

First-Generation Male College Students in Community-Based Education:

A Mixed Methods Study

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Abstract

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The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to investigate the participation of first-generation male college students in community-based education activities. As a group, first-generation male students are at a higher risk of academic disengagement and leaving college, as compared to most other demographic populations. Community-based education strategies, such as service-learning, have the potential to engage this group both academically and psychosocially; yet current data suggests that they are least likely to engage in these types of activities.

This study utilized an ecological framework, in conjunction with theories of engagement and persistence as well as intersectionality and male gender identity development, to explore participants' community engagement experiences. The preliminary phase of the study utilized a secondary data analysis strategy to examine patterns of first-generation males' community service participation, with data from the 2004/09 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Survey (BPS:04/09), conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics

(NCES). Qualitative data is based upon fifteen interviews with first-generation male students and staff who had participated in community-based education as undergraduates. A follow-up logistic regression analysis was conducted to test a predictive model of consistent service participation for first-generation males at four-year institutions over a six-year period.

Findings highlight themes regarding the impact that community-based involvement had on study participants, how their motivations were tied to their identities as first-generation males, and how institutional elements mediate participation. Primary factors influencing participation included financial and time constraints, gender socialization, and cultural perspectives on the notion of community service. Findings also suggest that community-based learning, as an educationally purposeful activity, contributed to the engagement of interview participants, particularly around four developmental areas: 1) academic and career, 2) psychosocial, 3) personal and spiritual, and 4) sociopolitical. Regression results identify a variety of person, context, and time variables that are associated with first-generation male community service participation. This study makes a contribution to the literatures on first-generation students, college men's development, and community engagement by using a mixed-method design to explore the intersection of these topics at a macro- as well as micro-level. Findings have implications for multiple programs and divisions across a range of institutional types.

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CHAPTER 1

Research Problem and Focus of Inquiry: Community-Based Education and the First-Generation Male College Student

“In the United States it is now possible for a youth, female as well as male, to graduate from high school or university...without comforting or assisting another human being who really needed help. The developmental consequences of such a deprivation of human experience have not as yet been scientifically researched. But the possible social implications are obvious, for – sooner than later, and usually sooner – all of us suffer illness, loneliness, and the need for help, comfort, and companionship. No society can long sustain itself unless its members have learned the sensitivities, motivations, and skills involved in assisting and caring for other human beings.”
(Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 825)

The importance of a college education has been widely accepted for decades, and has become even more critical in recent years as unemployment rates remain high. Data consistently indicates that higher levels of education are associated with higher earnings and lower unemployment rates, and that the earnings gap between high school and college graduates continues to grow wider (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2005; Levin, Belfield, Muennig & Rouse, 2007). Although access to postsecondary education has improved considerably over the last decade, attrition remains a critical problem for colleges and universities as roughly 40 percent of students who enter four-year postsecondary institutions do not complete a bachelor’s degree within six years (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Moreover, significant gaps in educational attainment still exist between students from different backgrounds. For example, male students who are the first generation in their families to go to college are among the least likely to earn a degree. Research points to a wide variety of factors that contribute to their lower levels of engagement, academic performance, and persistence to graduation (Moschetti & Hudley, 2008).

Community-based education strategies, including community service programs, service-learning, and community-based research, have the potential to engage marginalized students academically as well as psychosocially, in ways that traditional pedagogies have been found lacking. In particular, some research suggests that these types of educational experiences might have a positive influence on academic persistence and retention in college (Garlough, 2003; Mundy & Eyler, 2002; Tinto, 2003; Vogelgesang, Ikeda, Gilmartin & Keup, 2002).

The purpose of this exploratory study will be to gain a deeper understanding of first-generation male student participation in a variety of community-based education activities on college campuses. More specifically, it first presents an analysis of a large-scale, national data set to gain a clearer picture of community engagement participation patterns for this population. Subsequently, the study will explore the extent and ways in which community-based education experiences contribute to student learning and engagement in different institutional contexts.

This dissertation frames the research problem by first highlighting, in Chapter 1, the current research on first-generation male students and community-based education, identifying gaps in the literature on which this study will focus, and lastly providing a rationale for pursuing research in this area. Chapter 2 outlines relevant conceptual areas and theoretical frames that will inform this inquiry, and presents the guiding research questions for the study. Chapter 3 describes the three-phase, mixed methods study design that will attempt to examine these questions in depth, and chapters 4 through 8 present study findings. Chapter 9 provides an integrated analysis of the quantitative and qualitative findings, the meta-inferences that were generated from this process, and implications for policy, practice and research.

Roots of the Research Problem: Understanding First-Generation Males in Postsecondary Education and Schooling

College enrollment rates for most populations continue to rise in the United States, suggesting that efforts to increase college access for underrepresented populations have been at least partially successful (Adelman, 2007; Gladieux & Swail, 2000). However, college completion rates have remained relatively stagnant since the 1970's. Moreover, despite decades of efforts by government, private institutions, schools, and teachers to reduce disparities in educational achievement in K-12 as well as postsecondary education, postsecondary degree attainment still varies significantly between students from different demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds (Horn & Berger, 2004). For example, race and ethnicity have long been factors associated with unequal college completion rates (Bennett, 2004; Cook & Cordova, 2007). Students from low-income backgrounds also complete college at lower rates than those from high-income backgrounds (Horn, 2006; McSwain & Davis, 2007).

First-generation students, whose parents did not go to college, earn lower grades and consistently drop out of postsecondary institutions at higher rates than students with college-educated parents (Choy, 2001; Chen & Carroll, 2005; Ishitani, 2006; Strayhorn, 2006). And over the last several decades, women have been attending college and graduating at higher rates than men (Peter & Horn, 2005). The combination of multiple factors or characteristics thus places some students at a far greater disadvantage than others—in other words, students of color who are first-generation, male, and come from low-income backgrounds find themselves in the unenviable position of being the least statistically likely to complete a college degree.

First-generation Males and Postsecondary Educational Attainment

Much of the research on educational inequity in postsecondary settings has historically focused on students of color, or on students from low-income and/or first-generation backgrounds. In more recent years, the fact that women appear to be demonstrating greater academic success than men has also stimulated a renewed interest in the impact of gender on college performance (Kellom, 2004; Peter & Horn, 2005; Sax, 2008; Weaver-Hightower, 2010). Studies that consider the intersection of multiple background factors most often focus on race, ethnicity and socioeconomic status (as measured by income and parent education level); in addition, there is a small but growing body of research on race, ethnicity and gender, and more specifically on men of color. One combination that has not been studied as closely is that of gender and socioeconomic status—that is, men who are from the first generation in their families to go to college. This section gives an overview of postsecondary statistics on this population, as well as some of the educational barriers that they face. It should be noted that, although research on college completion rates and persistence issues are widely available for first-generation college students, as well as male students, very little information exists on first-generation male students as a specific group. Thus, the next several sections will present data on each group separately.

First-generation college students. Before reviewing the data on first-generation college students, it is important to clarify the parameters of this category because multiple definitions have been used in different settings. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) defines ‘first-generation’ college students as those whose parents have never enrolled in any type of postsecondary education (Choy, 2001). Alternatively, most federally-funded programs for first-generation students, as well as many researchers and practitioners, define this group as students whose parents do not possess a baccalaureate degree, and includes students whose

parents have attended some college but never earned a four-year degree (Davis, 2010). For the purposes of this study, I will use this broader definition. In addition, students with at least one parent who has completed a four-year degree will be referred to as ‘continuing-generation students’ (Lohfink & Paulsen, 2005).

Ample evidence indicates that first-generation college students are significantly less likely than students with college-educated parents to earn a degree. National data show that of the first-generation students who had enrolled in college between 1992-2000, 43% had left before earning a degree while only 24% completed a degree by 2000. Conversely, 68% of students with college-educated parents had earned bachelor’s degrees in the same time frame, while only 20% had dropped out (Chen & Carroll, 2005). In other words, first-generation students beginning at 4-year institutions are twice as likely as students whose parents had a bachelor’s degree to drop out of college before their second year. Even when other factors are accounted for such as working full-time, financial aid status, gender, and race/ethnicity, first-generation status is still a significant predictor of a student leaving college before his or her second year (Choy, 2001; Chen & Carroll, 2005; Ishitani, 2006).

First-generation students are also more likely to have other background characteristics that are associated with a lower likelihood of completing college. For example, a large percentage of first-generation students come from lower-income households. Among 1992 U.S. high school graduates, 51% of students whose parents did not go to college reported an annual family income of less than \$25,000, versus 8% of students who had parents with college degrees (Choy, 2001). By contrast, 35% of students with college-educated parents reported a family income of \$75,000 or higher, as compared to 3% of students with parents with a high school diploma or less. In addition, first-generation students are more likely to be Black or

Hispanic/Latino. For example, in the high school graduating class of 1992, Black students comprised 14% of all first-generation college students, Latinos comprised 17%, and Whites comprised 64%. In contrast, of the college students with parents who had bachelor's degrees, 5% were Black, 4% were Latino, and 84% were White (Chen & Carroll, 2005).

Male college students. As a group, men are also less likely to enroll in college and complete a college degree than women. For example, the percentage of 2010 high school graduates who enrolled in college was 74% for women and 63% for men (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). Although recent research suggests that the gender gap in postsecondary education has now stabilized, meaning that the gap is no longer growing, data show that men have consistently represented only 43% of students enrolled in and completing bachelor's degrees since 2000, even though they represent approximately 51% of the U.S. population up to age 30 (Academic Council on Education, 2010). In addition, data from the U.S. Department of Education indicates that women are earning the majority of college degrees across all racial and ethnic groups. More specifically, of all bachelor's degrees earned by each particular racial/ethnic group in 2001, 66% were awarded to African-American women, 60% were awarded to Latino and Native American women respectively, 55% were awarded to Asian American women, and 57% were awarded to White women (Peter & Horn, 2005). Another study found that first-generation female students were 56% more likely to graduate in four years than first-generation males (Ishitani, 2006). Indeed, multiple sources agree that the gender gap between men and women is widest for students from low-income backgrounds across all races, and nearly non-existent for those from the highest income backgrounds (Buchmann, 2009; Buchmann & DiPrete, 2006; Capraro, 2004; Clayton, Hewitt & Gaffney, 2004; Goldin, Katz, & Kuziemko, 2006; Kellom, 2004; King, 2006; Mather & Adams, 2007; Sax, 2008; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009;

Weaver-Hightower, 2010; Wilson, 2007). This data is not presented in order to diminish the significance of race and ethnicity in the student experience, but rather to make a case for closer examination of the experiences of first-generation and low-income men from all racial and ethnic groups.

Barriers Facing First-Generation Male College Students

Given the great disparities in educational performance and attainment between first-generation and continuing-generation students, as well as males and females, significant attention has been placed on trying to understand and explain these differences. Often, these analyses are presented in terms of individual or internal barriers versus institutional or external factors, as organized below.

Obstacles encountered by first-generation college students. Many studies on first-generation students describe the impact of first-generation status on various individual-level factors related to college success. Often, these issues are related to the fact that first-generation students are simply unfamiliar with the culture of college (Davis, 2010; Jehangir, 2010). For example, first-generation students are more likely than continuing generation students to report psychosocial challenges associated with the “culture shock” of college, such as lower self-efficacy, a greater fear of failing, difficulty adjusting to campus culture, and feelings of alienation on campus (Bui, 2002; Cushman, 2007; Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007). They are also more likely to have lower educational aspirations, show less engagement in college, and feel like they need to spend more time studying to keep up due to ineffective study skills (Bui, 2002; Hahs-Vaughn, 2004; Pike & Kuh, 2005; Somers, Woodhouse & Cofer, 2004). Since their parents are not familiar with the process or culture of college, first-generation students either receive less

academic and emotional support, or receive enthusiastic support but little practical guidance from their family members (Davis, 2010; Terenzini, Springer, Yeager, Pascarella, & Nora, 1996). Similarly, changing relationships with family and friends who have not gone to college can also lead to feelings of tension, guilt, and self-conflict for these students, which can in turn negatively impact their academic performance (Davis, 2010; Dennis, Phinney & Chuateco, 2005; Somers et al., 2004; Thayer, 2000).

First-generation college students are also more likely to face institutional, structural, or situational barriers that make it more difficult for them to complete a degree. For example, they are more likely to have attended low-performing high schools and less likely to have taken rigorous high school courses. This inadequate academic preparation often leads to lower reading, math, and critical thinking skills, a greater need for remedial coursework in college, as well as greater difficulty succeeding in college-level courses (Chen & Carroll, 2005; Choy, 2001; Strayhorn, 2006; Terenzini et al., 1996; Warburton, Bugarin, & Nunez, 2001). These students are also more likely to work full-time and have dependents, and less likely to live on-campus, which limits the amount of time they have to study or participate in academic or cocurricular activities (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004).

Furthermore, the rising cost of college tuition and simultaneous decrease in availability of grant-based financial aid can also disproportionately affect first-generation students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds (Long & Riley, 2007; McSwain & Davis, 2007). They may have to work more hours or take out more loans in order to pay for their education. Together, these myriad factors can act as barriers to academic success and graduation.

Obstacles facing male students. Refocusing on gender brings other dynamics into view. Beginning at an early age, male and female students also encounter different kinds of obstacles

that can eventually impact degree completion and other postsecondary outcomes (Buchmann, DiPrete & McDaniel, 2008; Conger & Long, 2010; Harris & Harper, 2008; Kellom, 2004; Sax & Harper, 2007; Sax, 2008). Many of these obstacles are attributed to individual-level differences between males and females, which impact the educational experience. Interestingly, parent education level and family resources are cited as two major factors in explaining gender differences in the decision to attend college as well as eventually completing a degree. Indeed, the gender gap in favor of females appears to be greatest in families where the father has a low level of education, or is absent from the family entirely (Buchmann & DiPrete, 2006; Buchmann, 2009). Motivation based on career and economic incentives has been another often-cited reason for the high achievement levels of women, although reasons for the large *disparity* between men and women are still somewhat unclear (DiPrete & Buchmann, 2006; Goldin, Katz & Kuziemko, 2006; King, 2006). Finally, gender differences in academic performance and behaviors throughout the educational pipeline lead to disparities in college attendance and completion as well. From girls' higher grade point averages, educational aspirations and standardized test scores to boys' higher incidences of behavior problems, rate of placement in special education programs, and high school dropout rates, a whole host of individual-level academic factors contribute to the significant gap in college persistence and completion (Buchmann, 2009; Conger & Long, 2010; Davis & Laker, 2004; King, 2006; Kleinfeld, 2009, Ludeman, 2004; Weaver-Hightower, 2010).

Institutional and societal-level factors also play a significant role in differential postsecondary enrollment and completion rates for men and women. Historically, the women's movement and subsequent change in labor market forces has had an enormous impact on increasing female college enrollment since the 1950's. Specifically, as women's expectations

about future employment and career options shifted, their college enrollment rates rose dramatically (Buchmann et al., 2008; Goldin et al., 2006; Kleinfeld, 2009). Buchmann (2009) also cites changes in higher education institutions, particularly around rising tuition costs and decreasing student aid, as a possible reason for the gender gap, although the nature of the link is not completely clear. In addition, she highlights the role of the military in shaping men's college participation, noting that military service is associated with lower levels of educational attainment. Disciplinary policies also seem to pose greater challenges for males, as boys disproportionately engage in the types of behaviors that lead to academic suspension and expulsion. Moreover, students who have been convicted of a drug offense are ineligible for federal financial aid, again negatively affecting males at higher rates than women (Clayton et al., 2004). Finally, from sociological and psychological perspectives, gender disparities in college completion are most often attributed to gender role socialization processes and the way that traditional male gender roles can hinder men's educational aspirations and achievement (Capraro, 2004; Harris & Lester, 2009; Kellom, 2004). In other words, traditional notions of masculinity often conflict with the values and behaviors that are necessary to succeed in school, and thus many males are forced to choose a "masculine" identity at the expense of academic success (Clayton et al., 2004; Harris & Harper, 2008).

Combined barriers: Being first-generation and male. When considering the combination of barriers facing first-generation students and male students, it becomes apparent that men who are the first in their families to go to college must contend with a unique and complex set of challenges in their educational journey. The importance of male family members and friends in the identity development and educational aspirations of young men has been cited frequently in the research, and thus the absence of role models who have gone to college likely

has an impact on men's decisions to pursue postsecondary education, as well as their choices and experiences in college (Clayton et al., 2004; Kimmel & Messner, 2007). Indeed, some men, particularly those from working-class backgrounds, may experience active discouragement from enrolling in college either because they are expected to fulfill the "breadwinner" role and earn money right after high school, or because of peer pressure to be "macho" and disengage from school (College Board, 2010; Harris & Harper, 2008; McSwain & Davis, 2007; Reed, 2011; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). Although the future earnings gap between those with and without a college degree continues to grow, many men from first-generation or working-class backgrounds appear to be unaware or in denial of this phenomenon, and are often tempted or pressured to choose the more immediate benefits of a low-wage job over the delayed benefits of higher education (College Board, 2010; Kleinfeld, 2009).

Much of the research on college attendance and completion disparities is quantitative, using large-scale demographic data. These studies can document trends and make some inferences as to causes for gender gap differences, as well as differences between first-generation and continuing-generation students. However, there are fewer studies that qualitatively examine the reasons for these differences. Moreover, the literature on gender gaps often uses human capital theory or status attainment theory to speculate on choices to attend or complete college, and cost-benefit perspectives to analyze choice-making. In contrast, studies of first-generation students tends to utilize theories of social capital and student development theory to make sense of their college experiences.

Currently, the intersection of these two groups is rarely studied. Only one unpublished study appears to focus on male first-generation students, but it focuses almost exclusively on issues related to first-generation status and does not examine themes around gender (Peltz,

2013). Thus, existing research does not capture the individual student experience of first-generation males, or focus on ways to support them in higher education. Those reports that do target these populations often focus solely on men of color, and not first-generation men across all racial backgrounds.

Educational Engagement in Schooling Before Postsecondary Years

While the barriers to higher education for first-generation males are significant, in order to understand the roots of the problem, it is important to more closely examine the reasons that males in general, and males with less educated parents in particular, seem to face more difficulty in educational settings even at an early age. Educational engagement is seen as a critical antecedent to academic success in both K-12 and postsecondary settings, and current studies indicate that boys tend to be less engaged than girls in the educational process. (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004). Some of the research on boys' experiences and engagement in traditional K-12 school settings points to differences in learning styles, and the ways that current school structures are more aligned with females learning preferences. In addition, the literature highlights societal pressures that influence males' attitudes towards schooling, and the ways that these factors interact and subsequently influence their behaviors, educational aspirations and engagement in college.

Historically, schools, along with most other institutions, have been male-dominated; hence, educational research on gender focused on the ways that women were disadvantaged and disengaged in academic settings. Prior to the 1960's, men earned the majority of bachelor's degrees, but by the 1980's, men and women were participating in college at the same rates, and by the 2000's females had overtaken males in college enrollment as well as graduation rates

(Goldin et al., 2006). These trends have been similar at the K-12 level, as educational initiatives in the 1980's focused on improving the academic achievement of girls, particularly in the math and sciences (Brannon, 2008). Now, girls in high school are taking similar or greater numbers of math, science, and other college preparatory courses, and often earn higher grades in those courses (Buchmann et al., 2008; King, 2006). Girls are also more likely to be involved in all types of extracurricular activities while males across all racial groups are more likely than girls to engage in risky behaviors, repeat a grade, or drop out of high school altogether. (Freeman, 2004; Snyder & Dillow, 2011). Altogether, these data suggest that comparatively, females are engaging in behaviors and activities that prepare them for success in postsecondary education while males struggle with the schooling experience. Researchers cite several reasons for these differences, which are described below.

Effects of school structure on boys' educational engagement. The fact that boys have been falling behind girls in multiple measures of academic achievement has not gone unnoticed by educators, researchers, and the media (Conlin, 2003; Lewin, 2006; Marklein, 2005; Wilson, 2007). Many propose the somewhat contested argument that boys and girls have different learning styles and brain structures, and that schools are currently structured in ways that favor girls, to the disadvantage of boys (Buchmann et al., 2008; King, 2006). For example, over the last several decades schools have moved toward an earlier emphasis on reading and writing. Partly because reading and writing require children to sit still, be quiet, and pay attention to the teacher, and partly because reading and writing are neurologically more challenging for young boys, they can fall behind in school as early as kindergarten (Brannon, 2008; Buchmann et al., 2008; Gurian, 1996).

In addition, research suggests that boys are more motivated by competition, and more successful in school environments that incorporate some hands-on or physical activity into the daily schedule (Clayton et al., 2004). However, many educators have moved toward using more collaborative, group-based projects in their teaching. Simultaneously, budget cuts and the increased focus on high-stakes testing have forced school districts to continually cut back on recess time as well as experiential classes such as art, music, and shop. These changes have arguably had a detrimental effect on the kinds of curricular activities that appear to be more successful with boys.

Non-cognitive factors and boys' educational engagement. Boys are also often described as having less of the social or noncognitive skills needed to succeed in school, compared to girls. For example, a wide variety of studies have shown that even from an early age, girls are more aware of social cues, more self-disciplined, more attentive, more likely to comply with adult instructions, demonstrate greater persistence in task-completion, spend more time doing homework, show more of an eagerness to learn, and have greater organizational skills - all behaviors which are associated with academic success (Brannon, 2008; Buchmann et al., 2008; Duckworth & Seligman, 2006; Jacob, 2002). Conversely, boys who are unable to demonstrate this kind of compliant conduct are often considered to have behavioral problems. Indeed, boys are far more likely to be placed in special education programs, diagnosed with ADHD, or labeled as mentally retarded, learning disabled, or emotionally disturbed (Goldin et al., 2006; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). When considering the adaptive skills and behaviors that girls tend to exhibit versus the negative attention and messages that many boys receive, it is not surprising that girls earn higher grades than boys from kindergarten to high school, graduate from high school at higher rates, enroll in college at higher rates, earn higher grades in college,

and complete more baccalaureate degrees (Buchmann, 2009; Freeman, 2004; Peter & Horn, 2005).

Socialization into male gender roles. An alternative, yet related explanation for the difficulty that some boys experience in school is that of the detrimental effects of male gender role socialization. Traditionally, the American ideal of masculinity has most often been associated with strength, power, and toughness. From a very early age, most boys are pressured by family members (usually fathers) and peers to conform to “appropriate” male behaviors by participating in sports and other competitive, aggressive activities (Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Swain, 2005). As Harris and Harper (2008) write, “the tasks that lead to academic success do not complement the activities in which boys engage to achieve a masculine identity...For boys, learning and studying are equated with femininity” (p. 28). In other words, traditional forms of masculinity force males into a very narrow and rigid definition of acceptable behavior, and most often this behavior is not compatible with schooling.

According to the College Board, this problem seems to be particularly acute for men of color (College Board, 2010). Participants in their roundtable discussions described being raised in an “aggressive culture” that emphasizes “toughness, firearms, gang initiations involving theft and beatings, disrespect for women, and drug dealing as an acceptable source of income” (College Board, 2010, p.11). In these settings and peer groups, academic success is often negatively associated with “acting White” and therefore, dropping out of school is usually seen as a positive act that earns respect from peers (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). A prevailing explanation is that African American and Latino men in particular, and men of color in general are systematically denied access to dominant, American forms of manhood and male success (Cuyjet, 2006; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009). In response, they “adopt alternate behaviors to

demonstrate manhood attainment—behaviors that are often at odds with those of the dominant culture” (Cuyjet, 2006, p.16).

There is also a dearth of male role models who value academic success, particularly among men of color (College Board, 2010). Instead, the predominant influence of male role models in the media, most notably musicians and athletes, contributes to the negative image of education, suggesting directly or indirectly that school is not “cool” (King, 2006). Additionally, Clayton, Hewitt & Gaffney (2004) describe the way that masculinity has become commercialized through the “successful linking of icons of male-centered culture (sports and sports figures in particular) to items marketed for identity (sport shoes, jerseys, and so on)” such that “who you are is what you buy, display, and consume” (p. 16-17). The constant messaging about materialism can draw young males towards entering the labor force right after high school, and push them away from pursuing higher education.

Men and (Dis)Engagement in College

The cumulative effect of the factors described above is often a relative lack of educational engagement, motivation and aspirations among many boys in elementary and secondary school. While research on engagement typically does not connect across K-12 and higher education settings, it is clear to see how students’ educational attitudes and behaviors at one level could carry over and influence their subsequent attitudes and behaviors in college — for those who make it there. At the postsecondary level, *engagement* most typically describes the quality of effort and level of involvement that a student invests in educationally purposeful activities (Kuh, 2009). Defined in this way, student engagement is associated with a wide variety of positive student outcomes including cognitive, moral, ethical, and psychosocial

development, student learning, higher grades, and college persistence and completion (Astin, 1993, Harper & Quaye, 2009; Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 1991; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Yet research again demonstrates that males are less engaged than females in their transition to college, as well as in a range of activities once they are enrolled in college.

In a study of high school seniors' decision-making about postsecondary education, Kleinfeld (2009) found that females were significantly more likely to have well-thought out plans for attending college, to consider college a vital educational investment, to plan on pursuing careers that require a higher degree, to be motivated by helping society in the future, and to strongly enjoy schooling. Conversely, males were much more likely to strongly dislike school, and to choose an occupation based on the potential for high income earnings; they were also far less likely to have actually applied to college by the end of senior year. Of particular interest to this study, the author also found that males seemed to display two different types of attitudes toward postsecondary education, based on their socioeconomic status. Most of the young men with college-educated parents expressed that they were not intrinsically interested in attending college, but that their parents had always expected them to go. On the other hand, males from "working-class" families, whose parents did not attend college, simply did not feel that college was a necessary part of their future and instead relied on vague dreams of finding a profitable job that did not require further education. Kleinfeld writes, "Many male seniors from working-class backgrounds were drifting, saying they would "take some time off" or postpone planning in hopes that some lucrative opportunity would eventually present itself and everything would work itself out" (p. 178). In fact, 70% of working-class females felt that college was a vital investment, as compared to 29% of males from the same background. Furthermore, working-class males were far less likely to report parental encouragement to attend college

(41%) than their female counterparts (76%), and 18 % of these young men even indicated that their families actively discouraged them from pursuing higher education.

For those men who do enroll in college, data shows that they participate in risky or unhealthy behaviors at far higher rates than women, which is indicative of disengagement. For example, male college students are more likely to engage in alcohol and substance abuse, exhibit aggressive and violent behavior, experience depression, and commit suicide (Davis & Laker, 2004; Harris & Lester, 2009). Men are also less likely to put effort into their academics, as they spend less time than women studying, doing homework, and participating in student organizations, and more time exercising, playing sports, partying, drinking alcohol, watching TV or playing video games (Sax, 2008). They are less likely to participate in community engagement activities, demonstrate successful coping behaviors, and utilize campus resources such as counseling, career, and health centers, as well as other academic support services, (Harris & Harper, 2008, Kellom, 2004; O'Neil & Crapser, 2011).

Similar to the research on boys and K-12 schooling, male gender socialization is cited as a significant, if not primary, factor in men's disengagement from the college experience (Harris & Lester, 2009; Kellom, 2004; May & Scher, 1988). In their monograph on working effectively with men in college, Kellom (2004) and his colleagues argue that in order to better serve men who struggle in college, practitioners must design programs and services for them based on a deeper theoretical understanding of male identity development. Davis & Laker (2004) state, "If we are to understand college men we must understand the social construction of masculinity and the pressure for men to conform to these standards" (p.50). Men's studies scholars explain that men are socialized to fear and reject any behaviors that are associated with femininity, which include demonstrating emotion, vulnerability, feelings of intimacy, and concern for others. Yet,

many of the tasks that are associated with healthy psychosocial growth and development in college can also be interpreted as “feminine.” For example, many campus programs and services are designed with the goal that students will develop competence, learn to manage their emotions, develop autonomy, establish their identity, develop freeing interpersonal relationships, develop a purpose, and develop integrity (Chickering and Reisser, 1993). However, Capraro (2004) theorizes that,

... most college men perceive programs and services offered by student affairs professionals as a return to “domesticity,” in other words as reconstituting their own feminization, *because such programs are inherently nurturing*. They would thus be a source of shame. For that reason, it is suggested by men’s studies, college men reject such programs as anathema to their masculinity. By contrast, more stereotypically masculine programs such as athletics or social functions featuring alcohol have few problems filling up with men on most campuses. (p. 29)

Thus, most of the very programs and activities that are created to engage men and help them grow beyond their limited views of masculinity, cannot attract the students who need them most because they require men to behave in ways that run contrary to the ideals of traditionally accepted male behavior. Indeed, “when examined critically, the incongruence between the behaviors that are linked empirically to student development and success in college and those that constitute the performance of traditional masculinities are evident” (Harris & Harper, 2008, p. 29).

Engaging First-Generation Male College Students

Specific studies of college student engagement in educationally purposeful activities

reveal that men are more likely than women to be disengaged in college across all racial and ethnic groups, and that first-generation students are less likely to be engaged than continuing-generation students (Hu & Kuh, 2002; Pike & Kuh, 2005). Given the importance of engagement to academic success, it becomes important to examine factors that contribute to increased engagement and academic achievement among these populations. Because the literature rarely focuses on the intersection of gender and first-generation status, this review is also divided into separate sections.

Engaging first-generation college students. The research on first-generation college students is quite extensive. A majority of these studies focus on the impact of first-generation status on various measures and characteristics related to college success. Many of these authors cite the need for greater preparation and support before these students even enter postsecondary education. However, fewer studies examine the factors and strategies that contribute to the success of first-generation students once they enter college. In one of the earlier studies in this area, Richardson & Skinner (1992) identified student strategies for postsecondary achievement that involved “scaling down” the physical, social, and psychological dimensions of going to college by finding comfortable spaces on campus, developing peer and faculty/staff support networks, and centering their experience around a particular program or department. Other literature confirms these findings, describing the benefits of summer transition programs, structured first-year programs, intensive academic advising and tutoring, peer support programs, residential living-learning programs, and multicultural learning communities (Engle, Bermeo & O’Brien, 2006; Inkelas, Daver, Vogt, & Leonard, 2007; Jehangir, 2009; Thayer, 2000). With respect to non-cognitive variables, ability to cope with racism, leadership experience, and demonstrated community service were positive predictors of GPA for students of color, while

factors related to continued enrollment included preference for setting long-term goals, acquired knowledge in an academic field, strong support networks, and realistic self-appraisal (Ting, 2003).

One of the more interesting findings is that first-generation status appears to have a distinct influence on students' college experiences and outcomes—in other words, the impact that a particular experience has on an academic or cognitive outcome differs for first-generation versus non-first-generation students. For instance, although first-generation students participated in extracurricular activities at lower rates than continuing-generation students, those first-generation students who *did* participate demonstrated significantly greater benefits from engaging in peer interactions as well as participating in academic/classroom and extracurricular activities than their continuing-generation counterparts, in terms of their critical thinking, degree plans, internal locus of attribution for academic success, learning for self-understanding, and preference for higher-order cognitive tasks (Pascarella et al., 2004). This finding implies that first-generation students might experience greater outcomes from participating in other activities, such as community-based education programs, as well.

Engaging male college students. The educational engagement of males is a somewhat understudied topic because men — particularly White men — are most often viewed as the dominant or privileged group who holds power over all other groups, and therefore do not require additional programmatic resources or policy attention. The idea that men can be oppressed by their own “gender role straitjackets” (Pollack, 1998) is a relatively new and sometimes unpopular one. Thus, while there is a significant amount of research on gender in education (i.e.: comparing males and females), specific studies of male college students are fairly sparse.

At this point, it may be important to consider the question, “Why focus on men at all?” This study takes the view that the plight of women and other oppressed groups is inextricably tied to that of men. Capraro (2004) explains that the field of men’s studies is “inherently activist” because many of its scholars are interested in “the larger project of “changing men” in response to the problems and uncertainties of a changing world of gender awareness, ideologies, and practices” (p. 24). Moreover, within the field of psychology, Liu (2005) argues that “men and masculinity should be studied as a multicultural issue, specifically because of issues of power and privilege” (p. 689). Indeed, these and other scholars contend that maintaining the invisibility of men and men’s issues can actually serve to perpetuate male privilege. Conversely, promoting healthy male development can begin to disrupt oppressive male behaviors and ultimately benefit women and men in college, and all of society (Wagner, 2011). With this perspective in mind, we return to the research on engaging male college students.

Many of the recommendations for working with men in college are based on a combination of theoretical extrapolation and anecdotal experience. For instance, some researchers advocate for actively incorporating men’ studies theories and perspectives into programs, courses, and staff trainings (Capraro, 2004; Harris & Lester 2009; Laker, 2011). Several authors also recommend offering single-sex, interactive small group programs that encourage critical reflection on masculinity (Capraro, 2004; Davis & Laker, 2004; Davis, LaPrad, & Dixon, 2011; Harris & Lester, 2009; Leafgren, 1988). They also suggest different ways to increase participation such as incorporating discussion groups into activities that are popular with males, targeting specific subgroups of men, or finding ways to require attendance (Capraro, 2004; Eichenfield, 1988; Harris & Harper, 2008). Some practitioners have also had success with programs that incorporate spirituality into the discussion (Longwood, Muesse,

Schipper, 2004; Kellom & Groth, 2010), or that include a community-based learning component (Davis, LaPrad, & Dixon, 2011; Harris & Lester, 2009; Kellom & Groth, 2010). At the institutional level, researchers emphasize the importance of conducting campus-level assessments to identify the needs of their male students, as well as being more intentional about campus messaging regarding masculinity (Harris & Harper, 2008; Harris & Lester, 2009).

In one of the largest and most comprehensive quantitative studies on gender differences among college students, Sax (2008) highlights an interesting theme similar to that found with first-generation students. She reports that although men, as a group, show lower levels of academic engagement, the influence of engagement is stronger for men. In other words, while males tend to spend less time studying, doing homework, and preparing for class, those men who *do* engage in such activities derive greater benefits than women in terms of their grades, academic confidence, critical-thinking skills, and achievement motivation. In addition, other educationally purposeful tasks such as going to faculty office hours or tutoring other students also seem to have a greater positive influence on grades for men than women, while non-academic activities such as working part-time, playing sports, and exercising appear to have a greater negative effect on grades for men than women (Sax, 2009). These findings suggest that exploring additional paths to educational engagement for men is a worthwhile endeavor.

To date, much of the research in higher education has approached these questions of engagement separately, with respect to males and first-generation populations. This study operates on the premise that the intersection of these two identity groups creates a unique set of learning needs, and proposes to explore an unconventional strategy to engage this specific group.

Community-Based Education as a Path To Engagement

A substantial body of research documents the academic and psychosocial benefits of participating in community-based learning activities in college. Given the wide range of activities that can potentially fall under the rubric of *community-based education*, the following section will first present a working definition of the term, as it will be used in this study. It will then provide an overview of the research on the educational outcomes of participation in various types of community-based learning, and a rationale for the effectiveness of community-based education with first-generation male populations in particular. Finally, data on community engagement participation rates for different populations will be reviewed.

Defining Community-Based Education and Learning

The terms *community-based education* and *community-based learning* are sometimes used in research and practice to refer to “service-learning,” as well as a variety of other terms including “volunteering,” “community service,” and “experiential learning.” However, there are some significant theoretical distinctions between their purposes and forms, both in K-12 and higher education settings. For this reason, it is important to distinguish between these terms and how they will be conceptualized in this study.

Distinctions within community-based experiences. *Community-based learning* (CBL), which I use interchangeably with *community-based education* (CBE) in this study, is a broad term that encompasses numerous forms of student activity which occur away from the school site and within a specified ‘community.’ The primary or defining characteristic of CBL is that it focuses on addressing community-defined problems, and thus engages students in meaningful, goal-oriented projects that meet a public need. In their article on the concept of community-based learning, Mooney and Edwards (2001) define it as “any pedagogical tool in which the

community becomes a partner in the learning process” (p. 182). They also propose a hierarchical typology of postsecondary community-based learning options, as well as the factors that distinguish them from each other. These six categories range from basic out-of-class activities, volunteering, and service add-ons, to more complex internships, service-learning, and service-learning advocacy. At the K-12 level, the Coalition for Community Schools (CCS) is one organization that actively promotes linkages between schools and community partners. They conceptualize community-based learning as a group of “strategies that engage students in learning through community-based problem solving” (Melaville, Berg & Blank, 2006, p. 2). Even more broadly defined than the previous typology, CCS includes academically-based community service, civic education, environmental education, place-based learning, service learning, and work-based learning under their umbrella of CBL. These are strategies that have traditionally been conceived and implemented separately from each other, yet the CCS report intentionally links these pedagogies and focuses on their common practices and educational benefits.

Service-learning is a much more widely-used term, although there is still some contention about how it is defined and implemented as well. Learn and Serve America (N.D.) defines service-learning as “a teaching and learning strategy that integrates community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.” Other definitions are narrower however, and particularly at the postsecondary level, require at minimum a structured reflection component as well as formal academic credit (Weigert, 1998). Furco (1996) presents a useful continuum model to distinguish between service-learning and other forms of community-based experiences. For example, activities like volunteering and community service focus primarily on service outcomes rather

than student learning, while field experiences and internships concentrate mostly on learning goals and less on the service being provided. Service-learning sits in the middle of this continuum, placing equal importance on service and learning goals.

In essence, community-based education is a broad term which includes most types of learning that is connected to the community (including service-learning), while service-learning is a much narrower concept that requires a curricular and reflective component. For the purposes of this research, I use the terms “community-based education” and “community-based learning” because I chose to examine activities that can be traditionally defined as “service-learning,” *as well as* other formal, long-term, institutionally-sponsored activities that are based in the community but may not have a structured reflection component and/or award academic credit. As such, these activities may fit Furco’s (2003) definition of “community service” as well as Mooney & Edwards’ (2001) definition of “service-learning advocacy” or Melaville et al.’s (2006) description of “place-based learning.” However, because the vast majority of literature focuses on service-learning and community service, I will at times draw from theories and findings in these areas.

Components of effective community-based education. Community-based learning experiences come in many shapes and sizes; thus educational outcomes can vary widely depending on the way an experience is structured and facilitated (Eyler & Giles, 1997). For instance, short one-time field trips or volunteering events, by design, cannot produce the same outcomes that longer term or more intensive immersion experiences provide. To gain a clearer picture of what community-based learning can look like, it may be most helpful to highlight the most common and defining characteristics discussed in the literature. As conceptualized by Melaville et al. (2006), effective community-based learning can take multiple forms, but still

share several key features. These include: 1) focusing on issues that are important to students, 2) providing students with an active role in learning and making decisions, 3) adopting learning goals that link individual action and achievement with public needs, 4) conducting formative assessments that provide useful feedback to students, and 5) developing substantive and sustainable community partnerships with organizations and people who can also support and mentor the students they work with. Ideally, high-quality community-based learning, whether academic or co-curricular, engages learners because it addresses multiple learning styles, connects abstract theories and concepts with real world situations, allows students to see the purpose and practical application behind what they are learning, and provides opportunities to develop supportive relationships with peers, faculty, staff, and community members over time.

Outcomes of Community-Based Education

Extensive empirical research has been conducted on the effects of community-based learning approaches on students at the K-12 level as well as in higher education. For the purposes of this paper I will focus only on postsecondary outcomes, categorized by the four major types of community-based learning models that are considered in this study.

Co-curricular community service outcomes. Tens of thousands of college students across the country participate in some sort of community service activity each year (Lopez & Kiesa, 2009). Even without the structured learning components present in most service-learning activities, research shows that service involvement has positive impacts on students. For example, Astin and Sax (1998) found that service participation had a significant impact on students' civic responsibility, academic development, and life skills. Specifically, students who participated in service showed greater increases than non-participants in variables such as

commitment to serve their communities, college GPA, increase in general knowledge, academic self-concept, time devoted to studying and homework, amount of faculty contact, leadership ability, and ability to think critically, among other things. Volunteering during the last year of college is also positively correlated with a number of post-college outcomes, including likelihood of volunteering after college, attending graduate school, earning higher degrees, helping others in difficulty, and a greater sense of empowerment (Astin, Sax & Avalos, 1999). Moreover, community service participation can help students develop a better understanding of themselves, as well as a greater sense of connectedness to others (Rhoads, 1997).

Academic service-learning outcomes. Since the mid-1990's, the research on service-learning outcomes has grown exponentially. In their comprehensive summary of hundreds of postsecondary service-learning studies across a seven-year period, Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray (2001) demonstrate that classroom-based service-learning has been shown to have positive effects on learning outcomes such as academic learning, ability to apply learning to practical situations, critical thinking, and cognitive development; personal outcomes such as self-efficacy, spiritual growth, moral development, collaboration skills, and leadership skills; and social outcomes such as greater cultural and racial understanding, sense of social responsibility, citizenship skills, and commitment to service. Similar positive results have been reported on many of the above-mentioned variables, as well as reducing negative stereotypes, promoting self-knowledge, improving communication skills, developing connections within the community, and facilitating connections with faculty and peers, particularly when students participated in high-quality service-learning experiences (Eyler & Giles, 1999) and even for short-term, intensive immersion experiences (Bowman, Brandenberger, Mick, & Smedley, 2010). Results from a large-scale national study also showed significant positive effects on variables such as

academic performance, values, self-efficacy, leadership development, and decision to pursue service careers (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000). More recently, a meta-analysis of research on service-learning outcomes indicated that service-learning had a positive impact on a variety of academic and non-cognitive outcomes including attitudes towards self, attitudes towards school and learning, civic engagement, social skills, and academic performance (Celio, Durlak, & Dymnicki, 2011).

Service-learning advocacy and critical community service outcomes. A growing number of scholars and practitioners in the field of CBE are drawing a distinction between service-learning that aims to create social change, and service-learning that does not explicitly have this goal (Butin, 2008; Mitchell, 2008; Rosenberger, 2000; Wade, 2001; Welch, 2009; Vogelgesang & Rhoads, 2003). Critics argue that traditional service-learning models involve people in addressing immediate and individual needs, but do not necessarily attempt to examine or address the systemic roots of the problem. Although a detailed review of this argument is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to examine the unique outcomes that can arise from participation in service-learning that has a specific focus on critical perspectives, advocacy, and/or social change. The limited research in this area suggests that advocacy-oriented service-learning, although sometimes controversial and difficult to implement, can lead to gains in cognitive development and citizenship skills (Wang & Rodgers, 2006; Welch, 2007), greater understanding of the historical context behind social conditions (Boyle-Baise & Binford, 2005), and greater awareness of societal power relations (Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007). Potential personal and social outcomes include greater awareness of personal identity and social location, greater awareness and reduction of stereotypical beliefs (Mayhew & Fernandez, 2007; Mitchell, 2007), and ultimately, personal transformation (Pompa, 2005).

Community-based research outcomes. Another CBE approach that is increasingly being used with undergraduates is community-based research. Similar to academic service-learning, it aims to apply theoretical concepts to solve problems that have been identified within a particular community. More specifically however, it engages students in scientific inquiry that is applied to an actual research project (Paul, 2009). The three core principles of community-based research are 1) extensive collaboration between researchers and community members, 2) promotion of a variety of methods to gain and disseminate knowledge, and 3) advancement of social justice as a primary goal of the research (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donohue, 2003). Data about the impact of community-based research on student learning is fairly sparse, but faculty who use this approach indicate that students are often involved in numerous aspects of the research process, from designing a study and gathering data to analyzing the data and writing up the findings. They can also gain innumerable practical skills through the process of setting up meetings with community members, writing letters and making phone calls, and interacting with various public entities. Moreover, community-based research can enhance discipline-specific learning and motivation to learn, because students see the immediate applicability of their work (Strand et al., 2003). These findings were corroborated in subsequent research which found that participation in community-based research developed students' academic and professional skills, enhanced their educational experience, increased their civic engagement, and led to personal growth (Lichtenstein, Thorne, Cutforth, & Tombari, 2011).

Outcomes related to engagement and persistence. Of particular interest to this study is research that examines the specific relationship between community-based education, educational engagement, and persistence—particularly for students from marginalized backgrounds. The sparse research on this topic generally examines the retention rates of all

students (Axsom & Piland, 1999; Gallini & Moely, 2003), or all first-year students (Bringle, Hatcher & Muthiah, 2010; Keup, 2005; Wolff & Tinney, 2006), and reports direct and indirect positive relationships between service-learning and persistence. A few studies specifically focus on first-generation students, reporting a significant relationship between the quality of student interactions with service-learning faculty and their academic and social integration (McKay & Estrella, 2008), and that low-income, first-generation students who completed a leadership development course with a civic engagement component were more likely than their peers to persist to the next year (Williams & Perrine, 2008). One qualitative study proposes that service-learning can help first-generation students to build their academic skills, develop resilience, find personal meaning, and develop critical consciousness, which could in turn have a positive impact on persistence (Yeh, 2010), and a recent mixed-methods study on first-generation students in service-learning reported positive impacts on academic and affective outcomes (York, 2013).

Although community-based education with marginalized student populations is understudied at the postsecondary level, there is a fairly large, parallel body of research on K-12 students who are considered “at-risk.” For example, some studies focus on the ways that CBE promotes positive youth development (Finlay, Flanagan & Black, 2007; Nelson & Eckstein, 2008; Swaminathan, 2005) while others advocate using it as a strategy for dropout prevention and closing the achievement gap (Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Wulsin, 2008; Scales & Roehlkepartain, 2005; Scales, Roehlkepartain, Neal, Kielsmeier & Benson, 2006). Several researchers document the positive impact of CBE on students from particular racial and ethnic groups (Castaneda, 1997; Charles, 2005; Lopez & Hall, 2007), as well as ESL, immigrant, and refugee students (Russell, 2007; Shadduck-Hernandez, 2005). Still others promote community-based education as part of a strategy for school reform (Ball, 1995; Education Commission of the

States, 2002; Pearson, 2002; Pickeral, Lennon, & Piscatelli, 2008; Vandegrift & Sandler, 1993). Common across all of this work is the notion that community-based education is a particularly effective strategy for engaging marginalized youth, academically as well as civically.

The impact of race, class, and gender on community-based education outcomes. A related line of inquiry explores the impact that service-learning has on undergraduate students of color, who are often first-generation students as well (Chesler & Scalera, 2000; Coles, 1999; Green, 2001; McCollum, 2003; Mitchell & Donahue, 2009; Murphy & Rasch, 2008). One study of community service and retention of Black students showed a significant positive relationship between community service involvement and graduation rates (Roose et al., 1997). Another researcher found that students of color were significantly less likely than White students to perceive a strong sense of community in their service-learning class, because they did not feel comfortable discussing issues of race and racism with their White classmates (Novick, Seider, & Huguley, 2011). Such interracial tensions in service-learning course discussions were a common theme across many of the studies on this topic.

A few case studies have also demonstrated how students from varying social class backgrounds have different motivations for service-learning, and interpret their service-learning experiences in very different ways (Henry, 2005; Lee, 2005). In addition, a study of community college students indicated that multiple service-learning experiences increased their exposure to issues in the community, and resulted in an orientation toward justice-oriented citizenship, as opposed to personally responsible citizenship (Prentice, 2007). The author makes the argument that community college students may be more likely to develop a social justice-oriented perspective because they are more likely to come from communities similar to those of the people they are helping.

Along these lines, some research points to the significant impact of working with people from a similar background to one's own, through community-based learning experiences. In an unpublished study of students of color who served as mentors to African-American high school students, Gilbride-Brown (2008) found that the experience of "working 'within' the community was an important reason for the college and high school students to academically persist" (p. iii). Yet simultaneously, the participants held a negative view of "community service" and "service-learning" activities because of their perception that these activities were dominated by White people who were doing charity work. These findings point to the complex issues surrounding community-based education, and to the need for additional research on the community-based learning experiences of students from marginalized groups.

Similarly, another article used a "borderlands" perspective to examine the experiences of Latino undergraduates who mentored Latino elementary school students as part of a service-learning ethnic studies course, and found that the experience helped participants to engage with and develop their ethnic identities, gave them the language to process and challenge dominant ideologies, motivated them to persevere and graduate, and helped them to feel more connected to the university (Delgado Bernal, Aleman, & Garavito, 2009). More specifically, the experience of serving as role models for young Latino students led the undergraduates to feel obligated to do their best in college, gave them a sense of pride as students of color in a predominantly White institution, helped them to see themselves as student leaders, and subsequently provided them with a sense of connection to the university. In their final analysis, the authors challenge Tinto's integrationist model and write, "The popular notion has been that students need to break away from the family and community to be engaged, integrated and successful on campus. However, our study builds on the research on students of color...which argues that maintaining strong ties

to family and community enhances student success” (p. 578). The current study will propose a similar line of argument, as it pertains to first-generation male college students.

Even less research has focused specifically on community-based education and gender. Several comprehensive studies of service-learning note the differential participation rates of men and women (Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyler & Giles, 1999), but very few studies go beyond a brief participation frequency analysis or case study presentation of specific programs designed for males (Kellom & Groth, 2010). One recent mixed-methods dissertation has ventured further into this territory, examining gender differences in motivation to participate in service, choice of service type, and learning outcomes from service (Chesbrough, 2009). With respect to motivation, the author found that women were more likely to report intrinsic reasons for getting involved in service, while men tended to get involved through external motivators, such as a service-learning course requirement or required service as part of a sports team or student organization. Men were also more likely to choose a type of service project based on “rational” factors such as the match between a particular project and a self-assessment of the skills they had to offer, the likelihood of having a visible impact as a result of their service, the relevance of a particular project to their planned careers, and the amount of time required by a project. Indeed, males cited “not enough time” as the main reason for not participating in service, even though they theoretically have the same amount of time as females. On the other hand, women tended to consider more “subjective” factors in their choice of project, such as choosing something they were emotionally drawn to, or “following their hearts,” regardless of the time commitment (p.157). In terms of learning outcomes, men described learning about leadership and organizational skills, social justice issues, and their obligation to contribute to society; they were also more inclined to evaluate their experience based on what they were able to accomplish.

Women however, were more likely to focus on the learning process, particularly with respect to interpersonal relationships and caring for others. In summary, Chesbrough found that men described service as “an individual and impersonal activity based in rational and objective enactments of societal duty” while women thought of it “predominantly as a relational activity based in emotional and subjective personal commitments” (p. 158).

Community-Based Education as a Strategy to Engage First-Generation Males

While numerous studies document the institutional barriers and adjustment issues of first-generation college students, there is less research on the educational strategies that might best serve their unique learning needs. The same can be said for male students, particularly in the postsecondary context. In this section I argue that community-based education has the potential to be particularly effective with first-generation male students because it incorporates many components that are likely to be congruent with the learning preferences associated with this population.

The experiential nature of community-based education. The educational outcomes named above are often associated with experiential education, of which CBL and service-learning are just one form. In particular, service-learning is based primarily on Kolb’s (1984) model of experiential learning, which is heavily influenced by John Dewey’s philosophies about the educative effects of experiences (Giles & Eyler, 1994). Dewey argued that students learn by having experiences rather than by memorizing facts and theories, and that they are more engaged when they are physically and emotionally interacting with the topics they are studying (Dewey, 1938; Rocheleau, 2004). Moreover, he envisioned student growth and development as a critical learning outcome, and as such, conceived of experiential learning as a continual process of

experiences, interactions, and reflection (Eyler & Giles, 1997). Kolb later adapted Dewey's process of inquiry into an "experiential learning cycle" with four stages, including concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Cone & Harris, 1996). Students engage in an experience, reflect on that experience, then generate hypotheses about what might be going on, and subsequently engage in 'experiments,' or more experiences, to test those hypotheses.

Contemporary learning research supports the premise that linking academic content to issues that have relevance and meaning to students leads to greater engagement in learning (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005). Additionally, theories about active learning propose that applying knowledge to practical and real problems leads to deeper understanding of concepts, as well as greater retention and transfer of information (Bransford, 2000). Students can also develop greater self-confidence and motivation when they can see the usefulness of their work, and when they perceive that they have something of value to offer others (Bandura, 1986). Moreover, research on gender and college student learning styles indicates that active or applied learning strategies that reference everyday life experiences may be more effective with males (Keri, 2002). In addition, pedagogies that encourage reflection and co-construction of knowledge may also lead to positive developmental and academic outcomes for men (Laker, 2011). Community-based education includes all of the above components, suggesting that it may be a particularly successful strategy to engage male college students.

Critical forms of community-based learning. As a unique form of experiential education, certain forms of service-learning and other forms of CBL are sometimes associated with an orientation towards social justice and critical pedagogy (Butin, 2007; Clark & Young, 2005; Cone & Harris, 1996; Cooks, Scharrer & Paredes, 2004; Cuban & Anderson, 2007;

Mitchell, 2008; Rhoads, 1997; Rosenberger, 2000). Freire's (1970, 1993) critical pedagogical philosophy has many components and layers to it, but the most pertinent for this study are the concepts of *conscientization* and *problem-posing*. According to Freire, traditional forms of education socialize people into accepting the status quo, while critical pedagogy encourages them to question inequitable power relationships and challenge the oppressive situations that they encounter. *Conscientization* then, is the developmental process by which students learn about societal inequities and the structures that keep them in place, and also become aware of their capacity to create change. Stage, Muller, Kinzie & Simmons (1998) summarize a four-stage progression, applicable primarily to marginalized populations, that begins with a lack of awareness of their own oppression and eventually leads to critical consciousness and a desire to take action. *Problem-posing* is a related concept that draws upon students' personal and cultural experiences and incorporates them into the curriculum. Students learn to identify and analyze problems in relation to their own lives, develop a more critical lens through which to view reality, and generate ways to change these situations.

Research on first-generation students and multicultural learning communities supports the argument that connecting students' own experience to their academics can help facilitate academic and social integration, and have a positive impact on college persistence (Jehangir, 2009). Similarly, first-generation students — particularly those with multiple non-dominant identities — may also respond positively to critical forms of community-based education when it encourages them to work *alongside* community members to address community-defined needs, and/or when the students themselves come from backgrounds that are similar to those in the communities they are working with (Delgado Bernal et al., 2009; Gilbride-Brown, 2008; Hayes

& Cuban, 1997; Myers-Lipton, 2002; Shaddock-Hernandez, 2005). However, these groups may not be benefiting from such types of educational experiences to the extent that one would hope.

Community and Civic Engagement Among Marginalized Populations

Unfortunately, data from multiple sources indicate that the participation level of marginalized populations in civic engagement activities generally, and CBL in particular, is disproportionately low. For example, several studies of civic engagement among young people report that education level and class are significant predictors of civic engagement. National census data show that youth from low-income backgrounds are far less likely to participate in volunteer activities than their higher income peers (Spring, Dietz, & Grimm, 2007). Similarly, in a study of service-learning and high school students, Bridgeland et al. (2008) found that “at-risk” students were significantly less likely to know about service-learning opportunities at their schools than other students, and less likely to participate in these programs even when they did know about them. Hyman & Levine (2008) found that those who report being college educated and “middle class” are five times more likely to participate in some type of community activity than those who have not gone to college and self-identify as “working class.” Yet, each of these studies indicates that CBL seems to have greater benefits for those who are most educationally and socioeconomically marginalized, reinforcing the importance of finding ways to increase their access and involvement.

College students, as an aggregate, are more involved in a wide range of civic engagement measures than young people who are not in college, and students at four-year colleges are engaged at higher levels than those at two-year colleges (Lopez & Kiesa, 2009). However, relatively little data is available on the participation rates of different student populations in

campus-sponsored, community-based education, in part because most of the research on CBL does not directly focus on these questions, and does not report disaggregated data by demographic characteristics such as race, ethnicity, income level, or parent education level. Data collected in 2002 by Campus Compact, a national organization which promotes civic engagement in higher education, suggests that Caucasians are overrepresented in service participation while African Americans and Hispanics are underrepresented (Salgado, 2003; U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

As mentioned earlier, one commonly cited demographic gap in service participation is that of gender—the vast majority of studies on community service and service-learning programs do disaggregate by gender and report much higher participation levels among women than men. Several researchers confirm this trend either in their national studies of college student service participation (Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyler & Giles, 1999), or of gender differences in college (Sax, 2008). For instance, Sax (2008) found that female first-year students were more likely to place importance on helping others in difficulty, participate in community programs, perform volunteer work, and anticipate performing community service in college. Additionally, in 2002 Campus Compact reported that 64% of service participants were female and 35% were male (Salgado, 2003). This gap seems to be narrowing as postsecondary institutions place a greater emphasis on community engagement, as data from the 2008 HERI College Senior Survey indicate that 63% of men and 71% of women performed some volunteer work in college (Liu, Ruiz, DeAngelo, & Pryor, 2009). Yet most data still suggest that the “typical” service-learning participant is a White, middle-class female (Coles, 1999; Webster & Worrell, 2008).

Some of the researchers cited above have speculated on the factors that impact community involvement levels. For instance, Davila & Mora (2007) suggest that underlying

personal preferences, college aspirations and opportunity costs account for differences in youth participation. Similarly, Hyman & Levine (2008) propose that the availability (or perceived availability) of discretionary time, personal preferences, and available personal resources all affect a person's willingness to volunteer. They also consider the possibility that the terms "service" and "volunteering" may have different meanings for different populations, and thus result in skewed survey data on participation rates. Yet, because these questions were not the main subject of the research, none of these studies actually explored the accuracy of these theories. Furthermore, neither of these studies focused on college students. Chesler & Scalera (2000) hypothesize that female college students participate more than males because they tend to like service-oriented activities and occupations more often than men. They also posit that students from lower-income backgrounds are more likely to have to work and thus don't have time to volunteer, and that students of color may seek out more diverse avenues for pursuing community-based experiences such as multicultural centers or race-based student organizations. However, there is virtually no research that specifically examines and confirms these differences, nor is there research on policies and practices that could reduce these participation gaps.

Focus of Inquiry: How First-Generation Males Participate in and Interpret

Their Community-Based Education Experiences

If we consider the above statistics on college students and also extrapolate from the broader studies on youth and adult civic engagement, the pattern that emerges is that males from lower-income, less educated backgrounds — especially those whose parents have not attended college — are the least likely to participate in community-based education, with some variation by race and ethnicity. This group of students is also the most likely to leave college without a

degree. If CBE potentially has positive educational outcomes, particularly for students who are most disengaged, then it seems important to examine why these groups are less likely to get involved, consider ways to increase their participation, and develop a deeper understanding of the learning outcomes for those first-generation males who *do* get involved. To pursue this investigation, three broad questions will guide research that substantially increases our grasp of first-generation males' participation in, and interpretation of, their community-based education experiences:

1. **Participation:** How, and how extensively do first-generation college males participate in community service and community-based education activities? What facilitates or inhibits their participation in these types of activities?
2. **Impact:** What impacts does participation in community-based education have on learning and engagement for first-generation males? How do they interpret and understand the benefits of participation in community-based education?
3. **Context:** How do institutional settings and environmental context shape what first-generation males learn from and believe about their experiences in community-based education?

Significance of the Study

First-generation college students have indeed received greater consideration from researchers and practitioners over the last decade, as awareness has grown regarding their struggles in higher education. Male students have also garnered greater attention due to an increasing focus on the college gender gap. Yet despite the rising number of studies on both of these populations, as well as the increase in programs that target these groups, virtually no

research focuses on the combination of these two demographic groups. Meanwhile, first-generation males, and particularly men of color, leave college at higher rates than any other group. These continued disparities, coupled with increasing pressure to improve retention rates, represent an escalating concern for institutional leaders and demonstrate the importance of continuing to develop new, innovative, and effective ways to promote the academic engagement and success of this population.

Current evidence suggests that community-based education can have a positive impact on student engagement in postsecondary education. Additionally, there is some indication that these strategies could be effective with first-generation college students in particular, who face very different needs and issues than non-first-generation students, and who are at greater risk of dropping out. In addition, because community-based education utilizes an active, experience-based pedagogy, there is potential for this type of learning to engage the specific needs or preferences of male students. However, many community-based experiences are currently designed, by default, with “traditional” students in mind — that is, students from White, middle-income, college-educated families. Moreover, the current structure and design of such experiences seems to draw significantly more female than male participants. This approach raises two issues. First, the underlying assumption is that students are unfamiliar with issues such as poverty, and will be encountering and helping “the other” through their work in the community — an assumption that places first-generation students at the crux of a patronizing and uncomfortable dichotomy, and ultimately discourages their participation (Henry, 2005; Lee, 2005; Mitchell & Donahue, 2009). Second, current approaches appear to unintentionally ignore half of the population at best, or exclude them at worst. Community engagement researchers and practitioners are aware of the gender gap in participation, but have not yet tried to systematically

address this gap. If community-based education is to be touted as an effective tool for educational engagement, then the field must do a better job of encouraging all students to participate.

Given these considerations, this study will contribute to the scholarship on first-generation student engagement, male college students and masculinity, and community-based education in several ways. First, it attempts to offer a new strategy by which to improve the engagement and success of first-generation males, by exploring the applicability of a currently existing yet underutilized type of learning experience that is becoming more popular on college campuses nationwide. Secondly, it also considers a novel approach to promoting healthy male socialization and identity development in college, in the hopes of addressing problems that most directly involve men, but are inevitably damaging to the women and children who are often victims of negative male behavior. Finally, this study will provide data on the community engagement patterns of first-generation male students — a topic on which virtually no information is currently available. Additionally, it will offer deeper insight into the community-based education experiences of a population that is unlikely to participate in this type of activity, in an effort to help faculty and practitioners more effectively structure their courses and programs to engage a wider range of students. In summary, findings from this study will be of use to researchers and practitioners who wish to expand the knowledge base about first-generation male students, as well as those who are interested in promoting civic engagement among a wider diversity of populations. The following chapter presents the conceptual framework that will be used to explore these issues and questions.

CHAPTER 2

Framing Concepts:

An Ecological Approach to Engaging First-Generation Males

The underlying concern in the proposed research problem is that many first-generation males struggle to stay in college and complete a bachelor's degree. The two main premises of the study are that educational engagement in college has a positive impact on student persistence and academic success, and that community-based education is a promising strategy to engage first-generation males in the educational process. A comprehensive analysis of the multiple factors relevant to this research problem requires use of an interdisciplinary conceptual framework that considers theories on engagement and persistence, as well as the social construction of identity. Moreover, in order to gain a more complete picture of the impact that community-based learning has on educational engagement and outcomes, these perspectives must be considered within the multiple contexts and environments in which first-generation male college students are situated. Three strands of literature are relevant to this inquiry and will be used to inform the research design and data analysis in this study.

The first body of work concentrates on theories of student engagement and persistence in postsecondary settings. As demonstrated earlier, first-generation male students face a myriad of barriers that prevent them from being involved and engaged in college, and these theoretical perspectives will help to draw a clearer picture of how community-based education strategies can contribute to student engagement. This section provides a brief overview of college retention and persistence models, as well as theories of student engagement in postsecondary and K-12 settings.

A second perspective considers theories pertinent to the social construction of identity. First-generation students are an extremely diverse group with respect to race, ethnicity, immigration history, age, and economic status, as well as gender. Examining community-based engagement solely through the first-generation dimension of their identity cannot fully capture the complexity of their experience. An intersectional lens draws attention to multiple aspects of a person's identity and how they impact the nature of people's experiences, as well as how individuals interpret those experiences. Moreover, the salience of gender in the schooling process is unequivocal, and presumably plays a significant role in the way that men view community-based involvement, as well as the way they interpret their experiences in these types of activities. Because this is a study of men in particular, rather than gender as a whole, this section does not include the plethora of psychological and sociological theories that pertain to women but instead focuses on the few gender socialization models that are relevant to men's experiences within educational settings.

As the final, overarching perspective that frames this study, I propose utilizing an ecological approach to understanding the role that community-based education can play in engaging first-generation male students in college. Ecological models have been used more commonly in recent years to examine a number of issues in postsecondary education, ranging from peer group influence to college readiness and persistence (Arnold, Lu & Armstrong, 2012; Axlund & Lott, in press; Renn & Arnold, 2003). This perspective is useful because it allows for consideration of multiple, complex relationships between students and the environments in which they exist, as well as the contextual factors and social structures that mediate those relationships over time. For this study, an ecological approach is ideal because it can be used to

examine the influence of environmental and sociocultural factors on both the *process* of participating in community-based education, as well as the *outcomes* of their participation.

Persistence and Engagement

A primary focus of this study is the engagement of first-generation men in college, and patterns of their frequent disengagement have been reviewed in Chapter 1. But how can we understand “engagement” in more theoretical terms? The first portion of the conceptual framework reviews theories of persistence and engagement in higher education, and considers their application to community-based education strategies.

Student Persistence in Postsecondary Education

A widely studied issue in higher education over the last fifty years, student persistence has most commonly been examined from sociological as well as psychological perspectives, which respectively focus on the institutional and individual factors associated with leaving college (Yorke & Longden, 2004). One of the underlying goals of focusing on the educational engagement of first-generation men is to improve their college persistence and completion rates. Thus, persistence theories are included in the conceptual framework for this study.

Tinto’s (1975, 1993) longitudinal interactionist model is the most widely utilized sociological framework for understanding the issues behind college student departure. Based on anthropological theories of social withdrawal, this model asserts that academic and social integration are crucial to the process of student adaptation to college. This theory suggests that students who fail to adapt to their new situation, academically or socially, feel disconnected from the college and thus leave early. Conversely, the more academically and socially integrated

students feel, the more likely they will be to persist. In recent years, Tinto (2010) has modified his model to acknowledge the institutional role in improving student persistence, by outlining four institutional conditions that impact retention. These include providing clear information and expectations for academic success, providing academic and social support, providing frequent feedback about student performance, and providing opportunities for active involvement and engagement.

Approaching student attrition from a psychological perspective, Bean and Eaton (2001) identify three non-cognitive concepts that are critical to the process of academic and social integration: self-efficacy, coping behavior, and attributional style. Of particular interest, service-learning was identified as an approach that could teach students new coping strategies by enhancing their cognitive skills, build students' sense of internal control by highlighting their ability to make a difference, and provide opportunities to develop academic and social self-efficacy by creating opportunities to interact with faculty and peers in positive ways.

Because Tinto's (1993) model is based on the experiences of traditional-aged, White, middle-class students who attended private residential institutions, it has been criticized for not adequately addressing the issues that marginalized student populations face. In response, a plethora of other models and theories have been proposed, which examine college persistence and degree completion through multiple lenses including education, economics, public policy, and organizational theory, as well as sociology and psychology (Melguizo, 2011; Perna & Thomas, 2008). Some of the most common critiques incorporate concepts of social and cultural capital, dual socialization, and critical perspectives on power and oppression (Metz, 2004; Rendon, Jalomo, & Nora, 2000; Tierney, 2000). One such model emphasizes the importance of student empowerment and the ability to effect institutional transformation (Maldonado, Rhoads,

& Buenavista, 2005). Based in theories of cultural capital, collectivism, and social praxis, three components are important for the persistence of students of color: 1) developing knowledge, skills, and social networks; 2) building community ties and commitments, and 3) challenging social and institutional norms. The authors propose that these mechanisms are effective because students of color become empowered to take a proactive role in their education.

Using various combinations of these and other theoretical models, countless studies have examined the factors that are related to student persistence. Reviews of this body of research have attempted to summarize these findings (Demetriou & Schmitz-Sciborski, 2011; Pacific Policy Research Center, 2010). These lists include external factors such as academic preparation, financial constraints, and social and family support, as well as individual or internal factors such as motivation, expectations, aspirations, academic self-concept, optimism, grit, and engagement as being related to college persistence. As community-based education is conceptualized as a strategy for engagement in this study, the following section explores engagement more closely.

Student Engagement

The constructs of engagement, achievement, and persistence are inextricably tied to each other, and in some cases are used interchangeably. This study draws upon the engagement literature in postsecondary as well as K-12 contexts, because they complement each other theoretically. While models of college student engagement tend to focus more on institutional policies and programs that promote engagement, theories of school engagement in K-12 settings seem to devote greater attention to the concept of engagement, and what engagement looks like for individual students. Both literatures are described below.

College student engagement. In the context of this conceptual framework, college

student *engagement* resembles Tinto's constructs of *integration*, which in turn lead to persistence. Engagement itself, however, is a complicated theoretical construct that is defined and operationalized in multiple ways. Kuh's multidimensional conceptualization of student engagement is one of the most widely used in higher education (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2007). Kuh and his colleagues describe two major features of engagement; the first is represented by "the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities" (p.44), and community-based education is listed as one example of an educationally purposeful activity. The second feature highlights the role of institutions in providing resources, opportunities and encouragement for students to participate in these types of activities. Specifically, Kuh et al. (2005) propose five effective practices that institutions can adopt to promote educationally purposeful activities, and that are measured in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). These include: 1) level of academic challenge, 2) active and collaborative learning, 3) student-faculty interaction, 4) enriching educational experiences, and 5) a supportive campus environment.

In a more recent study using NSSE data, Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea (2008) examined the relationship between student engagement and academic achievement, as well as persistence. They reported a positive relationship between engagement in educationally purposeful activities and first-year student grades, as well as persistence between the first and second year of college. They also found that engagement had a compensatory effect on grades and persistence. In other words, participation in effective educational practices had an even greater positive impact on lower ability students and students of color, as compared with White students. This finding mirrors those that cite the greater benefits that at-risk youth gain from CBL participation, and suggests that educators should invest more resources into promoting

educationally purposeful activities, such as CBE, for students who are more likely to be disengaged.

K-12 school engagement. The literature on school engagement at the K-12 level is also vast, and sometimes overlaps with research on other related concepts including student conduct and behavior, interests, motivation, and self-regulated learning. While this study does not focus on K-12 education, I argue that the concepts presented in school engagement theory can provide added value in illuminating the ways that community-based education can engage college students in general, and particularly first-generation males.

In their comprehensive review of K-12 school engagement research, Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris (2004) present engagement as a concept that can be used to assist students with low levels of academic motivation and achievement, as well as those with a higher likelihood of dropping out. They propose a multidimensional definition of school engagement comprised of three categories, each of which are interrelated and can change in depth as well as duration. *Behavioral engagement* refers to student actions, and can refer to positive or cooperative behavior in conjunction with the absence of negative or disruptive behavior. At a very basic level, this could involve compliance versus non-compliance with rules or instructions. Behavioral engagement also describes a student's participation in learning tasks "and includes behaviors such as effort, persistence, concentration, attention, asking questions, and contributing to class discussion" (p. 62). Participation in academic as well as extracurricular activities is a third example of this type of engagement. *Emotional engagement* focuses on affect and most often describes a student's feelings about school, including "interest, boredom, happiness, sadness, and anxiety" (p.63). This type of engagement can also refer to student attitudes and reactions to various actors in the school setting, or a sense of identification with school, a sense

of belonging, and placing value on school-related outcomes. *Cognitive engagement* describes a student's willingness to put effort into learning new skills and understanding complex ideas. This third type of engagement emphasizes psychological investment, and defines psychological effort as distinct from behavioral effort. It is sometimes conceptualized as an intrinsic quality similar to motivation, where motivated students are described as "focused on learning, mastering the task, understanding, and trying to accomplish something that is challenging" (p. 64). These three facets of engagement are not always associated with each other in the school engagement literature; yet the authors argue,

The fusion of behavior, emotion, and cognition under the idea of engagement is valuable because it may provide a richer characterization of children than is possible in research on single components. Defining and examining the components of engagement individually separates students' behavior, emotion, and cognition. In reality, these factors are dynamically interrelated within the individual; they are not isolated processes (p. 61).

Due to the interactive, problem-based nature of community-based education, such types of educational strategies have the potential to engage students in all three dimensions simultaneously. By physically going into a community to perform a particular task, students, by definition, will be required to engage at a behavioral level to some degree. Students may also engage at an emotional level with community members, more so than in the classroom, particularly if they work with someone and develop a personal connection over time. Finally, community-based education experiences often have a practical or problem-solving component, which prompts students to apply their knowledge to a current issue in the community. The applied nature of this activity can engage students cognitively, particularly those who are kinesthetic or tactile learners.

Together, the literatures on persistence, retention, and engagement form a helpful lens through which to examine the processes and outcomes of community-based learning for first-generation males, and how these activities may contribute to their postsecondary experience.

Social Construction of Identity

If we are to make sense of first-generation male college students' engagement or lack of engagement in their education, it is important to draw upon conceptual tools concerning the notion of gender, as well as other dimensions of an individual's identity. Social constructionist models challenge traditional, biological explanations of differences in gender, race, sexuality, and class, and instead argue that these identities are a product of socially, historically, culturally, and politically prescribed roles that people are socialized into (Kimmel & Messner, 2007; Omi & Winant, 1994). This perspective asserts that characteristics such as race and gender are not fixed, but are produced, reinforced, and redefined over time by society. Moreover, these constructs can vary significantly in different cultures, and according to other aspects of one's identity. Therefore, there is no uniform definition or experience of masculinity or femininity, nor of being Black, Latino, or Asian (for example).

Research suggests that there are differences in the way that social constructions of masculinity and race impact the experiences of men in college (Davis & Laker, 2004; Harper, 2004; Harper, Wardell, & McGuire, 2011; Harris & Lester, 2009; Leaper & Van, 2008; Ojeda, Rosales, & Good, 2008). Thus, in the context of the research problems posed above, social constructionism is an appropriate lens through which to examine the community-based experiences of first-generation male college students. Two specific theories within this perspective – male gender socialization and intersectionality – are most pertinent to this study.

Male Gender Socialization

Social constructionist perspectives on masculinity did not emerge until the 1990's, contradicting the essentialist view that a single form of masculinity applied to all men (Brod & Kaufman, 1994; Connell, 1995). The concept of *multiple masculinities* recognizes the fact that some forms of masculinity (White, heterosexual, middle-upper class) are dominant while others (non-White, homosexual, working-class) are subordinate or marginalized in society. Dominant forms of masculinity are seen as traditional or ideal, while marginalized masculinities are labeled as more feminine or deviant, and therefore less acceptable. Along these lines, *hegemonic masculinity* places traditional forms of masculinity above marginalized forms, as well as above all women, with the goal of maintaining a patriarchal society (Connell, 1995). Two theories on gender and masculinity are particularly relevant to this research, because they provide a lens through which to analyze the behaviors and attitudes of the men in the study, as well as the outcomes and impact of their participation in community-based education.

Gender role conflict. The concepts of gender role conflict and gender role strain are based on the above premise that gender is a socialized construct, and that men suffer negative psychological consequences from trying to conform to traditional roles of masculinity (Levant, 1996; O'Neil, 1981). The hegemonic conception of masculinity presents an impossibly narrow and hypermasculine ideal of manhood, which no person can realistically live up to. Gender role conflict takes place when these restrictive or rigid gender roles prevent a man from being his authentic self, thus leading to cognitive, affective, unconscious, and/or behavioral problems. A variety of situations or contexts can trigger feelings of self-conflict or self-doubt, which can in turn cause a man to restrict, devalue, or violate himself or another person. In this way, "the

hegemonic traditional definition of masculinity serves to oppress women, marginalize some men, and limit all men” (Edwards & Jones, 2009, p. 211).

O’Neil (1990) describes four specific behaviors or belief systems that can result from gender role conflict. These include *restrictive emotionality*, or an unwillingness to express feelings and a fear of showing vulnerability; *socialized control, power, and competition*, or a desire to demonstrate superiority over other men through competition; *restrictive sexual and affectionate behavior* due to a fear of expressing feelings with other men as well as physical contact with other men; and *obsession with achievement, work, and success*, which describes men’s issues with balancing work and family relations, as a result of the socialized expectation for men to serve as “breadwinners.” The consequences of gender role conflict can be seen in the literature on males in college, highlighted below.

College males and masculinity. In an attempt to better understand and address the problematic consequences of gender role conflict, a number of studies have closely examined the process of gender role socialization and male identity development, particularly for men in college (Davis, 2002; Edwards & Jones, 2009; Harris, 2010; Harris & Harper, 2008). In an exploratory study of the impact that gender role conflict has on identity development for male college students, Davis (2002) found that although men valued the opportunity to communicate with others in meaningful ways, they felt very restricted in their ability to do so, for fear of appearing too feminine. Interestingly, the participants found it easier to communicate openly with women than men, and to communicate with other men individually rather than in groups. In addition, their most meaningful interactions with other men often took place while they were engaged in another activity, such as traveling in a car or playing video games. An underlying fear of femininity seemed to be an ever-present mediator of their behavior, and yet the men also

distanced themselves from the idea of the “stereotypical man.” In essence, the author found that the college men in his study were boxed into a very narrow set of acceptable behaviors, defined by the boundaries of what they felt they were not permitted to do. In this way, they were restricted in their ability to be themselves.

On the other end of the spectrum, masculinity can also be defined by what men *are* permitted to do, and how they are expected to behave. Harris (2010) found that the college men in his study believed that “masculinity” entailed the need to be respected by others, be confident and self-assured, assume responsibility (ie: the breadwinner role), and embody physical prowess (either through physical stature or sexual relations with women). These beliefs originated from family messages about being a man, as well as pre-college peer influences. Once in college, these beliefs were either reinforced or challenged by additional influences such as campus culture, academic and career interests, campus involvement, and their male peer group interactions.

Perhaps most germane to this study is the theory of college men’s gender identity development, developed by Edwards and Jones (2009). As the authors describe it, male identity development involves a process of interacting with and responding to externally-based, societal expectations of men by:

1. learning the expectations
2. putting on a mask to conform with these expectations
3. wearing the mask, and
4. struggling to begin to take off the mask

As young boys grow up, they internalize the constant messages they receive about how men should and should not behave. For the participants in their study, “the expectations of men

simultaneously expanded and become more restrictive” over time (Edwards & Jones, 2009, p. 215). In order to conform to these expectations, the authors describe the process of putting on a mask as “performing” masculinity – a concept that has been explored in previous literature on gender and socialization. These performances involved putting on an act to hide the ways that they did not meet societal expectations, and also to appear more “masculine” by engaging in hypermasculine behaviors such as excessive partying, boasting about real or fictional sexual encounters with multiple women, feigning indifference about academics, and numerous other activities that are counterproductive or harmful. As frustration with this process grew, the men in the study attempted to modify their definitions of manhood to a version that was more aligned with their own personal values, and subsequently began the cathartic process of removing their masks, or at least wearing them less often.

These models of male socialization will be particularly useful in analyzing the ways that the study participants view the practice of community-based learning, as well as what they take away from their community-based learning process.

Intersectionality

As noted earlier, a great deal of diversity exists within first-generation student and male student populations, and the salience of these identities varies considerably for different students and in different situations (Harper, Wardell, & McGuire, 2011; Jehangir, 2010). Moreover, first-generation status appears to be a less prominent dimension of identity than other dimensions such as race, class, and/or gender (Orbe, 2004). As such, an intersectional approach is crucial to understanding and interpreting the experiences of first-generation male college students who participate in community-based education. This section presents several theories that recognize

the complex nature of first-generation identities as well as male identities, and can hopefully shed light on the different ways that community-based education might impact these students.

Intersectional analysis. Intersectionality is a theoretical perspective that focuses on the ways that race, ethnicity, class, gender, and other dimensions of identity interact with each other simultaneously, rather than as independent, compartmentalized, and static variables (Crenshaw, 1991). Dill & Zambrana (2009) describe intersectionality as “a systematic approach to understanding human life and behavior that is rooted in the experiences and struggles of marginalized people” (p.4). It examines not only individual level processes, but also the ways that current societal structures perpetuate inequality. The authors further present four theoretical interventions that are central to intersectional analysis, including: 1) centering the experiences of people of color, 2) complicating identity by recognizing variations within groups, 3) analyzing the way that power works in interconnected structures of inequality, and 4) promoting social justice and social change. Although a complex endeavor, these principles can be modified to focus on first-generation male students, in an effort to understand the way they interpret their experiences with community-based learning (McCall, 2005).

Multiple dimensions of identity. Similar to intersectionality, the model of multiple dimensions of identity acknowledges that all people have more than one aspect of their identities (i.e., every person has a race, a gender, a sexual orientation, etc.), and that these dimensions cannot be isolated from each other (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Coming from a psychological perspective, this model focuses on how changing environmental contexts influence the salience of different identity dimensions at any given point in time. In a more recent conceptualization of this model, the concept of “meaning-making” was added as a “filter” through which people interpret external, contextual information. The complexity of one’s filter shapes their

interpretations, which in turn influence their behaviors and the construction and understanding of their own identity (Abes, Jones, & McEwen, 2007).

In combination, these social constructionist perspectives on identity are necessary components to the conceptual framework of this study, because they can help provide insight into the ways that first-generation males view and participate in community-based education, and into the unique impacts that community-based involvement may have on their development and engagement in college.

Ecological Theory

In recent years, traditional approaches to research on college access, readiness, retention, and other aspects of the student experience have been critiqued, because they tend to focus on a single aspect or level of an issue – for example, individual student characteristics, family influences, programmatic interventions, or institutional factors (Arnold, Lu & Armstrong, 2012; Perna & Thomas, 2008; Renn & Arnold, 2003). By isolating the scope of a study to one or two variables, it becomes difficult to see the multiple factors and vast complexity surrounding such educational issues, which then leads to the risk of oversimplifying solutions to a given problem. It is challenging for researchers to consider a wide range of influences in one study, because most theoretical frameworks do not allow for examination of multiple factors, units, or levels of analysis simultaneously. Yet, in reality, complex sets of forces interact with each other which result in certain outcomes, and researchers need a framework which attempts to contain them all in one space. Although no single study could ever adequately examine all possible factors in a research problem, it is still important to theoretically consider the bigger picture. In reviewing

the literature on college readiness, Arnold et al. (2012) state, “What is needed, in short, is a way of making sense of the complexity of college readiness without simplifying it” (p. 5).

An ecological lens is particularly well-suited for the analysis of such educational issues, because it intentionally considers the multifaceted nature of human development and learning. In other words, one is able to analyze the learning process within the context of an individual’s life history, home and campus environments, peer groups, societal norms, and a multitude of other relevant factors, rather than studying them in isolation. This type of model, which considers the individual as nested within a larger society, is especially appropriate for this study for several reasons. First, it emphasizes “the ways in which the intersection of social structures and the macrofactors of cultural and ideology function to support or disrupt the educational pathways of economically and educationally disadvantaged students,” which is of primary interest in this research, given the focus on first-generation males (Arnold et al., 2012, p.102). Second, it allows for close examination of both the *process* of participating in community-based education, as well as the *outcomes* of participation, by drawing attention to the interactions between students and their environments over time (Renn & Arnold, 2003).

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 2005) bioecological theory of human development is the most widely used model of human ecology, and operates on the premise that the interaction between person and environment is the key to understanding how humans grow and learn. In contrast to most experimental research in psychology at the time, which was conducted in uniform and controlled settings, Bronfenbrenner argued that psychological attributes and processes must be studied within the context of people’s lives in order to truly reflect the reality of human development. Simply put, human development does not take place in a vacuum, but is instead “an evolving process of organism-environment interaction” (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p. 4).

Before providing an overview of this theory, it is important to note that numerous versions of the model exist, because Bronfenbrenner was constantly modifying and refining it (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009). To clarify, this study draws primarily from the version published in 2006 (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). There are four main components of this version of the Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model, which interact with each other to create a unique environment that shapes the growth of an individual: 1) process, 2) person, 3) context, and 4) time (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). These are described in detail below.

Process

Bronfenbrenner asserts that direct, face-to-face interactions that take place in a person's immediate setting are critical to psychological development. These interactions serve as the core of the theory and are conceptualized as *proximal processes*. The two kinds of processes that are most conducive to developmental growth are: 1) interactions between the individual and another person who is often older – possibly a mentor or teacher, and 2) engagement in activities that become progressively more complex – somewhat akin to the concept of instructional scaffolding. The premise of the model is that development and growth occur through processes of “progressively more complex reciprocal interaction” between an individual and the people and objects in that individual's immediate environment, on a fairly consistent basis, over an extended period of time (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 797). Increasing the occurrence of these types of interactions, or proximal processes, will theoretically result in greater growth. Yet, the occurrence and nature of these processes will vary based on 1) characteristics of the individual (*person*), 2) characteristics of the environment (*context*), and 3) the individual's life course and historical context at the time that the processes are taking place (*time*).

Person

The *person* element of the model focuses on the aspects of a person that are most influential on the course of one's growth and development, by either encouraging or interfering with engagement in proximal processes. Bronfenbrenner & Morris (2006) describe three types of characteristics that mediate an individual's interactions with his or her immediate environment.

Force characteristics. *Force characteristics* refer to traits of temperament, such as motivation or persistence. These traits can either be developmentally *generative* or *disruptive*, and the model specifies three types of developmentally generative characteristics, which include: 1) *selective responsiveness* (interests and tastes), 2) *structuring proclivities* (tendency to challenge oneself in ways that lead to growth and learning), and 3) *directive beliefs* (beliefs about oneself in relation to the environment, e.g., locus of control or self-efficacy).

Resource characteristics. *Resource characteristics* describe mental, physical, emotional, social, and material resources that can promote or hinder engagement in proximal processes, based on their presence or absence. These characteristics range widely from birth defects (physical) or intelligence (mental) to access to food, housing and/or educational opportunities (social and material).

Demand characteristics. *Demand characteristics* essentially refer to traits that can elicit certain reactions from the environment and subsequently impact the developmental process. These characteristics can include personality traits such as affect, mood, or aggressiveness, as well as physical traits such as appearance (attractiveness), age, gender, and skin color (Tudge, et al., 2009).

Taken together, these characteristics are not the sole determinant of one's developmental course, but are properties of individuals that influence their interactions with their environment or context, and thus shape one's developmental path.

Context

The environment, or *context*, is comprised of four systems that are nested within one another, and is perhaps the concept from ecological theory that is most widely used within higher education research. The innermost *microsystems* and *mesosystems* represent the immediate environments in which humans interact every day. As one moves further out, the *exosystems* and *macrosystems* encompass the structures and ideologies that influence one's immediate developmental setting. Similar to the *person* component of the model, each contextual system also possesses developmentally instigative characteristics that affect the nature of proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner, 1993).

Microsystem. A *microsystem* is any immediate setting in which an individual spends time engaged in face-to-face interactions and activities. However, it is conceptualized as more than just a physical setting. Bronfenbrenner & Morris (2006) state:

A microsystem is a pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit, engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment. (p. 814)

Proximal processes take place in various settings at the microsystem level. However, each setting has physical, social, and symbolic characteristics that can either encourage or inhibit

a person's engagement in these processes. For example, an old, noisy, overcrowded classroom that lacks sufficient desks may inhibit interactions that promote growth, while a clean, well-furnished classroom with a small number of students may be more conducive to these types of interactions. Furthermore, different people may have different reactions to the same features of a microsystem. The concept of *ecological niches* suggests that certain settings can be "especially favorable or unfavorable to the development of individuals with particular personal characteristics" (p. 18). For instance, a predominantly-male engineering class might be more inhibiting to a female student than a male student, while a predominantly-female women's studies class might be more inhibiting to a male than a female student. In other words, ecological niches are inviting and supportive for some people, while exclusionary and hostile for others.

Mesosystem. A *mesosystem* refers to the relationship or interaction between two or more microsystem settings in which an individual operates. The values or beliefs within one microsystem could either coincide with or contradict the values and beliefs in another microsystem, and the effect of these interactions can impact an individual's engagement in proximal processes. In the context of postsecondary education, "college students are embedded in interacting mesosystems of academic, social, family, and work life. Each of these systems has developmental effects on the student" (Renn & Arnold, 2003, p. 270).

Exosystem. The *exosystem* also refers to the relationship or interaction between two or more settings, but at least one of those settings does not include the individual. Instead, events that take place in the exosystem have an impact on a setting within the mesosystem, and therefore indirectly impact the development of that individual. Often-cited examples of an exosystem are parent work settings, or settings within a university such as the financial aid office

or an academic department. Even though a student does not spend time in or have control over these spaces, the decisions that take place in these settings can impact the student.

Macrosystem. The fourth level in the environment is the *macrosystem*. This level of the model accounts for the sociocultural, political, and economic context in which an individual is situated, and focuses on “the developmentally instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, lifestyles, opportunity structures, life course options, and patterns of social exchanges that are embedded in such overarching systems” (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p. 25). In other words, the proximal processes that are available to an individual are shaped by the particular sociocultural and historical context in which that person exists.

Time

The last component of the PPCT model is *time*. Because human development takes place over time, by definition, the concept of time is critical to the model. There are three subcategories of time: 1) *micro-time*, which refers to events during a specific interaction, 2) *meso-time*, which refers to the degree of stability and consistency of processes at each level of the ecological system, and 3) *macro-time*, which had previously been the *chronosystem*. Macro-time accounts for the variation in impact that life events and transitions can have on a person, depending on that person’s age and life stage, as well as the historical time and place in which they live.

Together, these four components of the model enable the researcher to examine the interactions and connections between factors within each of these levels, and target questions about “how students experience policies or program designs in their lives, how the settings in an

individual's life connect, and how individuals optimize their own development in choosing and responding to environments" (Arnold, Lu & Armstrong, 2012, p.18).

An Ecological Framework for Examining First-Generation Male Participation in Community-Based Education

Ecological or developmental systems models are being used more frequently in recent studies within higher education, specifically because they are able to consider more pieces of the student development puzzle. Of particular interest to this study, a number of researchers have adopted an ecological approach to investigating persistence or retention, marginalized student populations, and even volunteerism in higher education. This section first presents a review of relevant research that uses an ecological lens, and then explains the framework that will be used for this current study.

Ecological Research in Higher Education

At the broadest level, a few studies examine retention in an effort to create revised conceptual models for understanding this issue. Mendoza, Malcolm and Parish (in press) make the assertion that macro-level environmental factors can have a significant impact on student retention, and contribute to the literature by qualitatively describing how macrosystem and chronosystem factors can mediate student engagement. In contrast, Cordell-McNulty (2009) utilizes a quantitative approach to identify sociological factors and psychological processes from all components of the ecological model that are predictive of academic outcomes, social adjustment, and intention to persist.

An ecological lens has also been used to shed light on the college experiences of students from marginalized populations, because it allows for inclusion of immediate environmental factors as well as macro-level sociocultural forces – for example, racism and classism - that may have a particularly significant bearing on college experiences, development, and outcomes for these groups. These include qualitative studies of Black students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Alford, 2000), immigrant college students (Stebbleton, 2011), educationally disadvantaged students in South Africa (Lourens, 2013), and first-generation male students (Peltz, 2013). A small handful of studies have investigated a combination of these two topics – namely, persistence outcomes for a particular marginalized population. Arana, Castañeda-Sound, Blanchard, & Aguilar (2011) adapted the ecological model to qualitatively examine degree completion of Hispanic students, while Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco (2005) conducted a quantitative study of ethnic minority, first-generation students and the ecological factors that impact their academic outcomes.

While a moderate amount of research has focused on academic success and persistence, thus far it appears that only one study takes an ecological approach to college student civic engagement. In an investigation of volunteerism among women college students, Axlund & Lott (in press) consider the relationship between student peer culture and campus environments, and the likelihood of volunteering. Unlike most other studies using ecological theory, the authors compare two different mesosystems – one in which women volunteer and one in which they do not. Using this strategy, they discovered that certain microsystems are more inviting or encouraging than others, with respect to volunteer behavior. Specifically, their data indicated that on-campus microsystems that promote student leadership and involvement are related to higher rates of volunteering, while off-campus microsystems that include off-campus employment,

significant time commuting, and significant time playing video games are associated with low levels of volunteerism. Based on these and other related findings, the authors call for additional research on the ecological factors that encourage civic engagement, as well as the barriers that inhibit participation, particularly for groups who may be least likely to participate. This study attempts to add to the literature in this area.

The use of ecological theory in higher education research is still relatively new. Moreover, Bronfenbrenner's theory has continuously undergone numerous changes since its original publication. As such, researchers in a variety of fields are still learning to use it in its fullest and most mature form (Tudge et al., 2009). While few of the above-mentioned studies apply a full ecological model in the strictest sense, by incorporating all levels of the model and examining all possible sets of interactions over time, even the strongest critics agree that this task would be extremely difficult given the complexity of the research design that would be required (Arnold, Lu & Armstrong, 2012; Tudge et al., 2009). Each of these studies uses ecological theory to examine a portion of the phenomenon in question, and each includes a variable that of direct interest to this study. Therefore, this body of research is used to help inform the design of the framework for this study.

Framework for the Current Study

In a comprehensive critique of family studies research, Tudge et al. (2009) argue that numerous studies have used Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory incorrectly. They state that, while a study is not required to include every factor mentioned in the model,

A study involving the PPCT model should focus on proximal processes, showing how they are both influenced both by characteristics of the developing individual and by the

context in which they occur and showing how they are implicated in relevant developmental outcomes (Tudge et al., 2009, p. 207).

Technically, research that uses the most updated version of Bronfenbrenner's theory requires a certain level of attention to, or acknowledgement of, each component of the model. It should be noted that the purpose of this study is not to test Bronfenbrenner's theory in its entirety, but instead to use the theory as a framework for understanding first-generation male students who are involved in community-based education. Still, this study attempts to follow the above guidelines insofar as they relate to the primary research questions of the study. As such, the theories of engagement, persistence and social construction of identity will be used to interpret the impact that community-based education has had on the first-generation men in the study, within the structure of an ecological framework. I subsequently explain the various ecological components of the study, and how the supporting literatures inform the conceptual framework.

Process. The *proximal process* element of a study using ecological theory should focus on the “types of typical activities and interactions believed to be relevant for the study participants’ developmental outcomes of interest” (Tudge et al., 2009, p. 202). For the purposes of this study, community-based education is the proximal process under investigation. I argue that high-quality forms of community-based engagement can be defined as proximal process because they involve “progressively more complex reciprocal interactions” between the individual and the environment in which he or she is engaged, and because the interactions occur “on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time” (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006, p. 797). In addition, the person-environment interactions that take place in community-based experiences are ideally reciprocal, in that development occurs as the person acts on the environment, and as the environment acts on the person.

Person. Ecological perspectives also focus on the ways that person characteristics interact with proximal processes, by examining how a set of demand, resource, or force characteristics influence a particular process (Tudge et al, 2009). Given that this study focuses on male, first-generation college students, gender is the demand characteristic of interest and first-generation status is conceptualized as a resource characteristic. The literatures on the social construction of identity will be used as a primary lens by which to analyze these particular person characteristics, and the ways in which they shape the nature of participant interactions within their environment. In particular, they may be helpful in identifying developmentally instigative characteristics that are most conducive to participation in community-based education.

Context. The context of this study is essentially comprised of the environments in which the participants interact. Both the social constructionist and persistence and engagement literatures will be valuable in identifying influential environments for first-generation males at each level of the model. At the microsystem level, these will likely include the campus settings, home and family settings, male peer groups, work settings, and the community agencies in which they are engaged. Exosystem factors could include financial aid policies, or other institutional level characteristics that can impact persistence. The macrosystem will include factors such as restrictive male gender roles, and other sociocultural factors involving race, class, and culture.

Time. The impact of time will be considered through the lens of both social constructionism and engagement perspectives as well. These literatures can guide analysis of an individual's developmental process, and also provide historical context in describing the chronosystem with respect to evolving perceptions of gender over time, as well as changes in institutional and government attention to and policies around community service, service-

learning, and civic engagement. A visual representation of this conceptual framework is presented in Figure 2.1.

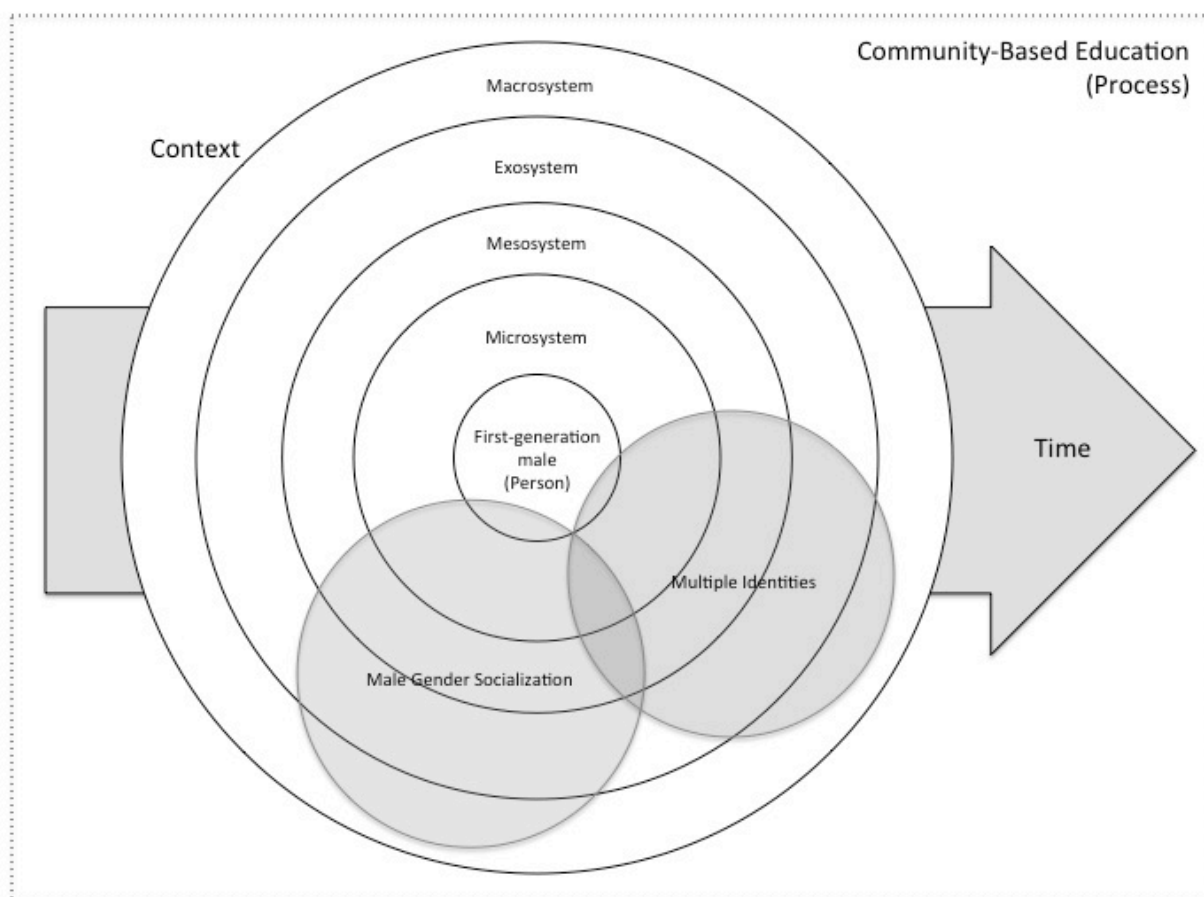


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework for the Study

Elaboration of Research Questions

A primary goal of this study is to gain a clearer picture of participation in community-based education for first-generation male students. As described earlier, an ecological perspective used in conjunction with theories of engagement and social construction of identity can allow for examination of both the process of participating in community-based education, as well as the outcomes of participation for this specific population. Using this conceptual

framework, I propose a more detailed set of research questions based upon the broad questions that were introduced in chapter 1.

1. Participation: How, and how extensively do first-generation college males participate in community service and community-based education activities?

What facilitates or inhibits their participation in these types of activities?

- a. How many first-generation males participate in CBE during college? How do these numbers compare to continuing-generation students and females?
- b. What person and environment characteristics are inhibitive and conducive to first-generation male participation in CBE?
- c. What types of CBE activities do first-generation males tend to choose, and why?
- d. What reasons or motivations do first-generation males report for participating in CBE?
- e. What factors predict CBE participation for first-generation males?

2. Impact: What impacts does participation in community-based education have on learning and engagement for first-generation males? How do they interpret and understand the benefits of participation in community-based education?

- a. What are the perceived benefits of CBE participation for first-generation males?
- b. How do first-generation males describe their learning outcomes from participation in CBE?
- c. How does CBE participation affect the educational engagement of first-generation males?

- d. In what ways and to what extent does a participant's first-generation male identity impact his experience with CBE? Conversely, how does CBE participation impact identity?
- 3. Context: How do institutional settings and environmental context shape what first-generation males learn from and believe about their experiences in community-based education?**
- a. Do CBE participation rates differ by institutional type?
 - b. How do first-generation male participants from different institutions describe their beliefs and attitudes about CBE?
 - c. How do macro-level environmental contexts influence first-generation male beliefs and attitudes about CBE?

CHAPTER 3

A Mixed Methods Research Design

This chapter begins by providing a brief overview of the research problem and overall purpose of the study. It then describes the mixed-methods research design that was selected to address the study objective, and how the research questions fit into this design. I will explain the research methodology used for each phase of the study, including descriptions of data sources, sampling strategies, selection of research setting and participants, procedures for data collection and analysis, and limitations of each phase of the study.

Research Problem and Study Objective

As a group, first-generation male students are at a higher risk of academic disengagement in college and of leaving college before completing a degree, as compared to most other demographic populations. Community-based education strategies have the potential to engage this group both academically and psychosocially; yet current data suggests that they are least likely to engage in these types of activities. If participation in community-based education could have a positive impact on first-generation males, then it would be helpful to gain a clearer picture of their participation patterns, and of the factors that impact their participation. In addition, it would be useful to develop a better understanding of their participation experiences, as well as the outcomes of their participation.

As such, the overall objective of this research was to investigate the participation of first-generation male college students in community-based education activities. In particular, this study utilized an ecological framework to intentionally focus on participants' perspectives as

first-generation males, by considering their unique environmental systems and how those systems impact development. Arnold & Lu (2012) indicate that “ecological studies employ statistical techniques and qualitative methods that focus on multiple levels of ecological systems and on higher-order interactions” (p.99). Additionally, because of the complex nature of community-based educational strategies, Furco (2003) advocates using both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the breadth and depth of these practices, and notes that an increasing number of researchers are using this approach in their work. Given these considerations, a mixed methods strategy seemed most appropriate to examine the research questions posed in this study. The broad, underlying assumption in choosing this method is that multiple types of data can provide a more thorough understanding of the problem in question.

Research Design

From a methodological standpoint, mixed methods researchers focus on a research problem and then design their study procedures in a way that will lead to the most comprehensive understanding or solution to that problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Contrary to most traditional quantitative and qualitative research, in mixed methods studies the research questions play a much more critical role in determining the specific research design, sampling strategy, and data analysis procedures (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In the previous chapter, the research questions were organized into three main topic areas: participation, impact, and context. As such the quantitative questions were integrated with the qualitative questions. In this chapter, the research questions have been re-categorized according to methodology, in order to inform the research design. Table 3.1 presents the reorganized list of research questions:

Table 3.1
Research Questions By Methodological Type

	Quantitative (Phase 1 & 3)	Qualitative (Phase 2)
Participation	1a. How many first-generation males participate in CBE during college? How do these numbers compare to continuing-generation students and females? 1b. What types of CBE activities do first-generation males tend to choose? 1c. What reasons do first-generation males report for participating in CBE? 3. What factors predict CBE participation for first-generation males? ^a	2a. What person and environment characteristics are inhibitive and conducive to first-generation male participation in CBE? 2b. What types of CBE activities do first-generation males tend to choose, and why? 2c. What motivations do first-generation males describe for participating in CBE?
Impact	1d. What are the perceived benefits of CBE participation for first-generation males?	2d. How do first-generation males describe their learning outcomes from participation in CBE? 2e. How does CBE participation affect the educational engagement of first-generation males? 2f. In what ways and to what extent does a participant's first-generation male identity impact his experience with CBE? Conversely, how does CBE participation impact identity?
Context	1e. Do CBE participation rates differ by institutional type?	2g. How do first-generation male participants from different institutions describe their beliefs and attitudes about CBE? 2h. How do macro-level environmental contexts influence first-generation male beliefs and attitudes about CBE?

^a This question was examined in Phase 3. All other quantitative questions were examined in Phase 1 of the study.

Upon considering these research questions, an *iterative sequential mixed design* was employed for this study, in order to develop a clearer picture of first-generation male college students and their experiences with community-based education. An iterative sequential mixed design is defined as a “complex design with more than two phases” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 155). In this case, the first phase involved an exploratory quantitative phase which helped to inform a second, more involved qualitative phase. These were followed by a third follow-up phase that examined a more complex quantitative research question. Using the mixed-methods notational system, this three-strand research design would be represented as a quan → QUAL → quan study.

The primary purpose of the study was to gain a deeper and more complex understanding

of first-generation college males and their participation in community-based education. Thus the predominant method used was a qualitative approach. However, because there is very little knowledge about the basic CBE participation patterns of this population, an initial exploratory quantitative strand was employed to provide a more complete picture of their involvement, by answering related aspects of all three broad research questions (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In addition, once data analysis began, it was determined that the quantitative question about predicting CBE participation (question 3) could be improved by using data gathered in the qualitative strand of the study. Therefore, following the data collection and analyses of the first two strands of the study, this remaining quantitative question was examined in a third phase that was informed by findings from the first two phases. The following sections in this chapter describe each phase in detail.

Phase 1: Exploratory Quantitative Component

This preliminary phase of the study utilized a secondary data analysis strategy to examine the prevalence and patterns of first-generation males' participation in community-based education. Secondary data analysis can be generally defined as analysis of an existing dataset that was originally collected for a different purpose, and often by other researchers (Smith, 2008). Secondary data analysis is particularly powerful in mixed methods designs, when it can be used "in combination with other methodological approaches from surveys to ethnographies" (Smith, 2008, p. 38). In this study, the intent of this design component was to use existing, national data to shed light on participation rates of first-generation male college students in community service experiences, because virtually no information about this topic is currently available. The findings from this initial phase are used to help shape the research questions in the

qualitative strand of the study. They can also be useful in supplementing the qualitative data by situating the experience of the first-generation male interview participants within a larger, national context. The specific research questions examined in this strand are as follows:

- 1a. How many first-generation males participate in CBE during college, as compared to the entire sample? Are there differences in participation by gender and first-generation status?
- 1b. What types of CBE activities do first-generation males tend to choose? Are there differences in activity type by gender and first-generation status?
- 1c. What reasons do first-generation males report for participating in CBE? Are there differences in reasons for participation by gender and first-generation status?
- 1d. What are the perceived benefits of CBE participation for first-generation males? Are there differences in benefits by gender and first-generation status?
- 1e. Do CBE participation rates of first-generation males differ by institutional type?

A secondary data analysis strategy was selected over a survey administration strategy because (1) a large, national data set with the primary variables of interest already exists, and (2) the likelihood of the researcher obtaining a sufficient number of responses from the population of interest (first-generation male college students who have participated in some form of community-based education) is very low. Secondary data analysis is a particularly effective approach for studying groups that are hard to reach, or that are small in number (Smith, 2008). Given that the population of interest is presumed to be very small, and that the researcher has a limited amount of resources, secondary data from a national, longitudinal study would undoubtedly yield a far larger, more comprehensive, and higher quality data set for analysis.

Data Source

Data sets from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) were both considered for this study. However, a majority of participating CIRP institutions are private, and all are four-year institutions (Saenz, Hurtado, Barrera, Wolf, & Yeung, 2007). Because first-generation students attend these types of institutions at lower rates than continuing-generation students, it was determined that the NCES dataset would provide a more representative sample of the population of interest. Moreover, the NCES dataset included a wide range of questions concerning community service and volunteer participation over a six-year time span, which made it an ideal choice for this study.

Background to the survey. This phase of the study draws upon restricted-use data from the 2004/09 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Survey (BPS:04/09), conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education. BPS collects longitudinal data from a cohort of first-time postsecondary students over a six-year period, with a particular focus on persistence and completion of postsecondary education, transition to employment, and the impact of financial aid on college completion (Wine, Janson, & Wheelless, 2011). The BPS:04/09 target population consists of students who began their postsecondary education for the first time at any postsecondary institution in the United States and Puerto Rico, during the 2003-04 academic year. Participants were initially drawn from the 2004 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:04), which examines the ways that students pay for college.

Data collection. Data collection for BPS:04/09 was conducted in three phases (Wine et al., 2011). Cohort participants were surveyed at the end of their first academic year, and subsequently invited to participate in follow-up surveys three and six years after they entered

postsecondary education, in 2006 and 2009. Many of the same survey questions were used in follow-up surveys, to provide continuity over time and allow for longitudinal analysis. A web-based instrument was used and responses were collected either by web, telephone, or by field interview. The average time to complete a survey was 20 minutes. NCES also collected postsecondary transcripts for all study respondents, through all postsecondary institutions they attended between July 2003 – June 2009.

Sampling and response rates. A two-stage design was employed to select students for the NPSAS:04 study, which was the base year study for BPS. In the first stage, eligible institutions were identified using criteria for distribution of federal financial aid, according to Title IV of the Higher Education Act. In the second stage, eligible students within the eligible responding institutions were selected. A detailed explanation of the sampling design is available in Chapter 2 of the full-scale methodology report (Wine et al., 2011).

The complete BPS:04/09 dataset includes 16,684 study respondents, out of an eligible sample of 18,640 students. Transcript data was requested for all 18,640 sample members, and transcripts were received for 16,955 students. 1536 participants were transcript nonrespondents, resulting in a final sample size of 15,419 and an overall response rate of 82.7%. Missing data for all variables from the student interview surveys were imputed. Details of the data editing and imputation process are provided in Chapter 5 of the full-scale methodology report.

Overall student sample. Table 3.2 provides an overview of the sample for the quantitative study strand. In the overall BPS:04/09 sample, females comprised 58.6% of the sample while males comprised 41.4%. In this study, first-generation status was determined using a BPS variable that identified respondents' eligibility for federal TRIO programs in 2003-04, based on family income and parent education level. According to this definition, "first-

generation” is defined as neither parent having a bachelor’s degree or higher. First-generation students represented a majority of the sample (57.3%) compared to continuing-generation students (42.7%). With respect to race, 64.9% of the sample identified as White and 35.1% identified as a race other than White. Income group was determined based on whether the student

Table 3.2
Characteristics of Students in the Overall Sample (N=15419)

Student Characteristics	%	n
Gender		
Male	41.4	6391
Female	58.6	9028
First-generation Status		
First-generation	57.3	8828
Continuing-generation	42.7	6591
Race		
White	64.9	10000
Black or African American	12.6	1947
Hispanic or Latino	12.7	1953
Asian	4.7	719
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.7	108
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0.3	46
Other	1.4	213
More than one race	2.8	433
Income Group in 2003-2004		
Low	28	4313
Low Middle	26.2	4035
High Middle	23.5	3629
High	22.3	3442
Low Income (\$25,000 or less)		
Low Income	28.2	4352
Not Low Income	71.8	11067

was dependent or independent. For dependent students, the lowest quartile included those with a parental income of \$32,000 or less; the low-middle income group included families with an income between \$32,000-\$59,999; the high-middle income group included those with an income between \$60,000-\$91,999, and the high income group included those with an income of \$92,000 or higher. For independent students, the low income group included respondents with an income of less than \$12,000; the low-middle group ranged from \$12,000-\$26,999; the high-middle group

ranged from \$27,000-\$51,999; and the high income group included those with an income of \$52,000 or higher. Using the federal TRIO program eligibility criteria, a “Low-Income” category was also created, where low-income is defined as having an annual income of \$25,000 or less. Using this definition, 28.2% of the total sample fell in the low-income category.

Institution sample. A total of 2007 postsecondary institutions were included in the dataset. As shown in Table 3.3, over half were public institutions (54.1%), while 28.9% were

Table 3.3

Institution Sample (<i>N</i> = 2007)	%	<i>n</i>
Institution Control		
Public	54.1	1086
Private Non-Profit	28.9	580
Private For-Profit	17	341
Institution Religious Affiliation		
Not Religious	84.5	1643
Religious	15.5	302
Institution Type		
2-year or less	49	983
4-year	51	1024
Institution Focus		
Predominantly White Institution (PWI)	70.6	1410
Minority Serving Institution (MSI)	14.5	289
(Not Applicable or Missing Data)	14.9	308

private non-profit institutions, and 17% were private for-profit institutions. Secular institutions comprised 84.5% of the sample and religious institutions comprised 15.5%. Approximately half of the sample consisted of 4-year institutions (51%) and the other half of institutions were 2-year or less (49%). The majority of institutions were Predominantly White Institutions (70.6%), while Minority Serving Institutions comprised 14.5% of the sample, and included Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges, and Hispanic Serving Institutions.

Subsample of interest. The primary population of interest in this study is first-generation male college students. Table 3.4 describes the respondent sample by gender and first-generation status. Using the BPS:04/09 transcript data set, the overall sample was filtered to include first-

generation males only ($n = 3345$). As mentioned in the previous section, first-generation status was determined by the highest level of education of either parent, based on TRIO program

Table 3.4
Gender by First-Generation Status ($N = 15419$)

	First-generation	Continuing generation	Total
Male	3345	3046	6391
Female	5483	3545	9028
Total	8828	6591	15419

eligibility during the 2003-04 academic year. Slightly more than half of the sample was White (59.6%) versus non-White (40.4%). A higher percentage of first-generation males (64.1%) were in the low and low-middle income groups as compared to the overall sample (54.2%), as well as the group with an income of \$25,000 or less (33.9% versus 28.2%). A substantial percentage of first-generation males worked while enrolled in college as well, as detailed in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5
Characteristics of First-Generation Males in the Sample ($N=3345$)

Student Characteristics	%	<i>n</i>
Race		
White	59.6	1993
Black or African American	14.4	481
Hispanic or Latino	15.5	519
Asian	4.8	162
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	33
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	0.2	8
Other	1.7	57
More than one race	2.8	92
Income Group in 2003-2004		
Low	34.4	1151
Low Middle	29.7	992
High Middle	23	769
High	12.9	433
Low Income (\$25,000 or less)		
Low Income	33.9	1135
Not Low Income	66.1	2210
Job while enrolled in 2004 (incl work-study)		
Did not work	28.4	949
1-20 hours/wk	28	937
21+ hours/wk	43.6	1459
Job while enrolled in 2006		
Did not work	39.7	1327
1-20 hours/wk	21	704
21+ hours/wk	39.3	1314

Job while enrolled in 2009		
Did not work	48	1604
1-20 hours/wk	17.3	579
21+ hours/wk	34.7	1162

Institutional context is an important consideration in this study, given the focus on environmental systems. Table 3.6 provides data on the enrollment patterns of first-generation males, based on the characteristics of the institutions where they were first enrolled. The majority of first-generation males in this sample began their postsecondary education at public, predominantly White, 2-year or vocational institutions.

Table 3.6
Enrollment of First-Generation Males in the Sample ($N = 3345$)

Institution Characteristics in 2003-04	%	<i>n</i>
Institution Control		
Public	69.5	2326
Private Non-Profit	18.2	609
Private For-Profit	12.3	410
Institution Religious Affiliation		
Not Religious	90.9	3031
Religious	9.1	303
Institution Type		
2-year or less	58	1940
4-year	42	1405
Institution Focus		
Predominantly White Institution (PWI)	88.5	2960
Minority Serving Institution (MSI)	11.5	385

Variables

This section provides a detailed description of the primary variables of interest in this initial exploratory, quantitative study strand. Table 3.7 includes a list of all BPS:04/09 variables that were examined in phase 1. The variables used to measure community-based education participation are derived from a set of BPS variables on volunteer participation. Community-based education is not identical to volunteering, as conceptualized in this study. The most significant differences are that community-based education, 1) has some kind of reflective and/or educative component (whether within a group or with an individual professor or mentor), and 2)

that it is performed on a consistent basis, over an extended period of time (at minimum, one academic quarter). However, it is reasonable to assume that respondents who participated in

Table 3.7
Phase 1 Variables

Variable Description	BPS Variable(s)	Type	Coding
Gender	GENDER	Binary	1=male 2=female
First-generation status (calculated from TRIO program eligibility criteria 2003-04)	FG_TRIO*	Binary	0=CG 1=FG
Ever volunteered between 2003-2009	VOL_Ever*	Binary	0= No 1= Yes
Ever volunteered consistently between 2003-2009	VOL_Consistent*	Binary	0= No 1= Yes
Volunteered consistently in 2004 Volunteered consistently in 2006 Volunteered consistently in 2009	COMHOUR_4* COMHRS06_4* COMHRS09_4*	Binary	0= No 1= Yes
Volunteer Reason 2006 A: Required as part of program B: Campus organization C: Student or faculty encouraged X: Others	VLTR06A VLTR06B VLTR06C VLTR06X	Binary	0= No 1= Yes
Volunteer Benefit 2006 A: Helped with career choice B: Learned to apply skills C: Expanded skills D: Added to resume E: Clarified choice of major F: More compassionate person G: Increased awareness H: Others	VLTB06A VLTB06B VLTB06C VLTB06D VLTB06E VLTB06F VLTB06G VLTB06H	Binary	0= No 1= Yes
Volunteer Type 2004 A: Fundraising B: Homeless shelter or soup kitchen C: Hospital, nursing home D: Neighborhood improvement E: Service to church F: Tutoring or mentoring G: Other work with kids X: Other types of community service	COMSERVA COMSERVB COMSERVC COMSERVD COMSERVE COMSERVF COMSERVG COMSERVX	Binary	0= No 1= Yes
Volunteer Type 2006 A: Tutoring or mentoring B: Other work with kids C: Fundraising D: Homeless shelter or soup kitchen E: Neighborhood improvement or cleanup F: Health services G: Service to church X: Other type of community service	VLT06A VLT06B VLT06C VLT06D VLT06E VLT06F VLT06G VLT06X	Binary	0= No 1= Yes
Volunteer Type 2009 A: Fundraising B: Health services C: Homeless shelter or soup kitchen D: Neighborhood improvement or cleanup E: Other work with kids F: Service to church G: Service to nonprofit organizations	VLT09A VLT09B VLT09C VLT09D VLT09E VLT09F VLT09G	Binary	0= No 1= Yes

H: Service to the community I: Tutoring or mentoring X: Other type of community service	VLT09H VLT09I VLT09X		
Minority	MINORITY*	Binary	0=White 1=Non-White
Low Income (25000 or less - TRIO definition)	LowIncome*	Binary	0= not LI 1=LI
First institution level 2003-04	FLEVEL_recode*	Binary	0= 2-year or less 1= 4-year
First institution control 2003-04	FCONTROL	Categorical	0= Public 1= Private for-profit 2= Private non-profit
Institution religious affiliation 2003-04	ReligiousInst*	Binary	0= not religious 1= religious
Minority-serving institution 2003-04	MSI*	Binary	0= not MSI 1= MSI
Job while enrolled in 2004 Job while enrolled in 2006 Job while enrolled in 2009	JOBHOUR2_recode* HRSWK06_recode* HRSWK09_recode*	Ordinal	0= Did not work 1= 1-20 hrs/week 2= 21+ hrs/week

* Variables that were calculated or recoded using original BPS variables

community-based education would consider these types of activities to fall within the realm of volunteering, and would respond to the survey items accordingly. In other words, community-based education participants would be included within the respondents who reported having volunteered. It was possible to create a variable that served as a proxy for consistent volunteerism, which is explained in the following paragraph. However, there was no way to determine whether these respondents participated in a learning or reflection component, which is a limitation of this study. Nevertheless, these variables were adequate for exploring participation patterns across different demographic groups. The remainder of this section describes the variables used to explore community service and volunteer behavior.

Ever volunteered btw 2003-2009 (VOL_Ever). This variable was calculated using three continuous variables from the BPS:04/09 dataset. Study respondents were asked to report the average number of hours they performed community service or volunteer work each month, during the 2003-2004 academic year (COMHOUR), the 2005-2006 academic year (COMHRS06), and during the 2008-09 academic year (COMHRS09). For respondents who had *only* volunteered at a one-time community service event during a particular year, which was

determined in a separate variable, NCES set the variable to a value of 0. In other words, students who were solely one-time service participants were coded as volunteering for an average of 0 hours per month, and would fall into the “never volunteered” category. This distinction was important because the researcher wanted to exclude one-time service participants from the “volunteered” group, for conceptual reasons.

Volunteered consistently in 2004, 2006, 2009 (COMHOUR_4, COMHRS06_4, COMHRS09_4). Volunteering consistently over an extended period of time has been shown to have greater benefits than sporadic or one-time volunteer activity (Eyler & Giles, 1999). For this reason, it was important to focus on respondents who volunteered on a consistent basis. These three variables were also calculated using the three continuous variables that measure the average number of community service hours performed each month, across all three data collection years. These variables were used to create 3 separate dichotomous variables that differentiated between those who volunteered at least 4 hours per month, or the equivalent of at least one hour per week (coded as 1), and those who did not (coded as 0), in 2004, 2006, and 2009. This variable did not include any exclusively one-time service volunteers, because NCES had already screened them out.

Ever volunteered consistently btw 2003-2009 (VOL_Consistent). This variable was calculated by using the three variables that were calculated above (COMHOUR_4, COMHRS06_4, and COMHRS09_4), to determine which respondents volunteered consistently for at least one year during their college career. These three variables were added to create a new variable, VOL4_Total. The range is 0 to 3 (0 if you never volunteered at least 4 hours in a given year, and 3 if you volunteered at least 4 hours each year. Those who had a value of 0 were

labeled “no,” and those who had a value of 1 or higher were labeled “yes,” because they had volunteered at least 4 hours per month in at least one of those years.

Volunteer reason 2006 (VLTR06A, B, C, & X). This set of four dichotomous variables asked study respondents to indicate whether they volunteered for a particular reason, during the 2005-2006 academic year. The following four reasons were listed: 1) “Required as part of a program” or a course requirement, 2) “Campus organization” which meant participation through a campus organization such as a sorority or fraternity, 3) “Student or faculty encouraged” which referred to encouragement by friends, family, faculty, or a mentor, and 4) “Others,” or other reasons. These variables were not mutually exclusive; in other words, respondents could respond “yes” to multiple reasons for volunteering.

Volunteer benefit 2006 (VLTB06 A-H). These eight dichotomous variables indicated whether respondents felt that their community service or volunteer work was beneficial in a particular area. The eight items asked about the following benefits: 1) career choice, 2) learning to apply skills to real world issues, 3) expanding skills such as leadership or communication, 4) adding to one’s resume, 5) clarifying choice of major, 6) becoming a more compassionate person, 7) increasing awareness of social issues, and 8) other benefits. Respondents could answer “yes” to multiple benefits of volunteering.

Volunteer type in 2004, 2006, and 2009 (see table for variable labels). Community service is not commonly measured in large-scale data sets, and of the data sets that do include questions on this topic, very few inquire about the type of service that is performed. Yet, the type of service or service setting that one works in can have a significant impact on the experience of the participant (Eyler & Giles, 1999). The BPS:04/09 survey included a set of dichotomous variables for each data collection period, asking respondents to indicate whether

they had performed a particular type of community service or not (yes/no). The categories changed slightly from year to year, but included choices such as working with kids, health services, neighborhood improvement, and work in homeless shelters. Table X provides the full list of categories for each year. Respondents had the option to answer “yes” to multiple types of volunteering experiences in a given year.

Data Analysis

To answer research questions 1-4, chi-square analyses were first conducted on the entire BPS:04/09 sample to determine whether there were differences in volunteer participation, type of volunteer activity, reasons for participating, and benefits of participating, by gender and first-generation status. The Pearson’s chi-square test is used to determine whether a relationship exists between two categorical variables, by comparing observed and expected frequencies in each category (Field, 2009). The sample was also filtered by gender and first-generation status, and the analyses were run again to determine whether community service participation rates differed between first-generation and continuing-generation men, and first-generation men and women.

Once these analyses were completed, the sample was sorted to include only first-generation males. This sample was then used to explore the last research question regarding the community service participation rates of first-generation males by several individual level variables (income level and race) as well as institutional level variables including institution control (public vs. private), institution religion (religious vs. not religious), institution type (2-year vs. 4-year), and institution focus (Predominantly White Institution vs. Minority Serving Institution), again using chi-square analyses. These variables were selected according to

previous research suggesting that these demographic and institutional factors may impact volunteer participation (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin et al., 2000; Cruce & Moore, 2007; Gasiorski, 2009; Marks & Jones, 2004). Effect sizes were also calculated in order to describe the strength of the relationship between community service participation and the variables in question (Field, 2009).

Design Limitations

Several limitations of this study strand should be noted. First, secondary data analysis generally limits the researcher to using the variables and measures that are available in the data set, rather than creating items that more closely measure the variable of interest (Smith, 2008). In the case of this study, the research questions focus on participation in “community-based education,” which is not a commonly used term in the research on civic engagement, due in part to the fact that it can be so broadly defined. The BPS:04/09 dataset measures participation in “community service” or “volunteering,” which arguably includes activities that I define as “community-based education” – namely service-learning and co-curricular programs that focus on community engagement – but might not include activities such as community-based research and service-learning advocacy. In other words, respondents who are involved in a community-based research project with a faculty member might not view this activity as “community service” or “volunteering” and would therefore not respond to these survey questions with this activity in mind. Thus, using the BPS:04/09 defined variables is not the most ideal choice because they do not capture the exact construct in question, but instead use “community service” and “volunteering” as reasonable proxies for “community-based education.”

Another limitation involves the use of self-report questions to measure benefits or outcomes of an activity, and applies to the set of questions on volunteer benefits in particular. Self-report questions cannot measure benefits directly; they can only measure perceptions of benefits. Although students' perceptions of what they have gained from an experience is important to an overall picture of the impact of community-based education, it is not necessarily an actual assessment of benefits. Some researchers have cautioned against the use of self-report data in research on college students due to concerns about social desirability and related biases, and interpretation of results must take these critiques into account. (Bowman & Hill, 2011). However, given that the findings of this study are not being used for assessment or accountability purposes, I argue that use of these self-report items is appropriate for the exploratory goals of this phase of the research (Pike, 2011).

Despite these limitations, the BPS:04/09 dataset still contains the best quality data that is available on the constructs and population of interest. Data analysis and interpretation will be conducted with these limitations in mind.

Phase 2: Qualitative Component

The overall research objective of the qualitative phase was to more closely examine the experiences of first-generation male college students who participate in community-based education, in order to better understand the processes and impacts of their participation, as well as what motivates them to participate. Smith (2008) argues that, although secondary data can describe *what* is happening in terms of broad patterns, it cannot explain *why* particular patterns exist; nor can it describe processes in detail. Thus, a qualitative component was necessary for the second phase of the study. A *basic interpretive strategy* was determined to be the most

appropriate research method in this phase (Merriam, 2009). Merriam explains that basic qualitative research is often used when a particular phenomenon cannot be explained by existing theory, and when the researcher is interested in the meaning that individuals ascribe to that phenomenon or experience. Such interpretive approaches focus on “the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live,” and are used “to explore the behavior, perspectives and experiences of the people they study” (Holloway, 1997, p. 2). The following sections describe how the conceptual framework informed the sampling design as well as the design of the research questions and analysis of this phase of the study.

Setting and Participants

Qualitative research generally utilizes purposeful sampling techniques in order to identify information-rich cases that can provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2002). The purpose of this study was to illuminate the experiences of first-generation male college students who participate in community-based learning activities within certain institutional contexts. Therefore the qualitative component of this study required *multi-stage purposeful sampling* at three levels in order to select participants: 1) postsecondary institutions, 2) community-based education programs, and 3) individual participants (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

Institutions. To adequately examine context within an ecological framework, Tudge et al. (2009) recommends comparing the impact of at least two different micro-, exo-, or macrosystems on a proximal process. The institutional level represents the exosystem, as conceptualized in this study. Thus, in order to gather information on a range of community-based educational experiences as well as institutional contexts, this study explores the impact of two

specific postsecondary institutional environments — namely a private, religious institution and a public institution — based on data suggesting that these types of institutions may prioritize and approach community-based education in different ways (Campus Compact, 2011; Cruce & Moore, 2007; Cuban & Anderson, 2007). In addition, this study focuses on first-generation males who have participated in community-based experiences over an extended period of time, and because two-year institutions are less likely to have extensive community-based education programs, the study sites were limited to four-year institutions.

The first institution in the study is a large public research university, located in an urban setting in the Northwest. In Spring 2008, the undergraduate student body was 51.5% females and 48.5% males. Civic engagement is encouraged at this institution, but is not a central part of the institutional mission. Approximately 7% of enrolled undergraduates participated in at least one community-based experience through the community engagement center on campus during the 2004-05 academic year. These numbers do not account for students who participated in community-based research or other community-based experiences that were sponsored by other offices or academic departments on campus. The second institution is a medium-sized, private religious university, also located in an urban setting in the Northwest. Between 2006-2010, undergraduate student enrollment has remained consistent at approximately 60% females and 40% males. Community-based education plays a central role in the academic experience at this university. In 2009-10, it was estimated that 75% of all undergraduates participated in at least one service-learning course during their time at this institution. This number does not account for students who participated in community-based research projects or co-curricular programs that included a community-based component.

These two universities were selected because they differ substantially in size, institutional structure, educational philosophy, and most importantly in the way that community-based education is integrated into the institution. Yet they are similar in that they both enroll a substantial percentage of students from within the state, and according to the Carnegie Classifications are similar with respect to admissions selectivity, thus suggesting that the students who attend have comparable academic backgrounds. Based on their graduation rates, the two institutions also appear to be relatively successful with first-generation students, suggesting that institutional arrangements (as well as selectivity) may be at work, and given their differences, may be at work in different ways.

Community-based education program. The qualitative design also attempted to sample for the type of community-based program in which students participated, as the characteristics of the program can substantially alter the nature of the learning experience, and might have particular implications for first-generation students. The community-based education program (or programs) represents one of the main microsystems of interest for this study, because it is where the proximal process of interest takes place – namely, community-based education. For the purposes of this study, *community-based education* is defined as a formal, long-term, institutionally-sponsored educational experience that is based in the community. These experiences may or may not have a structured reflection component and/or award academic credit. Such programs could include co-curricular community service, academic service-learning, service-learning advocacy, and community-based research.

At each institution, I approached faculty and administrators who were affiliated with various community-based education programs on campus, to ask for assistance in identifying individual participants. The primary criteria for inclusion in the study was that the program 1)

was sponsored by or affiliated with the institution, 2) strongly encouraged consistent participation for at least one academic quarter, and 3) allowed college students to select the service site they wanted engage with (among available options). This choice is important because students who consciously choose their service project might be more likely to have a positive experience than students who are forced to go to a site that may not be of interest to them, and would therefore provide more insightful data for the study. Approximately five community-based education programs were contacted at each institution.

Individual participants. The main focus of the study was on individual student participants and their experiences with community-based education. Because the number of first-generation males who participate in these types of programs is generally quite low, I recruited participants in two ways, in order to reach the maximum number of potential candidates. First, I asked program administrators and faculty to either distribute an email invitation to all participants in their programs, or to allow me to make a brief presentation at one of their program meetings. Secondly, I also asked them to identify first-generation male participants whom they knew, to see if they would be interested in participating in the study. An *intensity sampling strategy* was employed, in order to identify information-rich cases that could provide highly-informative examples of the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2002). Thus, the original criteria for selection were as follows: 1) participants were male college students whose parents or guardians had not completed a bachelor's degree; 2) participants had already completed at least two years of postsecondary education, thus ensuring that they have had the opportunity to get involved in community-based opportunities and that they had several years of experience in college to reflect upon; 3) participants had been consistently involved in at least one community-based education program for a minimum of one quarter (but preferably longer); 4) participants were full-time

students who were raised predominantly in the United States, because greater variation in enrollment status as well as immigration and/or international student status would have introduced additional mediating factors that are beyond the scope of this study. Within these parameters, a particular effort was made to identify students who had been or still were extensively involved in a community-based education program, because they would be more likely to provide information-rich cases.

In combination with intensity sampling, I also adopted a *maximum variation sampling strategy* in order to target several specific characteristics of interest. These characteristics included race, ethnicity, transfer status and community-based education program. I was particularly interested in identifying “important shared patterns that cut across cases and [that] derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity” (Patton, 2002, p. 235). In an attempt to identify students from a wide range of racial backgrounds, I approached staff in the multicultural centers at each institution, as well as staff who worked with first-generation students. Interestingly, although I was unable to identify any candidates through these channels, the entire undergraduate sample was comprised of students of color. I subsequently attempted to identify White male undergraduate participants, but was unsuccessful.

To provide an additional perspective on student experiences, the initial sampling design included instructors or program staff of the community-based education programs in which the undergraduate participants were involved. The original intention was only to ask them about the undergraduates whom they worked with. However, once data collection began, I found that many of these program staff had been first-generation male college students themselves, and that the data collected from these participants provided an even richer and more nuanced picture of community-based involvement. Including the stories of these older participants would enable

me to capture the kinds of deeper and more insightful reflections on community engagement outcomes that can only develop over years of reflection and additional life experience. Thus, I modified the original sampling strategy to place equal emphasis on program staff who had also been first-generation male college students, and to also include participants who were recent graduates from either institution. Patton (2002) describes this practice as *emergent sampling*, which “takes advantage of unforeseen opportunities after fieldwork has begun” (p. 240). A summary of final participant characteristics is provided in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8
Phase 2 Interview Participant Characteristics

	Participant Type	Institution Type ^a	Racial/Ethnic Background	Transfer Status	Family Immigration Status ^c
1	Student	Public	Vietnamese-Am	No transfer	2 nd generation
2	Student	Private	Latino-Am	From community college	2 nd generation
3	Student	Private	African-Am	No transfer	US-born parents
4	Student	Public	Filipino-Am	No transfer	2 nd generation
5	Student	Private	Filipino-Am	From community college	2 nd generation
6	Student	Private	Latino-Am	No transfer	2 nd generation
7	Student	Private	Filipino-Am	No transfer	2 nd generation
8	Student	Public	Chinese-Am	No transfer	2 nd generation
9	Recent grad	Public	Filipino-Am	No transfer	2 nd generation
10	Recent grad	Private	African-Am	No transfer	US-born parents
11	Staff	Private	Latino-Am	No transfer	2 nd generation
12	Staff	Public	Latino-Am	From community college	2 nd generation
13	Staff	Private	African-Am	From 4-year public	US-born parents
14	Staff ^b	Public	Caucasian	No transfer	US-born parents
15	Staff	Private	Caucasian	No transfer	US-born parents
16	Staff	Private	Caucasian	No transfer	US-born parents

^a refers to participant's undergraduate institution

^b female participant

^c *second-generation* is defined as an individual who was born in the U.S. to foreign-born parents

Data Collection

Data collection for the qualitative component of the study consisted of individual semi-structured interviews. I conducted interviews with ten first-generation male undergraduates who were currently participating in or had already completed at least one community-based education experience at their institution. Student interviews lasted between 70-90 minutes and explored the

student's educational background, reflections on his college experience thus far, and reflections on his community-based learning experiences. All student participants received a gift certificate to their campus bookstore in appreciation for their participation.

Additionally, I interviewed a total of six program staff across both institutions, five of whom were first-generation male college graduates. Staff interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes. Interview questions focused on their insights about student outcomes of community-based education in general, and on differences in participation and outcomes by first-generation status and gender in particular. For the staff who were first-generation males, interviews also explored their own experiences with community-based education when they were undergraduates.

All interviews were structured according to an interview guide, in order to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry were pursued in all cases while also allowing for flexibility in probing and further questioning (Seidman, 1998). As data collection and analysis took place simultaneously, staff interview questions were modified when the shift in focus on first-generation male staff took place. Staff participants who had been interviewed using the original interview guide were contacted again for an follow-up interview that incorporated the modified questions. With the permission of participants, all interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. Prior to data analysis, each transcript was compared to the original digital recording to check for accuracy and completeness.

Data Analysis

In basic inductive qualitative research, data analysis involves the discovery and categorization of recurring patterns and themes among the data, as well as interpretation of the

meaning behind these themes (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). I first used an open coding strategy to analyze the entire set of interview transcripts and develop initial descriptive codes (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Once these initial codes had been generated, I began the axial coding process by adopting the constant comparison technique to examine the variation in responses across different participants (Patton, 2002). This comparative strategy led to the development of more focused codes across the data, which were then sorted into more refined categories. By repeating this process numerous times, I synthesized these categories into conceptual themes that seemed to connect with each other in a meaningful way. Merriam (2009) refers to this type of analysis as *theorizing*, explaining that “when categories and their properties are reduced and refined and then linked together, the analysis is moving toward the development of a model or theory to explain the data’s meaning” (p.192).

Memoing was a consistent strategy utilized throughout the data collection and analysis process, as it enabled me to process my thoughts and reactions to the data, make sense of the themes that emerged from the data, and eventually see patterns and connections between these themes (Merriam, 2009). The memoing process was critical to determining what substantive significance could be uncovered in the qualitative findings, by considering questions such as “to what extent and in what ways do the findings increase and deepen understanding of the phenomenon studied?” and “to what extent are the findings useful for some intended purpose?” (Patton, 2002, p. 467).

Trustworthiness

Tierney and Clemens (2011) describe trustworthiness as “a qualitative way to speak about the rigor of one’s research” (p. 64). The four most commonly cited criteria for a

trustworthy study are based on the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) and are 1) credibility, 2) transferability, 3), dependability, and 4) confirmability. The following section addresses these criteria.

Credibility. Credibility can be summarized as confidence in the believability of a study's findings. Triangulation is one of the most often-used strategies for improving credibility, and this study employed several types. The first is *methods triangulation*, in which mixed methods analysis is used "to elucidate complementary aspects of the same phenomenon" (Patton, 2002, p. 558). I also incorporated *data source* and *site triangulation*, by including the perspectives of program staff as a way to corroborate information from students, and by including participants from a range of different community-based programs. Shenton (2004) notes, "where similar results emerge at different sites, findings may have greater credibility in the eyes of the reader" (p. 66). *Member checks* and *iterative questioning* were also conducted with all respondents during the interviews, and some respondents during the analysis stage (Merriam, 2009; Shenton, 2004).

Shenton (2004) also suggests the use of "tactics to help ensure honesty in informants" (p. 66), which includes many of the steps required in the informed consent process. Additionally, given that I do not come from the same gender or educational background as the study participants, and despite the fact that there is some evidence to suggest that male respondents might actually be more forthcoming with female interviewers (Davis, 2002), I considered the possibility that they might be reluctant to speak candidly with me, assuming that I would not be able to relate to their experiences. To address this issue, I briefly shared that I have worked extensively with students from first-generation backgrounds. I also took care to incorporate specific strategies for interviewing men and for analyzing their responses (Schwalbe &

Wolkomir, 2001). I am a person of color, however, and I believe this aspect of my identity was helpful in having candid discussions about race, which arose in virtually every interview.

Finally, *investigator credibility* is based upon the background and qualifications of the researcher (Patton, 2002). I have over nine years of professional experience working in college access and retention programs for first-generation students, and over six years of experience in the field of service-learning. Thus, my perspectives as a researcher and practitioner have influenced my choice to pursue a mixed methods strategy, and have also been invaluable in the task of interpreting the findings in ways that can be useful in practice.

Transferability. Transferability refers to the extent to which study findings can be applied in other contexts. Merriam (2009) and Shenton (2004) both recommend providing enough detail or thick description of the study context to enable readers to determine applicability in their own situations. Tierney & Clemens (2011) also note the importance of presenting results in a way that “are specific yet still focus on critical questions” (p. 78), so that they can be useful to a range of readers. I attempt to do both in the methods and discussion sections.

Dependability. Dependability can also be described as “reliability” or “consistency,” and is concerned with the consistency of the findings with respect to the data that has been collected. Audit trails or details of the research design and implementation should be provided to enable study replication (Merriam, 2009; Shenton, 2004). This information, which includes data collection procedures and interview protocols, has been described in the methods section and is also provided in the study appendices.

Confirmability. Confirmability requires demonstrating that study findings are generated from respondent data, rather than from researcher bias or interests. In addition to triangulation

and detailed reports of the data analysis process, it is important to acknowledge researcher positionality (Shenton, 2004). I am a female with college-educated parents; in other words, I do not belong to either of the identity groups on which this study focuses. As such, some may wonder or question why I have chosen a topic that seemingly lies in direct contrast to my own life experience. To answer, it is my work experience with first-generation students and their families that has inspired me to pursue research that promotes the educational success of first-generation students. I have also worked within the context of a university community engagement office for a number of years, and one question that inevitably arises in these settings is, “Where are the men?” I believe that people can discover their best selves when they are in the service of others, and that the low presence of men represents a missed opportunity. This assumption drives the other aspect of my research topic – the community engagement of men. The intersection of these two research topics is of interest to me because, in practice, I have witnessed the potential for community-based learning to engage and empower marginalized populations.

My familiarity with both facets of the study, namely first-generation college students and community engagement programs, have inevitably influenced the way I interpret and analyze the data that has been generated. While operating on the notion that “perfect objectivity – even if it were to exist – is impossible in qualitative research” (Tierney & Clemens, 2011, p. 69), I still attempted to control for bias by making sure that interview questions were open-ended, exploring contradictory data or themes when they arose, and triangulating between a variety of informants.

Design Limitations

Several design limitations have been noted in this phase of the study, regarding sample selection as well as data collection. First, the sample only includes first-generation males who were involved in community-based education. In order to get a more complete understanding of why male participation rates are low, it would have been beneficial to include men who did not get involved, as a point of comparison. As other points of comparison to the population of interest, it would also have been useful to include a sample of continuing-generation males or first-generation females.

Additionally, despite my efforts to locate first-generation males in a variety of program types (e.g.: environmental justice, homeless advocacy, etc.), the vast majority of participants were involved in programs that worked with youth, yielding data that provides depth but not breadth of experience. Although this pattern is an interesting finding in and of itself, the study might have been improved if I had included participants in multiple different types of community-based learning, to compare the different meanings or motivations they may have drawn from their work.

Finally, data collection in this phase only consisted of individual interview data. Inclusion of a wider variety of methods, such as site observations or document analysis, could have provided greater context and an additional way to understand or verify the information collected in the interviews. Despite these limitations, the phase 2 interviews generated a significant amount of data. Phase 2 conclusions were examined in conjunction with phase 1 findings to inform the final third phase of the study.

Phase 3 – Follow-up Quantitative Component

The purpose of the third phase of the study was to revisit the data on community service participation of first-generation males, in an effort to better understand which first-generation males may be more likely to participate in community-based education. Specifically, phase 3 addresses research question 3: What factors predict community-based education participation for first-generation males? Given the available variables in the BPS:04/09 dataset, and operating on the premise that consistent community service participation can be a precursor to participation in community-based education opportunities, this research question was modified to explore predictors of community service and volunteer participation. Findings from Phase 1 and 2 suggested that participation in community service and community-based education was beneficial for the participants in the study in a variety of ways, but that as a group, first-generation males are less likely to engage in these types of activities. Thus, the intent of conducting this third phase was to gather information that, in combination with data from the first two phases, could be useful in increasing the participation of first-generation men in community-based education.

A number of studies have examined predictors of, or factors related to participation in volunteerism, community service, and service-learning (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin et al., 2000; Axlund & Lott, in press; Cruce & Moore, 2007; Gasiorski, 2009; Marks & Jones, 2004). However all of these studies were conducted on the college student population as a whole, with the exception of Axlund & Lott (in press), who focus on factors related to volunteering among college women. Given that first-generation male students are the least likely group to engage in the community, it is plausible that the predictors found in these previous studies may not apply to this particular population. Phase 3 of the study explores this question.

Analytical Model

The ecological framework for the study informed the theoretical model for analysis in Phase 3. The previous research on first-generation students, male students, and predictors of service participation was reviewed in order to determine which *person*, *context*, and *time* variables might be most relevant to the population of interest, in terms of predicting participation in the *process* of community-based education. Findings from the first two phases of this study were also examined for patterns or themes that might suggest variables for the model.

Person component. As described in chapter 2, the *person* component of the ecological model refers to the characteristics of a person that may either promote or discourage engagement in proximal processes. With respect to this phase of the study, the goal is to identify person characteristics that may particularly promote or inhibit first-generation males from participating in community service activities. For example, one person characteristic that has almost always been found to be significant in predicting service participation is gender, in that females are consistently more likely to participate than men (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin et al., 2000; Campus Compact, 2009; Cruce & Moore, 2007; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Marks & Jones, 2004). First-generation status is less conclusive, although one study found that first-generation students are less likely to participate in community service (Cruce & Moore, 2007). Since this study focuses solely on male first-generation students, gender and first-generation status are eliminated from the predictive model. The question then becomes, which person characteristics, if any, differentiate between first-generation males who consistently volunteer and those who do not?

Context component. The *context* component of the ecological model represents the person's immediate as well as broader environment. In this case, the researcher is interested in determining what aspects of various microsystems and the exosystem seem to encourage or

discourage community service participation for first-generation males. The macrosystem was not included in the model, because there were no variables in the dataset that were representative of this level. Microsystems refer to the immediate settings in which people are situated, and in the case of college students would most likely include aspects of their campus setting, home life, and work environment (if applicable). Exosystems are settings that students are not directly situated in, but that indirectly have an impact on their engagement or disengagement in proximal processes. In this study, institutional variables are included within the exosystem.

Time component. The *time* component of the ecological model is comprised of three different categories, as described in chapter 2. Micro-time and meso-time are not examined in phase 3 of the study because the BPS:04/09 variables do not inquire about these areas. The concept of macro-time suggests that a person's life stage can have a substantial impact on his or her engagement in various proximal processes. For example, traditional-aged college students (18-22) may have more time to engage in a wide variety of activities that promote development, while older, non-traditional students may have other obligations that impede their ability to participate in such activities. In addition, the factors that affect a person's engagement can change over time, as they develop and grow. Thus, the factors that influence engagement of a first-year college student may differ from those of a student who is nearing graduation.

Sample

Phase 3 examines a subsample of first-generation males from Phase 1 of this study. Specifically, it excludes first-generation males that only attended two-year institutions, because two-year institutions encounter a variety of additional barriers to community engagement that cannot be adequately controlled for in the current dataset. In addition, Phase 2 of this study only

included participants who began college at a four-year institution, or who started at a two-year institution and later transferred to a four-year institution. For these reasons, the Phase 3 analysis only includes these students.

To obtain the subsample of interest, the first-generation males from Phase 1 were first filtered to include only those students who started attendance at a four-year institution in 2003 using the FLEVEL variable, and those who began at a two-year institution and later transferred to a four-year institution (either with or without a two-year degree) using the CCSTAT6Y variable. To analyze 2004 volunteer participation, the entire subsample (N=1763) was used. To analyze 2006 volunteer participation, the subsample was filtered to exclude those students who were not enrolled during the 2005-06 academic year using the ENINPT3 variable (N=1446). To analyze 2009 volunteer participation, the subsample was filtered to exclude those students who were not enrolled during the 2008-09 academic year using the ENINPT6 variable (N=650).

Variables

Phase 3 examines factors that predict community service or volunteer participation among first-generation males. Three dependent variables are used to examine this question over time: whether a student has volunteered on a consistent basis in 2004 (first year in college), 2006 (third year in college), and 2009 (sixth year in college, if applicable). Selection of independent variables was based on the theoretical model, as well as findings from phase 1 and 2 of this study. These variables are divided into three categories, and differ slightly for each year.

Person Variables. Based on previous research, one *resource characteristic* that is likely influential for first-generation males is income level. Similarly, race is a relevant *demand characteristic* because many first-generation students are also people of color. The research on

income level and race is mixed, in terms of predicting service participation, and immigration status has rarely been examined in the literature on community service and service-learning (Cruce & Moore, 2007; Gasiorski, 2009; Marks & Jones, 2004). Moreover, findings from phase 2 of this study suggested that income level, race, and family immigration history all had a meaningful impact on many of the study participants, and that these identities were influential in their decision to engage in the community. Thus, these variables were included in the analysis because they are particularly significant to the population of interest, and because they warrant further exploration.

Another set of person variables represent *force characteristics*, as defined by Bronfenbrenner & Morris (2006). The BPS dataset includes variables about the importance of various personal goals in 2004 and 2006, which could be related to engagement in community service. These questions range from the importance of being financially well-off to the importance of having adequate leisure time, both of which were themes that arose for males in particular, in the qualitative portion of the study. A full list of these variables can be found in Table 3.9. Finally, the highest level of education that respondents expected to ever complete was included as a force characteristic as well.

Context variables. Three sets of context variables were included in this category. Variables were identified in two microsystem levels (academic and cocurricular) and the exosystem level. The academic microsystem included the student's major, degree of interaction with faculty outside of class, degree of participation in study groups, and attendance intensity (part-time versus full-time). Previous studies have shown that major and part-time attendance were related to community engagement (Cruce & Moore, 2007; Ender et al., 2000). The other variables are included because they are theoretically part of a student's academic microsystem.

The extracurricular microsystem includes the number of hours that the student worked while enrolled, degree of involvement in school clubs and sports, and housing (on-campus versus off-campus). In particular, the relationships between service participation and work, as well as campus involvement and living on campus, have been demonstrated in numerous studies (Axlund & Lott, 2014; Cruce & Moore, 2007; Ender et al., 2000; Gasiorski, 2009; Marks & Jones, 2004). Thus they are included in the model for this study.

The exosystem is conceptualized as institutional level factors, because they are further removed from the individual and therefore indirectly affect student participation in community service. To complement the qualitative portion of the study, the variables in this section include institution control (public, private non-profit, and private for-profit), whether an institution is religious or secular, and whether an institution is a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) or a Minority Serving Institution (MSI). Previous studies have found that students at private religious institutions are more likely to volunteer and that MSIs report substantially higher levels of service involvement than PWIs (Campus Compact, 2009; Cruce & Moore, 2007; Gasiorski, 2009). Private for-profit institutions are included in the analysis because these types of institutions enroll disproportionately high numbers of first-generation students.

Time variables. Age can arguably be considered a demand characteristic or a function of time. In this study it is used as a time variable, to represent where a person is in their life stage. Several studies of community service participation found conflicting results with respect to age (Cruce & Moore, 2007; Ender et al., 2000; Gasiorski, 2009). First-generation students are more likely to be of non-traditional college age than continuing-generation students, and so it is a variable of interest.

In 2004, the dependent variable is whether a student volunteered consistently in the 2003-04 academic year. Block 1 variables include three demographic variables, four variables that measure the importance that a student places on various personal values, and the highest degree that a student expects to earn, as of 2004. Block 2 includes academic major, two academic behavior variables, and a variable on attendance intensity, all measured in 2004. Block 3 includes variables on student employment, campus involvement, and housing, all measured in 2004. Block 4 includes three institutional level variables which reference the first institution a student attended, and a variable indicating whether the student began at a two-year versus a four-year institution. Block 5 includes the student's age when he or she first began postsecondary education. Table 3.9 lists the specific variables used in 2004.

Table 3.9
Phase 3 2004 Variable List

	Variable Description	BPS Variable	Coding
Dependent Variable	Volunteered at least 4 hours per month in 2003-04	COMHOUR_4*	0 = no 1 = yes
Block 1 (Person)	Race Income Immigrant status 03-04 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign Born • US born Foreign Parents • US born (reference group) Importance of being a community leader (2004) Importance of being financially well-off (2004) Importance of influencing political structure (2004) Importance of having leisure time (2004) Highest degree expected (2004)	MINORITY* LowIncome* Immig_Foreign* Immig_1.5* IMPT04B IMPT04C IMPT04E IMPT04F HIGHLVX_BAGrad*	0 = White 1 = Non-White 0 = Not LI 1 = LI 0 = Not foreign born 1 = Foreign born 0 = Not 1.5 generation 1 = 1.5 generation 0 = no 1 = yes 0 = no 1 = yes 0 = no 1 = yes 0 = no 1 = yes 0 = BA or less 1 = Post BA degree
Block 2 (Academic microsystem)	Major 2004 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanities • Business • Vocational • SocialScience, Education, or Health • Undeclared • STEM (reference group) Degree of faculty interaction outside of class (2004)	MAJ04_Humanities* MAJ04_Business* MAJ04_Voc* MAJ04_SocSciEdHealth* MAJ04_Undeclared* FREQ04B_binary*	0 = other major 1 = indicated major 0 = Never 1 = Sometimes or often

	Attending study groups (2004)	FREQ04G_binary*	0 = Never 1 = Sometimes or often
	Attendance intensity 2003-04	ENINPT1_binary*	0 = Part-time or mixed 1 = Full-time
Block 3 (Extra curricular microsystem)	Job 2004: Hours worked per week (incl work-study)	JOBHOUR2	Continuous
	Involvement in school clubs (2004)	FREQ04E_binary*	0 = Never 1 = Sometimes or often
	Involvement in sports (2004)	FREQ04F_binary*	0 = Never 1 = Sometimes or often
	Campus Housing 2003-04	LOCALRES_recode*	0 = Off-campus 1 = On-campus
Block 4 (Exosystem)	First institution control (2003-04)	InstControl_PrivNP* InstControl_PrivFP*	0 = Other 1 = indicated institution
	• Private non-profit • Private for-profit • Public (reference group)	ReligiousInst*	0 = Not religious 1 = Religious
	First institution religion (2003-04)	MSI*	0 = PWI 1 = MSI
	First institution focus (2003-04)	Transfer_4YR*	0 = Did not transferred 1 = Transferred
Block 5 (Time)	Transferred from a 2-year to 4-year institution		
	Age in 2003	AGE_binary	0 = traditional (23 or younger) 1 = non-traditional (24+)

*Variables that were calculated or recoded using original BPS variables

In 2006, many of the variables remain the same as in 2004, except for those which were measured again in 2006. Demographic and institutional variables remained the same, while measures of personal values (including two additional questions), major, and academic and extracurricular behaviors were measured again in 2006. Table 3.10 lists the specific variables used in 2006.

Table 3.10

Phase 3 2006 Variable List

	Variable Description	BPS Variable	Coding
Dependent Variable	Volunteered at least 4 hours per month in 2005-06	COMHRS06_4*	0 = no 1 = yes
Block 1 (Person)	Race	MINORITY*	0 = White 1 = Non-White
	Income	LowIncome*	0 = Not LI 1 = LI
	Immigrant status 03-04	Immig_Foreign*	0 = Not foreign born 1 = Foreign born
	• Foreign Born	Immig_1.5*	0 = Not 1.5 generation 1 = 1.5 generation
	• US born Foreign Parents	IMPT06B	0 = no 1 = yes
	• US born (reference group)	IMPT06C	0 = no 1 = yes
	Importance of being a community leader (2006)	IMPT06E	0 = no 1 = yes
Importance of being financially well-off (2006)			
Importance of influencing political structure (2006)			

	Importance of having leisure time (2006) Importance of finding meaning and sense of purpose in life (2006) Importance of helping others in need (2006) Highest degree expected (2006)	IMPT06F IMPT06J IMPT06K DGEVR06_BAgrad *	0 = no 1 = yes 0 = no 1 = yes 0 = no 1 = yes 0 = BA or less 1 = Post BA degree
Block 2 (Academic microsystem)	Major 2006 • Humanities • Business • Vocational • SocialScience, Education, or Health • Undeclared • STEM (reference group) Degree of faculty interaction outside of class (2006) Attending study groups (2006) Attendance intensity 2005-06	MAJ06_Humanities* MAJ06_Business* MAJ06_Voc* MAJ06_SocSciEdHealth* MAJ06_Undeclared* FREQ06B_binary* FREQ06G_binary* ENINPT3_recode*	0 = other major 1 = indicated major 0 = Never 1 = Sometimes or often 0 = Never 1 = Sometimes or often 0 = Part-time or mixed 1 = Full-time
Block 3 (Extra curricular microsystem)	Job 2006: Hours worked per week Involvement in school clubs (2006) Involvement in sports (2006) Housing when last enrolled (2006)	HRSWK06 FREQ06E_binary* FREQ06F_binary* LOCALR06_recode *	Continuous 0 = Never 1 = Sometimes or often 0 = Never 1 = Sometimes or often 0 = Off-campus 1 = On-campus
Block 4 (Exosystem)	First institution control (2003-04) • Private non-profit • Private for-profit • Public (reference group) First institution religion (2003-04) First institution focus (2003-04) Transferred from a 2-year to 4-year institution	InstControl_PrivNP* InstControl_PrivFP* ReligiousInst* MSI* Transfer_4YR*	0 = Other 1 = indicated institution 0 = Not religious 1 = Religious 0 = PWI 1 = MSI 0 = Did not transferred 1 = Transferred
Block 5 (Time)	Age in 2003	AGE_binary	0 = traditional (23 or younger) 1 = non-traditional (24+)

*Variables that were calculated or recoded using original BPS variables

Fewer variables were included in the 2009 model, because the variables on personal goals and behaviors were not measured again in 2009. The demographic and institutional level variables remain the same as in 2004. Degree expectations, major, attendance intensity, work hours, and housing were measured again in 2009, and therefore included in the model. A number of the personal values items had a significant influence on previous models in 2004 and

2006; therefore the 2006 personal values items were included in the 2009 model based on the assumption that these values may not have changed dramatically between 2006 to 2009. One additional variable was included in the 2009 model, which was not available in previous years – that of a participant’s overall GPA at all institutions attended, via transcript data. Table 3.11 lists the specific variables used in the 2009 model.

Table 3.11
Phase 3 2009 Variable List

	Variable Description	BPS Variable	Coding
Dependent Variable	Volunteered at least 4 hours per month in 2008-09	COMHRS09_4*	0 = no 1 = yes
Block 1 (Person)	Race Income Immigrant status 03-04 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign Born • US born Foreign Parents • US born (reference group) Importance of being a community leader (2006) Importance of being financially well-off (2006) Importance of influencing political structure (2006) Importance of having leisure time (2006) Importance of finding meaning and sense of purpose in life (2006) Importance of helping others in need (2006) Highest degree expected (2009)	MINORITY* LowIncome* Immig_Foreign* Immig_1.5* IMPT06B IMPT06C IMPT06E IMPT06F IMPT06J IMPT06K DGEVR09_BAgrad *	0 = White 1 = Non-White 0 = Not LI 1 = LI 0 = Not foreign born 1 = Foreign born 0 = Not 1.5 generation 1 = 1.5 generation 0 = no 1 = yes 0 = no 1 = yes 0 = no 1 = yes 0 = no 1 = yes 0 = no 1 = yes 0 = no 1 = yes 0 = BA or less 1 = Post BA degree
Block 2 (Academic microsystem)	Major 2009 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanities • Business • Vocational • SocialScience, Education, or Health • Undeclared • STEM (reference group) Attendance intensity 2008-09 GPA at all institutions attended	MAJ09_Humanities* MAJ09_Business* MAJ09_Voc* MAJ09_SocSciEdHealth* MAJ09_Undeclared* ENINPT6_recode* QEGPAALL	0 = other major 1 = indicated major 0 = Part-time or mixed 1 = Full-time Continuous
Block 3 (Extra curricular microsystem)	Job 2009: Hours worked per week Housing when last enrolled (2006)	HRSWK09 LOCALR09_recode *	Continuous 0 = Off-campus 1 = On-campus
Block 4 (Exosystem)	First institution control (2003-04) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private non-profit • Private for-profit • Public (reference group) First institution religion (2003-04)	InstControl_PrivNP* InstControl_PrivFP* ReligiousInst*	0 = Other 1 = indicated institution 0 = Not religious

	First institution focus (2003-04)	MSI*	1 = Religious 0 = PWI 1 = MSI
	Transferred from a 2-year to 4-year institution	Transfer_4YR*	0 = Did not transferred 1 = Transferred
Block 5 (Time)	Age in 2003	AGE_binary	0 = traditional (23 or younger) 1 = non-traditional (24+)

*Variables that were calculated or recoded using original BPS variables

Data Analysis

Phase 3 examines consistent community service participation, which is a binary dependent variable. Therefore a binomial logistic regression model was used to examine predictors of participation in community-based education activities. Logistic regression is used when the outcome variable is categorical and the assumption of linearity is violated. The logistic regression equation estimates the probability of the dependent variable occurring, based on the values of various independent variables (Mertler & Vannatta, 2005). Thus, the model in this study seeks to determine which person, environmental, and time factors (if any) increase the odds of participation in community service for first-generation males. Given the nested nature of the data, a hierarchical generalized linear modeling strategy was considered. However, given the small number of first-generation males at each individual institution, this strategy was not possible (Raudenbush, 2008).

Collinearity testing was conducted to check for high correlations between independent variables, by examining correlation coefficients as well as tolerance and VIF statistics (Field, 2009). Although design weights are provided by NCES to adjust for study non-response bias and unequal sampling rates within and across strata, these weights were not used in the current study because estimation of population parameters is not a goal of this study (Wine et al., 2011).

Blocked entry logistic regression analysis regressed the dependent variable, consistent community service participation, on the independent variables in each level of the conceptual

model. The independent variables were entered in five blocks, based on the following categories: 1) person characteristics, 2) microsystem factors - extracurricular, 3) microsystem factors – academic, 4) exosystem factors, and 5) time factors. The overall model was tested to determine whether it was useful in predicting consistent community service participation of first-generation males, above and beyond what is expected by chance. Odds ratios, which are used to examine effect size, were also examined to determine the influence of each predictor variable on the outcome.

Following the logistic regression analyses, further exploratory analyses were conducted to identify mesosystems that were particularly conducive or inhibitive to participation in community service for first-generation males, using a strategy employed by Axlund & Lott (in press). These exploratory analyses focused on the first year in college (2003-04) because the qualitative findings suggest that early involvement in community-based education has the potential for greater positive impact over the course of one's college experience. Based on results from the 2004 logistic regression model, it was determined that social science, education, or health majors were significantly more likely to volunteer, while business majors were significantly less likely to do so. In addition, first-generation males at private non-profit institutions were significantly more likely to volunteer than those at public institutions, while those at private for-profit institutions were less likely to do so. Finally, involvement in school clubs was also related to community service participation. These three microsystems – major, institution control, and school club involvement – were used to create two distinct mesosystems for examination. Odds ratios were used to compare the likelihood of volunteering for first-generation males in each of these two mesosystems, by first calculating the odds of volunteering for students in each group, using the following formula:

$$\text{Odds}_{\text{volunteering}} = \frac{\text{number of first-generation men who volunteering consistently}}{\text{number of first-generation men who did not volunteer consistently}}$$

Then the ratio of the odds of volunteering between these two groups was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Odds Ratio} = \frac{\text{odds of volunteering in conducive mesosystem}}{\text{odds of volunteering in prohibitive mesosystem}}$$

Design Limitations

Several limitations should be considered in Phase 3 of the study, some of which are similar to the limitations noted for Phase 1. First of all, this analysis could have been stronger if it had included additional control variables – and most notably for prior community service participation in high school, because it has been consistently shown to be a significant predictor of service participation in college (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin et al., 2000; Gasiorski, 2009; Marks & Jones, 2004). In addition, a greater set of variables could have been included in the ecological model, particularly regarding various environments in the college microsystem such as Greek organization participation or service-learning course participation. However, it was not possible to measure all the variables of interest, because they were not available through the secondary data set.

Secondly, an original goal of this study was to examine the outcomes of community-based education using both qualitative as well as quantitative methods. However, the variables in the BPS dataset did not distinguish between those who participated in basic volunteer activities versus service-learning activities. The reflection activities and connection to coursework inherent in service-learning have been shown to have a substantial impact on *outcomes* of community engagement. Because volunteerism and service-learning participation were conflated

in this study, a quantitative examination of community-based education outcomes was determined to be unfeasible.

Finally, the dependent variable used in Phase 2 is a reasonable, but not perfect proxy for consistent community service participation. As described earlier, this variable was calculated using the self-reported average number of hours that an individual volunteered each month, in a particular year. Thus, those who volunteered, *on average*, four hours or more each month were categorized as having volunteered consistently, while those who volunteered three hours or less per month were categorized as not volunteering consistently. However, there are situations in which a person's "correct" category could be unclear. For example, consider a student who volunteered two hours per week for one semester (in a service-learning course), but zero hours per week in the other semester. It is unclear whether that student would self-report as having volunteered over four hours each month, across the academic year. In addition, volunteering four hours per month does not necessarily mean that a person volunteered one hour each week – it is possible that a person volunteered in several all-day service events over the course of the year, or in a week-long service immersion. These examples illustrate the fact that some imprecision exists regarding the dependent variable of interest.

Mixed Methods Data Analysis and Inferences

One defining characteristic of mixed methods research involves the integration of quantitative and qualitative data analysis and findings, in order to generate inferences that speak to the entire study. According to Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009), "the most important step in any mixed methods study is when the results from the study's QUAL and QUAN strands are

incorporated into a coherent conceptual framework that provides an effective answer to the research question” (p. 286).

This study utilized an *iterative sequential mixed analysis* strategy, which is defined as data analysis in sequential studies with more than two phases, to examine data from each phase of the study (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In the initial quantitative phase (Phase 1), the descriptive data were examined for patterns and themes of community service participation, which subsequently informed the design of interview protocols for the qualitative phase (Phase 2). Once the qualitative data was collected and analyzed, I considered these results in conjunction with the initial quantitative findings to determine whether there were additional research questions that had not yet been answered. This process led to the incorporation of the final quantitative phase (Phase 3). Once the Phase 3 data had been analyzed, all of the findings across all three phases were reviewed again, in order to develop a broader set of inferences that attempted to address all of the research questions in the study.

The following five chapters review findings from the three phases of the study. Subsequently, I provide an integrative analysis of all quantitative and qualitative findings in the discussion chapter.

CHAPTER 4

Quantitative Exploratory Phase 1:

First-Generation Male Participation in Community Service

Chapters 4 through 8 present detailed study findings from all phases of the research. Chapter 4 begins by reviewing results from the initial, exploratory quantitative phase of the study. Due to the volume and complexity of data from the qualitative phase, these findings are divided into Chapters 5-7 based on the themes that arose during data analysis: 1) identity and motivation, 2) participation in community-based education, and 3) outcomes of community-based education. Finally, Chapter 8 presents results from the follow-up quantitative study phase.

Virtually no information is available about first-generation male college students and community engagement. Although this study operates on the research-based premise that first-generation males participate at lower rates than their counterparts, currently no empirical evidence exists to confirm this assumption. Therefore, the purpose of this first phase of the study was to conduct a preliminary exploration of the community service participation patterns of first-generation males, in comparison to other groups of college students.

Overall Participation Patterns

This first section of the chapter addresses research question 1a, which focuses on differences in volunteer participation rates by gender as well as first-generation status. Chi-square analyses were conducted to examine differences in whether these demographic groups had ever volunteered between 2004-2009 (excluding one-time service projects), and whether

they had ever volunteered consistently (for at least 4 hours per month) between 2004-2009.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 provide detailed findings.

Results indicate that there were significant differences in participation rates between all groups on both measures, except between first-generation men and first-generation women. Women (60%) were significantly more likely to have ever volunteered than men (57.3%), and to volunteer on a consistent basis than men (51.6% versus 47.9%), although the effect sizes for gender were very small. In examining the sample of first-generation students only, there was no difference between volunteering rates for first-generation men and women. However, in the male sample, there was a significant relationship between first-generation status and volunteering. Continuing-generation males (63.8%) were more likely to have ever volunteered than first-generation males (51.4%), $\chi^2(1, N=6391) = 99.69, p < .001, \phi = -.13$. In addition, continuing-generation males (52.5%) were more likely to have volunteered consistently than first-generation men (43.7%), $\chi^2(1, N=6391) = 49.31, p < .001, \phi = -.09$. These results confirm the vast majority of previous research which suggests that females participate in community service at higher rates than males, and also empirically supports the hypothesis that first-generation students participate in community service at lower rates than continuing-generation students. Interestingly, the gender participation gap does not appear to be present in first-generation students, which could warrant further investigation.

Volunteer participation was also examined according to demographic categories, major, and institutional types, including income level, institution control, institution religious affiliation, 2-year versus 4-year institutions, and whether the institution served a predominantly White population versus a minority population. Community service participation – both *ever volunteering* and *volunteering consistently* - differed significantly by income level, major, and all

four institutional categories. Low-income students were less likely to volunteer than higher income students, which is consistent with previous research. Ever having volunteered also differed significantly by race, with White students more likely to volunteer than non-White students, but volunteering consistently did not differ between groups. Previous research has also been inconclusive about race and community engagement, with some studies reporting a difference (Cruce & Moore, 2007; Gasiorski, 2009) and others finding no difference (Astin, et.al, 2000; Ender, et.al., 2000; Marks & Jones, 2004). With respect to major, standardized residuals were examined to determine which majors contributed significantly to the overall chi-square statistic. Residuals that lie outside 1.96 are significant at the .05 level, residuals that lie outside 2.58 are significant at the .01 level, and residuals that lie outside 3.29 are significant at the .001 level (Field, 2009). Based on these values, undeclared students and vocational students were less likely to ever participate in service and volunteer consistently, while humanities majors, social science, education & health majors, and STEM majors were more likely to have ever volunteered. These findings are consistent with previous research, with the exception of STEM majors who are traditionally thought to participate at lower rates than other. STEM differences were not significant for consistent community service, however, suggesting that STEM majors are only more likely to get involved at a cursory level, perhaps because they do not have time for a greater commitment or because they are participating to enhance their resumes. Similar to findings from other studies, students at private non-profit institutions were more likely to volunteer than those at public or private for-profit institutions, students at religious institutions were more likely to volunteer than those at non-religious institutions, and students at 2-year institutions were less likely to volunteer than those at 4-year institutions. In addition, students at Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) were less likely to volunteer than those at Predominantly

White Institutions (PWI), although the effect sizes were quite small. These findings are also summarized in Tables 4.1 and 4.2.

Table 4.1
Ever Volunteered Between 2003-2009 — Chi-Square Tests

Variable	Did not volunteer		Volunteered		χ^2	Phi/ Cramer's V
	%	n	%	n		
Gender					$\chi^2 (1, N=15,419) = 10.79^{***}$	0.026
Male	42.7	2728	57.3	3663		
Female	40	3615	60	5413		
First-Generation Status					$\chi^2 (1, N=15,419) = 417.13^{***}$	-0.164
First-Generation	48.1	4249	51.9	4579		
Continuing-Generation	31.8	2094	68.2	4497		
Low Income (\$25,000 or less)					$\chi^2 (1, N=15,419) = 260.27^{***}$	-0.13
Low-Income	51.3	2234	48.7	2118		
Not Low-Income	37.1	4109	62.9	6958		
Race					$\chi^2 (1, N=15,419) = 43.66^{***}$	-0.053
White	39.2	3921	60.8	6079		
Minority	44.7	2422	55.3	2997		
Major in 2009					$\chi^2 (5, N=15,419) = 202.85^{***}$	0.115
Undeclared ^{***}	52.8	1120	47.2	1001		
Humanities ^{***}	34.9	628	65.1	1170		
Social Science, Educ, Health ^{**}	38.0	1714	62.0	2802		
STEM ^{**}	36.6	846	63.4	1467		
Business	42.1	1024	57.9	1411		
Vocational ^{**}	45.2	1011	54.8	1225		
Institution Control					$\chi^2 (2, N=15,419) = 821.44^{***}$	0.231
Public	43.8	4326	56.2	5544		
Private Non-Profit	24.9	979	75.1	2959		
Private For-Profit	64.4	1038	35.6	573		
Institution Religious Affiliation					$\chi^2 (1, N=15,419) = 458.94^{***}$	0.173
Not Religious	44.5	5924	55.5	7392		
Religious	19.6	409	80.4	1673		
Institution Type					$\chi^2 (1, N=15,419) = 872.48^{***}$	0.238
2-year or less	53.6	3872	46.4	3351		
4-year	30.1	2471	69.9	5725		
Institution Focus					$\chi^2 (1, N=15,419) = 26.48^{***}$	-0.041
PWI	40.5	5671	59.5	8335		
MSI	47.6	672	52.4	741		
Males					$\chi^2 (1, N=6391) = 99.69^{***}$	-0.125
First-Gen Males	48.6	1625	51.4	1720		
Continuing-Gen Males	36.2	1103	63.8	1943		
First-Generation Students					$\chi^2 (1, N=8828) = 0.435$	0.007
Male FG Students	48.6	1625	51.4	1720		
Female FG Students	47.9	2624	52.1	2859		

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 4.2
Ever Volunteered Consistently Between 2003-2009 — Chi-Square Tests

Variable	Did not volunteer consistently		Volunteered consistently		χ^2	Phi/ Cramer's V
	%	n	%	n		
Gender					$\chi^2 (1, N=15,419) = 20.71^{***}$	0.037
Male	52.1	3332	47.9	3059		
Female	48.4	4371	51.6	4657		
First-Generation Status					$\chi^2 (1, N=15,419) = 238.88^{***}$	-0.124
First-Generation	55.3	4885	44.7	3943		
Continuing-Generation	42.8	2818	57.2	3773		
Low Income (\$25,000 or less)					$\chi^2 (1, N=15,419) = 141.01^{***}$	-0.096
Low-Income	57.6	2506	42.4	1846		
Not Low-Income	47	5197	53	5870		
Race					$\chi^2 (1, N=15,419) = 2.82$	-0.014
White	49.5	4946	50.5	5054		
Minority	50.9	2757	49.1	2662		
Major in 2009					$\chi^2 (5, N=15,419) = 133.12^{***}$	0.093
Undeclared ^{***}	58.9	1250	41.1	871		
Humanities ^{***}	44.3	796	55.7	1002		
Social Science, Educ, Health ^{**}	46.6	2104	53.4	2412		
STEM	47.2	1092	52.8	1221		
Business	52.4	1277	47.6	1158		
Vocational*	53.0	1184	47.0	1052		
Institution Control					$\chi^2 (2, N=15,419) = 548.88^{***}$	0.189
Public	52.4	5169	47.6	4701		
Private Non-Profit	36.2	1426	63.8	2512		
Private For-Profit	68.8	1108	31.2	503		
Institution Religious Affiliation					$\chi^2 (1, N=15,419) = 331.11^{***}$	0.147
Not Religious	52.9	7038	47.1	6278		
Religious	31.4	654	68.6	1428		
Institution Type					$\chi^2 (1, N=15,419) = 577.54^{***}$	0.194
2-year or less	60.3	4353	39.7	2870		
4-year	40.9	3350	59.1	4846		
Institution Focus					$\chi^2 (1, N=15,419) = 5.52^*$	-0.019
PWI	49.7	6955	50.3	7051		
MSI	52.9	748	47.1	665		
Males					$\chi^2 (1, N=6391) = 49.31^{***}$	-0.088
First-Gen Males	56.3	1884	43.7	1461		
Continuing-Gen Males	47.5	1448	52.5	1598		
First-Generation Students					$\chi^2 (1, N=8828) = 2.125$	0.016
Male FG Students	56.3	1884	43.7	1461		
Female FG Students	54.7	3001	45.3	2482		

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

In short, virtually all of the initial descriptive findings support previous research about who participates in community service and who does not.

First-Generation Males and Volunteering

The second half of this chapter examines research questions 1b through 1e, which focus on volunteer participation among first-generation males, as well as the types of volunteer activities that first-generation males were engaged in, the reasons that they reported for volunteer participation, and the self-reported benefits of volunteering.

Demographic and Institutional Factors

The sample was filtered for first-generation males in order to examine research question 1e, regarding differences between those first-generation males who participated in community service and those who did not. For first-generation males, community service participation at any level as well as consistently, was significantly related to income level, major, institution control, institution religious affiliation, and institution type. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 summarize these findings.

Table 4.3

First-Generation Males Who Ever Volunteered Between 2003-2009 - Chi-Square Tests

Variable	Did not volunteer		Volunteered		χ^2	Phi/ Cramer's V
	%	n	%	n		
Low Income (\$25,000 or less)					$\chi^2 (1, N=3345) = 12.62^{***}$	-0.061
Low-Income	52.9	600	47.1	535		
Not Low-Income	46.4	1025	53.6	1185		
Race					$\chi^2 (1, N=3345) = .003$	0.001
White	48.6	969	51.4	1024		
Minority	48.5	656	51.5	696		
Major in 2009					$\chi^2 (5, N=3345) = 63.07^{***}$	0.137
Undeclared ^{***}	58.3	353	41.7	252		
Humanities [*]	39.9	124	60.1	187		
Social Sci, Educ, Health [*]	41.9	235	58.1	326		

STEM	48.8	321	51.2	337		
Business*	42.2	246	57.8	337		
Vocational*	55.2	346	44.8	281		
Institution Control					$\chi^2 (2, N=3345) = 64.04^{***}$	0.138
Public	50	1162	50	1164		
Private Non-Profit	35.6	217	64.4	392		
Private For-Profit	60	246	40	164		
Institution Religious Affiliation					$\chi^2 (1, N=3334) = 39.51^{***}$	0.109
Not Religious	50.3	1524	49.7	1507		
Religious	31.4	95	68.6	208		
Institution Type					$\chi^2 (1, N=3345) = 94.31^{***}$	0.168
2-year or less	55.7	1081	44.3	859		
4-year	38.7	544	61.3	861		
Institution Focus					$\chi^2 (1, N=3345) = 0.95$	-0.017
PWI	48.3	1429	51.7	1531		
MSI	50.9	196	49.1	189		

* p< .05 ** p< .01 ***p< .001

For the most part, the community service participation patterns for first-generation males mirrored that of the larger sample. As seen in Table 4.3, low-income students were less likely to ever participate in community service, as were undeclared and vocational majors, while humanities and social science, education and health majors were more likely to participate. Similarly, students at private non-profit institutions, religious institutions, and four-year institutions were all more likely to engage in community service. The only difference was that first-generation males who were business majors were significantly more likely to volunteer than others, which was not true for the entire sample. Upon closer examination, the percentage of first-generation male business majors who volunteered matches the percentage for all business majors, suggesting that it was a change in the volunteerism rates of other majors that affected the significance level for first-generation male business majors.

The first-generation male participation rates in consistent community service were quite similar to rates for having ever volunteered, with the exception that differences in participation were no longer significant for business majors and vocational majors. Differences by income-

level and institutional characteristics were identical, again supporting previous research on community engagement.

Table 4.4

First-Generation Males Who Ever Volunteered Consistently Between 2003-2009 - Chi-Square Tests

Variable	Did not volunteer consistently		Volunteered consistently		χ^2	Phi/ Cramer's V
	%	n	%	n		
Low Income (\$25,000 or less)					$\chi^2 (1, N=3345) = 5.46^*$	-0.040
Low-Income	59.1	671	40.9	464		
Not Low-Income	54.9	1213	45.1	997		
Race					$\chi^2 (1, N=3345) = 2.55$	0.028
White	57.5	1145	42.5	848		
Minority	54.7	739	45.3	613		
Major in 2009					$\chi^2 (5, N=3345) = 42.72^{***}$	0.113
Undeclared**	64.0	387	36.0	218		
Humanities*	46.9	146	53.1	165		
Social Sci, Educ, Health*	50.1	281	49.9	280		
STEM	58.1	382	41.9	276		
Business	52.8	308	47.2	275		
Vocational	60.6	380	39.4	247		
Institution Control					$\chi^2 (2, N=3345) = 47.20^{***}$	0.119
Public	57.7	1342	42.3	984		
Private Non-Profit	45	274	55	335		
Private For-Profit	65.4	268	34.6	142		
Institution Religious Affiliation					$\chi^2 (1, N=3334) = 32.15^{***}$	0.098
Not Religious	57.9	1754	42.1	1277		
Religious	40.9	124	59.1	179		
Institution Type					$\chi^2 (1, N=3345) = 77.12^{***}$	0.152
2-year or less	62.7	1217	37.3	723		
4-year	47.5	667	52.5	738		
Institution Focus					$\chi^2 (1, N=3345) = 0.21$	-0.008
PWI	56.2	1663	43.8	1297		
MSI	57.4	221	42.6	164		

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Volunteer Type

To examine volunteer activity type, reasons for volunteering, and volunteer benefits, the sample was filtered for students who had volunteered consistently in the years during which data was collected (2004, 2006, and 2009). In 2004, a total of 729 first-generation males (21.8%) reported volunteering at least 4 hours per month in their first year in college. In subsequent years, the percentage of first-generation males who volunteered at least 4 hours per month declined

slightly, to 708 (21.2%) in 2006 (third year in college) and 643 (19.2%) in 2009 (sixth year in college). Chi-square analyses were then conducted between first-generation males and continuing-generation males, as well as first-generation females, to determine whether there were differences between these groups. Analyses were also conducted on a range of individual and institutional variables, to explore differences within the first-generation male sample.

With respect to volunteer activity type (research question 1b), the first-generation males in this sample participated in “service to a church” more than any other type of activity, followed by “other work with kids” that did not involve tutoring or mentoring and “other types of community service” that were not included among the list of item choices. Involvement in “neighborhood improvement or cleanup” was also slightly higher than other types of service, particularly in 2006. Table 4.5 provides a more detailed picture of the types of service that this population engaged in while in college.

Table 4.5
Volunteer Activity Types of First-Generation Males Who Volunteered Consistently

Volunteer Type (0=no, 1=yes)	2004 (n = 729)		2006 (n = 708)		2009 (n = 643)	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Fundraising	18.2	133	19.9	141	16.2	104
Homeless shelter or soup kitchen	13.9	101	9.6	68	9.2	59
Hospital/nursing home/health services	13.6	99	13.1	93	14.5	93
Neighborhood improvement or cleanup	25.2	184	29.5	209	16.3	105
Other types of community service	30.2	220	33.1	234	18.2	117
Service to church	35.4	258	38	269	35	225
Tutoring or mentoring	24	175	20.6	146	21	135
Other work with kids	34.7	253	28.2	200	29.5	190
Service to nonprofit organizations		na		na	21.9	141
Service to the community		na		na	18	116

Volunteer type between groups. During the 2003-2004 academic year, first-generation males were less likely to participate in neighborhood improvement activities than continuing-generation males, $\chi^2 (1, N=1654) = 7.195, p = .007, \phi = -.066$. No other significant differences

in type of volunteer activity were found between first-generation males and continuing-generation males. With respect to the entire first-generation population, first-generation males were significantly less likely than first-generation females to volunteer in hospital or nursing home settings, $\chi^2(1, N=2030) = 25.45, p < .001, \phi = -.112$; and tutoring or mentoring activities, $\chi^2(1, N=2030) = 23.89, p < .001, \phi = -.108$. Conversely, males were more likely to participate in neighborhood improvement activities, $\chi^2(1, N=2030) = 11.218, p = .001, \phi = .074$, as well as “other” types of community service, $\chi^2(1, N=2030) = 6.828, p = .009, \phi = .058$.

In 2006, first-generation males were significantly less likely than continuing-generation males to have volunteered in a homeless shelter or soup kitchen, $\chi^2(1, N=1544) = 9.228, p = .002, \phi = -.077$, and to participate in tutoring or mentoring activities, $\chi^2(1, N=1544) = 9.557, p = .002, \phi = -.079$. They were also less likely than first-generation females to volunteer in health services settings, $\chi^2(1, N=1973) = 11.573, p = .001, \phi = -.077$; homeless shelters or soup kitchens, $\chi^2(1, N=1973) = 16.938, p < .001, \phi = -.093$; and tutoring or mentoring activities, $\chi^2(1, N=1973) = 15.178, p < .001, \phi = -.088$. However, similar to 2004, they were more likely than their female counterparts to perform neighborhood cleanup work, $\chi^2(1, N=1973) = 35.873, p < .001, \phi = .135$, and “other” types of service, $\chi^2(1, N=1973) = 4.234, p = .04, \phi = .046$.

In 2009, which was the sixth year of college for this cohort, the only difference between first-generation and continuing-generation males was in “service to non-profit organizations,” which was a new category added in this year. First-generation males were less likely to serve in non-profit organizations than continuing-generation males, $\chi^2(1, N=1372) = 6.369, p = .012, \phi = -.068$. With respect to gender, first-generation males were again less likely than females to volunteer in homeless shelters or soup kitchens, $\chi^2(1, N=1643) = 6.169, p = .013, \phi = -.061$, and

more likely to perform “service to the community,” which was another new category introduced in 2009, $\chi^2(1, N=1643) = 6.233, p = .013, \phi = .062$.

One pattern that seems to emerge from these findings is that first-generation males are less likely than females to participate in activities that could be considered nurturing or caring, such as working in homeless shelters, soup kitchens, healthcare settings, or educational/childcare settings. Conversely, they engaged more often in activities that do not require working with people, but instead require physical activity – namely, neighborhood cleanup and improvement. Interestingly, these males were also more likely to choose more generic responses such as “other types of activity” or “service to the community,” despite the fact that most types of service are included in the other response choices. Unfortunately the dataset does not allow for further investigation into what these students specifically did.

Volunteer type among first-generation males. The sample was filtered for first-generation males who reported having volunteered consistently, to explore differences in volunteer type within this group by major, institution control, institution religious affiliation, institution type and institution focus.

In 2004, there were several significant differences by institution type. First-generation males who started their first year at a religious institution were significantly more likely than those at non-religious institutions to provide service at a homeless shelter or soup kitchen, $\chi^2(1, N=726) = 6.405, p = .011, \phi = .094$, as well as at a church, $\chi^2(1, N=726) = 5.345, p = .021, \phi = .086$. This finding is not surprising given the fact that churches often host meal and shelter programs for homeless populations, and that religious institutions are affiliated with churches. Students at private non-profit institutions were also more likely to serve at a homeless shelter or soup kitchen, $\chi^2(2, N=726) = 10.209, p = .006, \phi = .119$, to tutor or mentor kids, $\chi^2(2, N=726) =$

6.982, $p = .03$, $\phi = .098$, and to perform other work with kids, $\chi^2 (2, N=726) = 8.652$, $p = .013$, $\phi = .109$ than students who attended public or private for-profit institutions. It is possible that smaller institutions have a greater capacity to host community service programs that engage children and youth, although there is no data to support this claim. Conversely, those at private for-profit institutions were significantly less likely to participate in neighborhood improvement projects, $\chi^2 (2, N=726) = 9.467$, $p = .009$, $\phi = .114$. This could be because non-profit institutions often host neighborhood improvement projects through orientation programs and residence halls, while for-profit institutions do not promote such activities. First-generation males who began school at a 2-year institution or less were less likely to participate in fundraising, $\chi^2 (1, N=729) = 7.954$, $p = .005$, $\phi = .104$, as well as tutoring and mentoring types of service, $\chi^2 (1, N=729) = 5.220$, $p = .022$, $\phi = .085$, than those who began school at a 4-year institution. No differences were found between first-year students across different majors.

For first-generation males who had volunteered in 2006, in their third year of postsecondary education, several differences emerged by major and institutional type. Chi-square analyses indicate that there was a significant difference in participation in health service, $\chi^2 (5, N=600) = 12.539$, $p = .028$, $\phi = .145$, as well as tutoring/mentoring types of activities, $\chi^2 (5, N=600) = 13.156$, $p = .022$, $\phi = .148$, by major. Closer examination of the standardized residuals suggest that, not surprisingly, STEM majors were more likely than others to be involved in health services while vocational/technical majors were less likely to do so (Field, 2009). Additionally, STEM, social science, education and health majors were significantly more likely to perform tutoring or mentoring while business and vocational students were less likely to do so. Again, this finding is not surprising given that social science, education and health majors often seek experience working with children, and that tutoring programs heavily recruit STEM majors

to help children with math and science. Students at religious institutions were significantly more likely than those at non-religious institutions to volunteer in health service activities, $\chi^2(1, N=706) = 9.310, p = .002, \phi = .115$, at homeless shelters or soup kitchens, $\chi^2(1, N=706) = 4.159, p = .041, \phi = .077$, and at churches, $\chi^2(1, N=706) = 10.351, p = .001, \phi = .121$, similar to 2004 findings. First-generation males who began school at private non-profit institutions were more likely to provide health services, $\chi^2(2, N=706) = 6.360, p = .042, \phi = .095$, while those who began at private for-profit institutions were less likely to participate in neighborhood improvement, $\chi^2(2, N=706) = 10.760, p = .005, \phi = .123$. In addition, first-generation males who began at 2-year institutions were less likely than those at 4-year institutions to participate in fundraising, $\chi^2(1, N=708) = 4.793, p = .029, \phi = .082$, work in homeless shelters, $\chi^2(1, N=708) = 14.250, p < .001, \phi = .142$, and perform neighborhood improvement, $\chi^2(1, N=708) = 10.192, p = .001, \phi = .120$, tutoring or mentoring, $\chi^2(1, N=708) = 4.032, p = .045, \phi = .075$, or other work with kids, $\chi^2(1, N=708) = 12.840, p < .001, \phi = .135$.

In 2009, the only type of volunteer activity that demonstrated significant differences by major was tutoring or mentoring, $\chi^2(5, N=643) = 28.731, p < .001, \phi = .211$. As was the case in 2006, standardized residuals indicated that first-generation males who were STEM, social science, education and health majors were significantly more likely to engage in tutoring or mentoring while business and vocational students were significantly less likely to do so. Similar to 2006, the greatest differences in volunteer type within first-generation males in 2009 appeared between those who began at 2-year versus 4-year institutions. Those who began their college education at a 4-year college were significantly more likely to perform fundraising, $\chi^2(1, N=643) = 4.921, p = .027, \phi = .087$, tutoring and mentoring, $\chi^2(1, N=643) = 19.10, p < .001, \phi = .172$, other work with kids, $\chi^2(1, N=643) = 6.995, p = .008, \phi = .104$, and service to nonprofits, $\chi^2(1,$

$N=643$) = 4.967, $p = .026$, $\phi = .088$, and less likely to report other types of community service, χ^2 (1, $N=643$) = 5.892, $p = .015$, $\phi = -.096$. These differences could simply reflect a greater variety of service choices at 4-year colleges and universities. Interestingly, first-generation males at Minority Serving Institutions were more likely than those at Predominantly White Institutions to provide tutoring and mentoring services, χ^2 (1, $N=643$) = 4.468, $p = .035$, $\phi = .083$, a finding that was only true in 2009. However, it is unclear why this difference emerged only in the sixth year of college.

Reasons for Volunteering

Respondents were asked about their reasons for participating in community service during the 2006 follow-up data collection phase, which is the focus of research question 1c. A summary of these reasons is provided in Table 4.6. Of the 708 first-generation males who volunteered consistently in 2006, most had chosen to do so for a reason other than those which were listed in the BPS:04/06 survey (51.6%). Given that the response choices all represent external influences, it is possible that the people who answered “other” had personal motivations for volunteering. A substantial number of respondents also chose to participate as a result of encouragement from friends, family, faculty members, or a mentor (42.7%). Course or program requirements were the least cited reason for first-generation males to participate in community service (11.7%).

Table 4.6

Reasons for Volunteering of First-Generation Males Who Volunteered Consistently ($N = 708$)

Volunteer Reason in 2006 (0=no, 1=yes)	%	<i>n</i>
Campus organization	18.2	129
Required as part of program	11.7	83
Student or faculty encouraged	42.7	302
Other reason	51.6	365

Volunteer reasons between groups. Chi-square analyses were also conducted to examine differences in reasons for volunteering between first-generation males and their counterparts. Continuing-generation males were significantly more likely than first-generation males to cite participation in a campus organization as a reason for volunteering, $\chi^2(1, N=1544) = 13.580, p < .001, \phi = -.094$, while first-generation males were significantly more likely than continuing-generation males to cite “other reasons” for volunteering, $\chi^2(1, N=1544) = 7.139, p = .008, \phi = .068$. It is possible that continuing-generation males participate in campus organizations at higher rates than first-generation males, which could produce the first finding. However, the greater tendency for first-generation males to cite “other” reasons is interesting, and warrants further investigation. With respect to gender differences, first-generation females were significantly more likely to cite program or course requirements as a reason for volunteering, $\chi^2(1, N=1973) = 10.660, p = .001, \phi = -.074$. One possible explanation is that females tend to enroll in humanities, social science, education, and health related majors at higher rates than males, and these majors are more likely to include service-learning courses or field placements.

Volunteer reasons among first-generation males. The overall sample was filtered for first-generation males who reported having volunteered consistently in 2006, to explore differences in reasons for volunteering within this group by major, institution control, institution religious affiliation, institution type and institution focus. With respect to major, the only significant difference in reason for volunteering occurred in citing campus organizations as a reason for volunteering, $\chi^2(5, N=600) = 16.089, p = .007, \phi = .164$. Standardized residuals indicated that undeclared, and social science, education or health majors were less likely to participate because of a campus organization, perhaps because they became involved through

their coursework instead, while STEM majors were significantly more likely to do so. Institutional factors were also related to reasons for volunteering. First-generation males at religious institutions were significantly more likely to cite that volunteering was required as part of a program, $\chi^2(1, N=706) = 10.891, p = .001, \phi = .124$, and that they participated through a campus organization, $\chi^2(1, N=706) = 6.242, p = .012, \phi = .094$. Students at private for-profit institutions were significantly less likely to participate through a campus organization while those at private non-profit institutions were more likely to do so, $\chi^2(2, N=706) = 16.512, p < .001, \phi = .153$. Those at private non-profits were also more likely to state that they were required to participate as part of a program, $\chi^2(2, N=706) = 9.771, p = .008, \phi = .118$. Students who began college at two-year institutions were significantly less likely to participate through a campus organization while those at four-year institutions were more likely to do so, $\chi^2(1, N=708) = 48.025, p < .001, \phi = .260$. These findings are not surprising, given the greater emphasis and institutional support that private non-profit, religious, and 4-year colleges tend to place on community engagement. The implication is that private non-profit institutions, and particularly those that are religious, are more likely to have requirements and campus organizations that promote volunteerism. There were no differences in reasons for volunteering between students at Minority-Serving Institutions and those at Predominantly White Institutions.

Benefits of Volunteering

In the 2006 phase of data collection, respondents were also asked about the perceived benefits of their community service or volunteer work (research question 1d). To determine the benefits that first-generation males reported from their service, frequency analyses were conducted on the subsample of first-generation males who had volunteered consistently in 2006.

Table 4.7 shows that a majority of first-generation males felt that their community service work helped them to expand their leadership, communication, and other related skills (65.1%), increase their awareness of social issues (58.2%), become more compassionate (56.2%), and discover how to apply their knowledge, skills, and interests to real world issues (53.5%). Community service involvement appeared to have less of an impact on major and career choice. This data is encouraging, and will be explored further in the qualitative section of this study.

Table 4.7

Benefits of Volunteering for First-Generation Males Who Volunteered Consistently ($N = 708$)

Volunteer Benefit in 2006 (0=no, 1=yes)	%	<i>n</i>
Added to resume	44.4	314
Clarified choice of major	14	99
Expanded skills	65.1	461
Helped with career choice	19.1	135
Increased awareness	58.2	412
Learned to apply skills	53.5	379
More compassionate person	56.2	398
Other benefits	9.2	65

Volunteer benefits between groups. Comparison of volunteer benefits between groups revealed that continuing-generation and first-generation males were quite similar in the benefits that they gained from their community service work. The only difference was that first-generation males were significantly more likely than continuing-generation males to indicate that they learned to apply their knowledge and skills in the real world, $\chi^2(1, N=1544) = 5.380, p = .02, \phi = .059$. This could be because continuing-generation males have had more opportunities to apply their skills prior to college, or because of some difference in self-perception between these two groups. A greater number of differences by gender were reported however. First-generation females were significantly more likely than first-generation males to report that community service work helped them to clarify their choice of major, $\chi^2(1, N=1973) = 8.176, p = .004, \phi = -.064$; increase their awareness of social issues, $\chi^2(1, N=1973) = 6.933, p = .008, \phi =$

-.059; and become more compassionate, $\chi^2(1, N=1973) = 9.396, p = .002, \phi = -.069$. These differences could be related to the difference in the types of activities that first-generation males and females tended to choose. For example, the males in this sample participated in neighborhood improvement activities at higher rates, which would be more likely to lead to concrete skill development. On the other hand, the females gravitated toward working with youth, homeless populations, and in healthcare settings - activities which would expose people more directly to social issues and require greater compassion. However, the low Phi values suggest that the effect size for all these differences are extremely small.

Volunteer benefits among first-generation males. Among first-generation males who had volunteered consistently in 2006, those who were vocational/technical majors were significantly more likely than others to indicate that volunteering helped to clarify their choice of major, $\chi^2(5, N=600) = 14.541, p = .013, \phi = .156$, and expand their skills, $\chi^2(5, N=600) = 16.995, p = .005, \phi = .168$. Again, if these students participated in neighborhood improvement activities such as painting, construction or landscaping, then vocational majors could gain many relevant and useful skills from these types of activities. Social science, education and health majors were significantly more likely to feel that they learned to apply their skills through volunteering, while STEM majors were less likely to feel this way, $\chi^2(5, N=600) = 15.845, p = .007, \phi = .163$, perhaps because their technical skills would be less likely to be utilized in most community settings. No differences in reported benefits of volunteering were found by institutional religious affiliation and control. However, first-generation males who began at two-year institutions were significantly more likely to report that volunteering made them a more compassionate person as compared to those at four-year institutions, $\chi^2(1, N=708) = 7.810, p = .005, \phi = -.105$. In addition, first-generation males at Minority-Serving Institutions were

significantly more likely to indicate that they learned to apply their skills through volunteering, as compared to those at Predominantly White Institutions, $\chi^2 (1, N=708) = 11.016, p = .001, \phi = .125$. No explanation for these differences is immediately obvious.

Conclusion

In summary, many of the descriptive findings in the first half of this chapter support the previous research on community service participation. The differences in gender among this sample support numerous other studies demonstrating that females participate at greater rates than males, although it is interesting that the gender difference does not exist among first-generation students. Additionally, the data indicate that first-generation college students volunteer at lower rates than continuing-generation students. The combination of these findings suggest that the reasons for lower first-generation participation rates may overshadow those that pertain to gender. Patterns of participation by income level, race, and major also reinforced existing research, with the exception of STEM majors who participated at higher levels than other majors. Analyses across institutional factors confirms other studies reporting that students at religious institutions, private non-profit institutions (which include religious schools), and 4-year institutions demonstrate higher community service participation rates than their counterparts, while for-profit institutions rates are significantly lower. Furthermore, there is virtually no difference in participation rates between students at Minority Serving Institutions and Predominantly White Institutions.

Since no prior research has been conducted on first-generation males and community service participation, the second half of the chapter makes a contribution to the literature on this topic. Findings from this analysis indicate that the first-generation males in this sample engaged

in service to a church more than any other type of activity, followed by “other” activities with children, “other” community service more broadly speaking, and neighborhood improvement projects. Differences by gender suggest that males gravitated toward activities that involve physical activity (such as neighborhood cleanup), and were less likely to choose human service types of volunteering, although it is difficult to tell because a relatively high percentage of them chose the “other” response. This tendency to choose “other” was also observed in the reasons cited for volunteering. “Other” was most commonly cited reason while program requirements and campus organizations were the least cited. This pattern begs the question, what are the “other” reasons that prompted these first-generation males to volunteer? These types of questions will be explored further in chapter 5 of this study. With respect to the benefits of volunteering, the data from this sample suggest that a majority of first-generation males felt that their community service participation helped to expand their leadership and communication skills, apply their knowledge and skills in the real world, and increased their compassion and awareness of social issues. These impacts of community service involvement have promising implications for college engagement, and are examined in greater detail in in chapter 7.

CHAPTER 5

Identity and Motivation to Engage in Community-Based Education

The purpose of the qualitative strand of this study was to closely explore the experiences of first-generation male college students who chose to get involved in community-based education activities, and stay committed to them over time. Data suggests that this population is one of the least likely to pursue community engagement. Yet if this type of engagement has the potential to positively impact their success in college, then it is important to first examine the reasons why the participants in this study - who are the exception to the rule - were drawn to these types of activities to begin with.

Analysis of the interview data revealed that participants' identities were closely tied to their motivation to engage in the community, as well as to their interpretations of their experiences in the community. Thus, the first section of this chapter provides an overall picture of the participants' experiences as first-generation college students and as males, as a frame from which to subsequently examine their motivations for, participation in, and outcomes of community engagement. The latter section explores the connections between the participants' identities and their motivations to participate in community-based education.

First-Generation Males: Perspectives on Identity

Participants often talked about one aspect of their identity or another, but usually did not discuss both simultaneously. Therefore, the findings along these themes are presented in consecutive but distinct sections of the chapter. This arrangement does not imply that these two

identities are separate or independent from each other, but instead reflects the nature of the conversations with the interviewer.

Being First-Generation

The first-generation college student experience has already been studied extensively in the literature; therefore the interview questions only touched indirectly upon this topic. In fact, only one question specifically used the term “first-generation,” and it was placed towards the end of the interview protocols. However, throughout the interviews, participants consistently brought up stories and experiences that were related to being first-generation. Given that the study focuses on first-generation students, it became important to examine the participants’ perspectives on this aspect of their identity, because they provided significant background context for understanding their choices regarding community-based learning.

Ambivalence about identity. Participants were asked, at the very end of the interviews, to reflect broadly on their identities. Most did not specifically name first-generation status as an important part of their identity, even though the impact of this status was noticeable throughout their descriptions of their experiences in college. In these cases, participants were prompted about whether or how their first-generation status impacted their college experience. Because first-generation status is not a visibly identifiable characteristic, students often talked about it as a subordinate or latent aspect of their identity. Some of them did not know they were “first-generation” until they entered college; one student did not realize it until he got involved with his service-learning program, “because that's the population that we work with. So I was able to think more about my background, become more in touch with it.” Most others were aware of being first-generation, but either downplayed its significance or kept it to themselves, indicating,

“It only comes up whenever we talk about it in class.” One student used it as a private reminder and motivator to focus in college. He shared,

I make it part of my identity. And it's not to say “Oh, hey everybody, I'm first generation...” Like, I don't like to say it out loud. But in the back of my mind it brings me down to earth, it makes me more aware of the fact that hey, you are in a very fortunate place right now, but the only reason why you're here is because you put in a lot of hard work and effort into what you've done, as well as the time and care that your parents have given you. Don't waste it all, basically.

Interestingly, while most participants viewed their educational background as something to downplay, a few, more strategic students discussed how they turned their first-generation status into an advantage or strength, particularly when meeting with administrators or other people in positions of power. One student believed that, “if they see they're meeting with a first-generation student from their own community then they're more attentive towards your needs...they're willing to go that extra mile to support you through your processes.” Another student felt that others would respect his abilities and accomplishments even more if they were aware of the obstacles he had overcome:

When I talk to stakeholders or people who make decisions, I always bring up the fact that I'm first-generation, just because I know...most of the time they come from privileged [backgrounds]. But I pride myself in sharing that I am a first-generation student because, not only do I contribute a unique voice, but it makes everything else I do that much more independent, like knowing that I did everything by myself.

Such decisions to highlight or downplay this aspect of their identity, depending on context, reflected an ambivalence that many participants felt about their educational background. For

some, these conflicting feelings also arose as they navigated relationships with their family and friends.

Family: Connections and disconnections. Study participants also described a number of family experiences that have been commonly reported in the literature on first-generation students. For example, almost all of the participants mentioned feeling a strong sense of obligation to their families because of the sacrifices they had made. This sentiment was particularly true for children of immigrants. After visiting his parents' impoverished childhood home, one student reflected, "Especially seeing where they were from originally, back in El Salvador, and where they are now - in a way, having that in the back of my mind is humbling...[My education] is definitely something that they treasure a lot." In many cases, these feelings of obligation led participants to place a high priority on the wishes and needs of their family members, as did the following student:

Being first-generation, I felt like I had more of a pressure to make the right decisions...Like my family is really important and central to who I am. So I think I kind of tried to make decisions, based upon not necessarily what would be best for myself, but what I felt like would be best for my family and what they would want for me...because I feel like since both of my parents had immigrated to America from the Philippines, that I kind of owed something to them because of that.

Many students felt significant pressure to achieve in school and to take care of their families as well. As one student shared, "I have a responsibility...I want to succeed so my family is not stuck at the bottom forever." Similarly, another person revealed, "Being a male student, I never thought that I would actually finish college because I have the mindset of - I need to support my

family.” As will be discussed later in the chapter, this sense of obligation appeared to have a significant influence on the students’ participation in the community.

Another issue that is frequently referenced in the literature on first-generation students is the sense of disconnection or ‘feeling out-of-place’ that can arise from the vast difference between their home and college cultures. Several students described the internal and external conflict they experienced as they navigated their home and school identities. Sometimes, conflicts arose with family members, as in the case of this student, whose mother criticized that he was “school smart, but not home smart.” He shared, “It comes up every once in a while and it's just kind of like, where's my balance in life? Where should I keep my school stuff actually at school, and how am I going to slowly transition that home?” Other times, participants described strained interactions with their friends from home who did not pursue higher education, sharing, “What they're going through isn't the same as what I'm going through... So there's a gap of communication now that we didn't have [before].” These communication gaps often led to feelings of isolation and disappointment. One student described a painful interaction that he had with his parents on the day that he received his acceptance letter to college:

I remember -- this almost broke me... [My mother] said, “Well that's nice,” and she just walked away. Like there was no acknowledgement for what I had done. And my dad never congratulated me, never told me anything. I remember that day, I was so sad. Like it was supposed to be one of the happiest days of my life, but it turned to one of the saddest because they hadn't understood what just happened. A private university, one of the best ones in [the state], and they didn't understand what I had just accomplished.

These types of frustrating interactions turned out to be quite influential on this young man's subsequent choice to get involved in the community and work with middle school youth from similar backgrounds to his own, as will be illustrated later in this chapter.

Along with this sense of conflict often came a sense of guilt about leaving one's family. One staff person, who is also a first-generation male, illustrates how this is true for the students he works, with as well as for himself:

I think its a common thing for first-generation [students] to feel just a little bit of guilt over leaving...A lot of our students here come from [the other side of the state], and I've heard them talk about that - how they wanna stay [here] but they feel like they should go back cause they have their family there and they have more family commitments, even over the summers and stuff...And even if your parents aren't telling you - I always felt bad I never wanted to go back home... And my cousins will still talk about how they can't believe I left for college and still haven't come back.

For this participant, his conflicted feelings of guilt and obligation to his family and community were a major factor in his choice to eventually choose a career in education and working with youth.

Academic barriers: The meaning of underpreparation for college. Academic “culture shock” is another frequently cited challenge for first-generation students when they begin postsecondary education (Cushman, 2007). A number of study participants reported feeling overwhelmed by the workload and academic expectations, admitting, “it's definitely a step up from what I was used to... It was a real shock, the speed they move at.” At other times, students felt intimidated by their peers when they first arrived at college. For one staff participant, this

feeling of inadequacy initially impeded his ability to engage in college and in the community.

He reflected:

When I think of my college career I wish I would have started doing more of that service experience right from the get go...I think this ties to being a first-generation student as well. I went to a really small high school and I was like, a rock star...and then I went to this liberal arts college and I was so intimidated by being in that space. And everyone seemed like a bright star, you know?...And so I think there was sort of this initial shyness or reticence to get involved - not knowing if there would be failure or if I was up to par to jump into things.

Along these lines, academic underpreparation is one of the most significant barriers for first-generation students to succeed in college. Many of the participants in this study, particularly those who attended public K-12 schools, felt academically inferior compared to their continuing-generation peers and lacked confidence in their ability to succeed. For one student who attended the smaller private university, he felt awkward because, “being a minority here and everyone else went to private schools, and I came from [the public schools] - it's like, oh you guys are so much smarter...If that's in the back of your mind, you're not going to have so much confidence in yourself compared to other people.” Another participant, who attended the large public institution, shared a similar feeling. Here he describes his experience as a freshman, sitting in a large lecture class with hundreds of other students:

I felt like I didn't really deserve a college education because I didn't really feel smart compared to my other classmates...I never valued myself as a student because I always thought that I was dumb. And I guess being a first-generation student is like, I never thought of myself as capable of actually heading to college. I always thought that college

was for people that are third or above generations, wealthy, or any of those statuses. I thought that I would fail and drop out because I had never really had that advantage.

In addition to being academically underprepared, several participants also felt that they were at a disadvantage because they did not have anyone they could turn to for advice about navigating the college experience. In the latter part of this chapter, it will become clear that this lack of guidance had an impact on their choices about community involvement, as was the case for this person who shared, “I can't have someone personal at my reach to ask for help or guidance. [My parents] couldn't even guide me through high school if they tried... They don't know what goes into it. So that affects me a lot. I reflect on what possibly somebody else's situation is.” A staff participant, who has already earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees, provided an insightful perspective on the complexity of this situation:

It's a value system that I think is different a lot of times - where all parents want to see their kids succeed, all parents want to see their kid educated, but all parents can't help their kids get there. I think my parents wanted all that, but they didn't know the steps to prepare us... And I think I went in with some serious deficiencies. Thank god that I met people along the way who helped me out to understand that, and to grow in certain areas. As he reflected later in the interview, he was extremely grateful to the people who mentored him and helped him to achieve success. This sense of gratitude instilled in him a sense of obligation to do the same for others, through his work with youth.

Being Male

Interestingly, participants had much more to say about being first-generation than about being male, which may not be surprising given that men belong to the dominant group while

first-generation status is a subordinate identity relative to continuing-generation college students. The common response, when asked about being a man, was, "I don't think I was cognizant of me being a male on campus." Observations from staff members were more reflective on this topic, presumably because they became more aware as they grew older. One staff person attributed his developing awareness to the leadership training he participated in as an undergraduate, sharing:

For me it definitely was not something that I had thought about or was aware of. And I *started* to become aware of it... this idea that, oh my gosh well, I am male, what does that mean? What does it mean to *me*? What kind of "man" do I want to be?

He further explained how his college leadership training experiences helped him to think about the unspoken messages and perceptions that he picked up in childhood, and how they subconsciously shaped his identity:

It was an entryway into 'men and masculinity.' But I didn't have that language then. I just knew it was - oh well being a man, its much more than just...you know, my thought was, "Oh I'm a *provider*, I'm gonna bring home the bacon" and all of that - cause that was my dad. My mom was a stay-at-home mom and my dad was the "provider." And that's how it was defined. They didn't *say* that - that's just what I saw. And so I was like, "Oh, that's something to be proud of, so I wanna do that.

Another staff participant, who self-identified as gay, had a different experience in his childhood. He explained, "I didn't have this sense of, "Well as a male, these are expectations I have set up for myself." I mean maybe you feel external expectations, but I didn't have super overbearing parents...who wanted me to be hypermasculine." He was more aware of, in his words, "inhabiting a male space" because he had always been involved in activities and majors that had a higher percentage of females. Even so, he was not necessarily cognizant of how these

gender differences played out and worked to his advantage, until later in life. He observed, “males tend to...raise their hand more, or they're the first to speak up in class or some of those typical things. And I think of certain classes in college where maybe I did that and was not aware.” His experiences over time have led him to greater self-awareness and a more complex understanding of gender. He observed, “A lot of people in leadership positions are white men and they just take up so much space and they're talking so much and...I notice that now. Whereas like, I wouldn't have noticed that in college or high school.”

In addition to general questions about being male, participants were also asked to share their thoughts on why males participated in community-based activities at a substantially lower rate than females. Their responses revolved around male priorities and interests, and often highlighted the differences that they saw between themselves and other men.

Self-focused interests. Male interests were considered to be a barrier to community engagement, as participants frequently talked about men being more selfish, preferring to focus on “doing homework and becoming the top competitor within the global economy” on the one hand, or “social things” such as parties and video games on the other. Reflecting upon his own past behavior, one student remarked, “Not to be sexist, but women are so much more caring and willing to lend a hand than males. Males are more...self-interested. And not to generalize, but that's how I've been before too. More interested in myself, less about other people.”

Along these same lines, several students specifically pointed to a male tendency to focus on money. This preoccupation with money was particularly noticeable for one of the few study participants in a male-dominated, science major, who observed, “My friends in my major are focused more on profit - like what benefits me first.” He went on to explain how he was different from them because,

I see money as a means for self-sustainability, but I don't see it as something that I should wake up to every morning and say, "Hey, I want to wake up and make more money."

But my other [friends], I could totally see them saying that.

A number of participants expressed some disdain for their fellow men, sharply criticizing their lack of engagement. One person made the generalization that all men are goal-oriented and just want to get things done. He felt that, "If it's not part of the male-oriented role, then they wouldn't pursue it. They're just like, 'F*** you folks.' They're networking with other businesses or working with other people in order to better themselves."

Social pursuits. On the other end of the spectrum, many students also named social and recreational activities as being especially important to their male friends, as compared to their female friends. This claim is supported in the gender research on college students by Linda Sax (2008). When asked what he thought other men were spending their time on, one participant speculated,

I know some of them go out and drink on Friday nights, even though they're not legal.

And some of them go and play sports and go travel with the sports team. Some of them are into the ladies and just want to go and flirt in class and flirt after school and flirt whenever they can, and so its a wide variety of things that they're interested in compared to being involved in service-learning.

In reflecting upon his own experience as an undergraduate, a staff member remembered, "I just didn't want to engage in things on campus. And I remember my other male friends, like if it wasn't directly related to sports, or something directly with girls around, we just weren't being a part of it." His reasoning was that "I just found it wasn't interesting, it was time consuming, and how did it directly benefit me?" Along the same lines, some of the men who do participate in

service activities have ulterior motives for doing so. Here a student reflects on his experience in high school, comparing the leadership demonstrated by females to the less noble motivations of males:

I was going to join an international club, directed by women and a great number of women in it, and it was to service the Hispanic community. And it was just mostly women, and the males that would be attracted by women there - but not because they wanted to do it. It was more like they were influenced by their girlfriends because they just want to keep talking to them during lunch or something, during the meetings or see them on the weekends type of thing. The girls took the step forward and the guys didn't.

Other participants attributed the difference in participation to natural developmental phases or processes, and how “males mature at a slower rate than females do, and so...you hear the conversations in classes - the males are talking about the party that they had last weekend, while the females are talking about what's in class right now.” He goes on to consider the concept of pleasure-seeking, and how men might be more likely to seek instant gratification than women, speculating, “For example, males might want to play video games when they get out of class instead of going to go tutor somebody. Compared to a female who might want to go tutor someone and *then* go play video games.” Similarly, a staff member who directs several elementary school programs pointed out that some types of community-based activities might just be more difficult for young males in college to connect with, given their age and place along their developmental journey:

In a field where at times you have to be a nurturer -- that's something that males, especially at this age, are not always comfortable with. You're talking about working with five to 12-year-olds...dealing with a crying little boy or young girl who misses their

mommy...For a male that's very hard at that age to adapt to, I think, from some of the conversations that I've had... And a lot of times it's, "Where are you at in your life as a young person? How comfortable are you in those situations?" I would think when I was 18, 19-year-old as a college jock, I wouldn't have wanted to volunteer [here].

Overall, participants were somewhat disparaging about men as a population, although those who were older seemed to be more understanding about the male patterns and tendencies that they observed. This behavior corroborates a theme identified by Davis (2002) in which the men in their study tended to distance themselves from the notion of a "typical" male. In addition, it helps to explain the fact that these participants felt comfortable enough to engage in an activity that is traditionally dominated by females.

Navigating Intersections Between Race, Class, and Gender

First-generation status is often correlated with low-income status, and most of the participants in this study also came from households with minimal economic resources. As such, several students discussed the impact that poverty had in shaping their lives. One student described how his experiences became a motivation for him to pursue higher education:

During the summer of my middle school years, my family would go to different orchards within the agricultural areas of [our town] to pick cherries. And I tried that for a summer just to see what that's like and [for] some extra cash...And going through that made me really experience - I don't just want to go to high school and end up picking cherries for the rest of my life. So that really started the impetus for me to just really direct my efforts towards studying in school and making sure I don't get involved in the gang violence that's surrounding [my town].

Along with discussing poverty, a number of students were very conscious of the privileged backgrounds of some of their peers. Some students processed this difference in a reflective manner, but for others it triggered feelings of anger and resentment. One person explained, “Being first generation - it's taught me valuing everything that you have and appreciate what your parents have done for you...So whenever someone starts complaining...then it's like “Eh, you haven't been around where I'm from.”

One staff member, who teaches a service-learning course each year, commented on the tension that can arise when students from different socioeconomic backgrounds reflect on their service together. This phenomenon has been also described in the literature about race and class in service-learning courses (Henry, 2005; Lee, 2005; Mitchell & Donahue, 2009; Novick, Seider & Huguley, 2011). He observed:

I think for first-generation students in the class...they would react very strongly to some of the things that were said by some of the fellow students who were not first-generation and who, particularly around economics, came from more affluent backgrounds, who were casting judgment upon the people whom the class was engaged with.

The intersection of first-generation status and race raises additional issues. Often, first-generation students are assumed to be students of color. While the percentage of first-generation students is higher among non-White racial groups, national statistics show that the numeric majority of first-generation students in the U.S. is still White (Chen & Carroll, 2005). Although the vast majority of participants in this study were people of color, the two White participants (who were both staff members) specifically discussed the experience of being White and first-generation, and how this “hidden disadvantage” played out in their undergraduate experience. One staff person reflected on his own undergraduate institution, sharing, “As someone who

identifies as White, I feel like you can blend into this very privileged liberal arts school. But I felt significant differences in terms of the backgrounds of my friends' families and things like that.”

Another participant, whose career now focuses on working with first-generation populations, had a more difficult time navigating this space, and provided a unique perspective that is rarely examined in the literature on first-generation students:

In my first year I actually tried to get involved in a couple of things and really didn't find a place. Actually I think that it's probably more difficult for someone who is first-generation and also identified as White to find a community that's organized for me to find other first-generation students. Because a lot of the student organizations are designed or organized around ethnic or racial identity. And so I found myself trying to connect with those groups and just not feeling like I fit in very well...So, trying to find a place that made sense...where I felt like other people understood what it meant to be at a very white institution that was fairly affluent, when I was not affluent and I was the first in my family to be on a campus - there wasn't really a place for that if I was also White.

This difficult situation initially prevented him from getting involved on- or off-campus, and almost led to him leaving the institution. However, he was able to process the experience in a productive way, and eventually found his place at that institution. He continues:

I'm very aware of the multiple, vast privilege that [being White] represents. So I didn't see it as a-- I certainly don't see it now as something that was any kind of bias or discrimination or anything like that. I think at the time it was just hard to experience as an individual - somebody who was trying to find a place and couldn't. And so my first year was actually really difficult, and I spent a lot of time focusing more on my studies than on trying to engage in any sort of community activity.

Although the struggle to fit in was common to both groups, the issues that students of color faced were, of course, different than those of the White participants. In these cases, gender was a conscious aspect of their identity as well. Many non-White respondents talked about both their race and gender simultaneously. In particular, the Black and Latino participants did not just talk about being “Black” or “Latino,” but instead talked about being a “Black *male*” or a “Latino *male*.” When asked about this, one person shared, “I think for me it's one and the same... I think it's difficult for me to separate the two.”

Several of these participants talked passionately about their efforts to break negative stereotypes about young men of color, and about the need to constantly prove their academic ability to others. One young Latino male articulated, “I think...who I am ethnically just makes me strive for more - break barriers, break social thought of what's expected of a young Hispanic...Be able to show others... that anything is possible regardless of your gender, being first-generation, or your ethnicity.” An African-American staff member expressed a similar perspective, which is consistent throughout his interview, and lies at the heart of his motivation to pursue community and youth work:

I always tried to go above and beyond to show that we're not all like [the stereotypical Black male]. And I always think you have a duty - you absolutely have a duty as an African American to do things that much better when it comes to professional life, work life, and once you go outside your house - you do. Because the negative stereotypes are so glaring in American society, that's the perception people have more times than not.

As these findings begin to demonstrate, the identities and personal backgrounds of the study participants were instrumental in motivating them to engage in the local community. In some cases, economic and educational background were the most salient aspect of their

identities, while for others, their race, gender, *and* socioeconomic status were all relevant to their interest in helping others. Regardless of the combination, based on their own experiences growing up, the participants felt compelled to pave the way for others in similar situations. The following section explores these motivations in greater depth.

Motivations for Community Engagement

As noted at the beginning of the chapter, a major piece of the puzzle in understanding first-generation male participation in community-based education revolves around their initial motivations for getting involved, and for their commitment to stay involved. Participants cited many different reasons for choosing community engagement over the multitude of other co-curricular and extra-curricular options available to them, ranging from identity and personal interests to institutional factors. This next section reviews the main themes that were generated from the data, which include altruism, extrinsic goals, personal history, a desire to “give back,” an interest in being a role model to other males, and institutional messaging.

Altruistic Versus Utilitarian Goals

Among college students, one of the most commonly reasons cited for volunteering is altruism, which can be loosely defined as a sense of intrinsic satisfaction derived from helping others (Winniford, Carpenter & Grider, 1997). Certainly, some of the participants in this study reported externally-focused, altruistic reasons for getting involved in the community. For some students, they talked about their motivation to contribute in an abstract or general way, “just thinking about what could benefit others over myself” or “that there was still a need for people to be involved.” Another student took a more systemic view of the problems he hoped to address

through his work, saying that “it's all important, and eventually, the idea is that...you just wish that everyone's all caught up – that everyone has the same resources. But that's a long way away.”

In contrast, some people were very specific about how they wanted to contribute. One student spoke passionately of a particular need that he wanted to fulfill, which is directly related to his own personal experience:

A lot of our students come from a background where they don't really have a person that tells them that they can do it...So for me, being able to be in that supporting role was always the driving factor of why [this program] has been such an important part of my life, is that I want to be able to be that person that my mentees and my students - that they can trust with their own personal life stories, and for me to be the motivating factor, or being that support system that they never had.

Other common motivators for service involvement were less altruistic. These often included utilitarian purposes such as completing a service requirement, attempting to develop a certain skill, exploring a career, or finding a community on campus. Several participants named these types of motivators as their initial reason for getting involved. When describing his introduction to service involvement in high school, one student admitted, “I went for it because I needed community service hours. I mean, I saw it more of an advantage for me than for the kids or anyone else.” However, for him as well as other participants, the requirement led to a deeper commitment to work in the community. Reflecting on his high school experience, another student remarked, “I think it's cool to require service learning because it can get people to open their eyes, if they enjoy it... [Sometimes] there's a fire that's lit.” Many participants also mentioned career exploration as one of their reasons for pursuing community involvement. In

most cases, these students were interested in teaching, working with youth, or working more broadly in social services, and community involvement was the most immediate way to gain direct experience in these areas. One staff person described some of the multiple extrinsic reasons that seemed to attract males to the programs he works with:

A lot of them actually want to go into education...or they're just curious to find out more. We had a guy last quarter...and he just heard about it from someone just talking, and he came and got involved for two quarters for the experience. [Another student] stayed because he had a crush on a girl in the program who is now his girlfriend...And I think chasing this young lady and finding out where she hung out at - she hung out at [our program]. And he became addicted [to working with youth]. So people come in all different ways and stay for different reasons. For [another student] who started as a service-learner...he was more looking for a home on campus.

Although externally-focused reasons were sometimes cited as the initial impetus for getting involved in the community, all participants pointed to deeper, personal beliefs as the primary motivation for them to continue their engagement on a long-term basis.

Personal Context and History

Participants' individual stories provided greater insight into their reasons for pursuing community work. The lessons and experiences that they drew from their families and communities, both positive and negative, often propelled them into this type of involvement.

Family background. One of the more prevalent themes in the data from this study was the impact that participants' personal backgrounds had on their commitment to community-based education experiences. In particular, growing up in poverty was cited as a critical motivator for

several students. When asked why he devoted so much time in the community one student answered, "I kind of grew up in poverty--and still am in it. So you see the struggles of other people, including yourself." He felt that, as a college student, he should use his new opportunities and resources to help others, sharing, "It's more like a value or moral or something of that sort." Although he didn't have many economic resources, he viewed his current position as a college student as one of privilege, and thus felt a responsibility to help others. Another student, who grew up in an apartment building with other low-income immigrants, shared, "This is like a standing-room-only apartment. So I think looking at that and understanding the differences around me...kind of just fueled my passion for advocacy and change and stuff like that."

A few other participants grew up in lower-income neighborhoods and then moved into more mixed-income settings as they got older. These experiences of "seeing both perspectives" seemed to spark an awareness that had a lasting impression on them, and spurred their interest in community work. One student explains,

We moved from a not-so-great neighborhood to a pretty nice neighborhood...And I think a lot of my friends, we had different lifestyles and different ways of growing up...I would say starting around middle school or high school, I kind of realized how lucky I was. And I also started becoming aware...how other kids weren't as lucky as I was, and didn't have ...the support that they needed. And it just became something that I became aware of, and ever since then I feel a lot of joy in making sure that I'm being a part of people's support process, and seeing them start somewhere where they're struggling with something, and then figure some things out.

Still others found their involvement served as a way to process some of their past negative experiences in a positive or productive way. One student felt remorse about the difficult relationship he had with his family when he was younger, and wanted to prevent other young people from falling into similar patterns. When reflecting on his own motivations to work with youth in the community, he shared,

It has to be genuine and there actually has to be a reason and a motive for you to be there...I felt like I rejected my culture so much up until college where - it's kind of like redemption or something. I just really want to make up for all these years that I've looked down on my own culture and [my parents]... And if a newer generation could understand that it would help them a lot, too.

Another student talked extensively about the lack of support he experienced growing up, with respect to education, stating, "I wish somebody would have been there for me to influence me on a personal level." His hope was to provide something to others that he did not have as a young person, by working with students, and "just being that role model that they can see. And I think I have a story that can move people - that nothing is impossible."

Family values. There was a great deal of contrast in the messages that participants received about community involvement as children. Some stated that the idea of "service" was not part of their upbringing or consciousness at all, while others attributed their motivation to the values that they learned from their families about working hard, being a "good" person, and thinking of others. One student explains,

I've always been taught, from very young to just give back in a way...just show that you have some sort of appreciation for what it is that's going on around you. And so I find that one of those ways is through doing some sort of service...it's just kind of a way for

me to be able to show that I'm not just some kid coming in to school with a mentality just focused on himself, but rather someone who's more willing to see things from others' point of view.

Along these same lines, another participant talked about the idea of obligation to one's own community, regardless of one's own situation or resources:

My mother really instilled the concept of solidarity and...feeling a responsibility that if you have that privilege of being able to walk, being able to talk, you should -- I hate to use the term 'help' -- but work with people in liberating them or something like that. So for example, even though we weren't doing well - we were on welfare - I remember ever since I was five, my mom took me to a soup kitchen at [a local church], and we would volunteer there.

In summary, the experiences and motivations of these first-generation, mostly low-income, male participants are quite distinct from the majority of volunteers and service-learning participants, who are middle to upper-class, White women. While the altruistic and utilitarian incentives for participation might be similar across all populations, the personal context and histories that fuel their motivation are substantially different. The inspiration of these first-generation men comes from a place that is much more personal and close to home, and often leads to the desire to "give back."

Giving Back To My People

The concept of "giving back" was another major theme that arose from the data. Many participants used the term at least once, yet there were differences in the ways they conceptualized it. Some students thought about it in vague or abstract ways, as one student

described: “I feel like being engaged within the community is like a new hobby for me, like being able to give back...It's something that I find joy in.” Others spoke about giving back from a more personalized perspective: “I think it's from the idea that my parents, they gave up a lot in order for us to be in America. I guess it's like my own sacrifices that I want to give...like my own passion of giving back.” Interestingly, one staff participant observed the prevalence of this idea among the male students he worked with, although he struggled to define it:

I do tend to hear that guys will say, like, this idea of ‘giving back.’ In the group we have this year, there's a lot of the guys that say that - like "Oh, I wanna give back" or "I like giving back." And I don't know if it's buzz wordy, or if it's like a real thought, or if that is even just a kind of thing you think you should say - I'm not exactly sure what it is. Or there's more to it but they don't know how to express it?

He went on to explain that most of the men who talk about ‘giving back’ come from communities that resemble the ones they are serving. He felt that, even though students didn’t say it specifically, what they really meant by ‘giving back’ was that, “I want to help the people that represent what I came from,” or “I wanna work with *my* people” or “I wanna be back in *my* community.”

Along these lines, there seemed to be two primary groups that people envisioned when they thought about giving back. Many talked about working with or contributing to the actual geographic community where they grew up; but in other cases ‘giving back’ could also encompass a broader target group, which included people or communities that students considered similar to themselves in some way.

Giving back to one’s own community. Several participants were volunteering in the same public schools that they had attended when they were younger. These students were clearly

excited about their involvement and found a sense of satisfaction and pride in literally going “back to the roots” to provide a service. One participant describes the moment he realized where he had been placed:

The first day where we took the bus there, I was like “Woah, that's my middle school and I haven't seen it for so long!” And we drive a little bit further and then we're at the preschool. I was like, “No way! I'm back at where I used to be!” Yeah, it's pretty cool. I think it made a big difference, because then... I was able to go back to the community that helped raise me, basically, and try to help raise them.

Giving to one's own community is qualitatively different from working in an unfamiliar community, as another student who was working with youth at his old middle school, explained:

I feel like you should always give back to people or places that got you to where you are today...If you could give back to the community, people who got you there, it's like family almost. You kind of give them more of yourself than strangers because they got you to where you are.

Another young man described the reciprocal nature of his involvement with the low-income housing organization that manages the building where he grew up as a child. For him, the chance to give back to this organization seems to have served multiple purposes, moving him from a sense of powerlessness to empowerment, and helping him to feel at peace with his past:

At the time, I hated living there. It was such a bad circumstance. But being able to look as an outsider, I want to give back. It's more of a personal thing...So when we lived there [we] felt like we were just a charity case...So me being here by helping out, I can...show that I can give back to them so it's not always just a handout - just basically show that I

made it, basically... I just want to prove to myself that a person can do a complete turnaround of their relationship with someone or something.

Staff members who had been first-generation college students felt compelled to give back as well, particularly when they reflected on their own achievement and success. One participant who completed his undergraduate and graduate degrees shared his perspective:

I think it's inspiring, and it's an obligation. I'm obligated one way or another to give back to my community...these men who took me under their wing. I had my father there, but these are also other men who took me under their wing, who were like, "Something's in you, you have to do great in life." Our community needs that. It's the obligation for those people to come back and do more.

Giving back to people from a similar background. The other main context for giving back involved working with populations who faced similar circumstances or challenges as the participants themselves. Virtually all participants alluded to the significance of helping people with whom they shared a common background, and "wanting to go and work with people that were...like us, a little bit." Most often these commonalities would center around race, culture, or socioeconomic status, and many times these identities were conflated. Both student and staff participants spoke about the challenges they had faced throughout their own educational journey, and how they felt fortunate to have "made it." Furthermore, they felt a "responsibility to look out for other people that have grown up in a similar situation as I have," and expressed a desire to share their experiences and help others achieve their goals. One Latino undergraduate described the motivations of some of the other males who served in his program:

Some of them usually come from a background similar to mine, or they grew up in a community very similar to that of the middle schools [we serve]. So it kind of rings true

to home for them. They definitely feel more inclined to go to that school as opposed to doing service elsewhere, really. But I feel like a good reason why a lot of the men who just go and do service there, it's mostly because they want to give an extra edge to some of the students there who may or may not receive that later on in their life, and just give them this opportunity to see, "Well hey, I come from a similar background as you, and I'm in college right now, and I'm on my way to getting a degree. This isn't the hardest thing. You're able to get through it. There's going to be a lot of tough challenges along the way, but in the end it's definitely worth it."

A staff person who works with a large percentage of first-generation students also observed this pattern among the volunteers in her program, and elaborated on why this type of service experience is different for first-generation versus continuing-generation students:

It's more personal to them, to their life story, and it can be almost a way of feeling like you're impacting the system...but the feeling that you're making an impact on something that directly affected you potentially I think can be, not therapeutic, but personally satisfying in a way that might be different than if you come from a more privileged background and this is something that you do because it makes you feel good and you like making a difference - but it's not your story in that same way.

As has been discussed in much of the service-learning literature that takes a more critical perspective, the idea of "helping" others can seem condescending or patronizing in some contexts. Often, this impression is related to the attitudes or assumptions of the people who are providing the "help," who usually come from a different socioeconomic background than the people being "helped." This difference is less likely to exist for first-generation students, as evidenced by one student who described what "helping" meant to him:

Being first-gen, you - at least my family did - grew up in poverty. So, the helping - it wasn't like, "I want to help you because you are less than me or you don't have what I have." It was more like, "I understand the pain that you're suffering and I would like to help..." I've gotten help from other family or family friends or whatever, who got me where I am. That's why I'm doing it. I understand that pain and struggle and that kind of stuff. I think that's how being first-gen took me to where I am today.

In some cases, students had very specific ideas about the lessons that they wanted to convey through their community engagement. One African-American student felt very strongly about the negative messages that young African-American males are faced with, and attempted to combat these stereotypes through his educational work:

There's so many students who are first generation, or they're low-income or they're minority and I always hear them saying, "Well I can't achieve this and that because of my situation." But I came from a family that only had my mother in the household...She's physically ill. I am a student of color, I come from a low-income family. I had decent grades but I didn't have a 4.0 when I was in high school, I didn't do sports. I didn't do all those things that's expected of students who are African-American. I didn't do rap, but I'm still being successful in what I'm doing. And I want to show them that they need to stop thinking about what people are telling them they can do, and do what they *want* to do.

The impact of negative stereotypes was also a significant motivator for one staff person who is Latino. He was very cognizant of the barriers facing his community, and began working on educational access issues when he was an undergraduate. Together with other male friends, he began visiting local under-resourced high schools where most students knew nothing about college because, "We thought, we had been given a lot, and we were in college, and why can't

they [go] too?” So he and his friends decided, “Well, let’s expose them to what’s truthful about this experience...like don't let the perception of the university deter you from going after your dream. And you deserve to be there. And you belong.” After completing his undergraduate and doctorate degrees, this participant continued to work in higher education. And although his subsequent professional positions did not solely focus on marginalized populations, he did work with them whenever possible, explaining, “That was always very fulfilling for me, and a way to give back...it was always a way for me to carve out a space for students of color to see different ways of being - to see more possibility in their life, that they may not have seen to date.”

The concept of “obligation” seemed to become more prevalent as participants grew older. In particular, a number of staff members touched upon the difference between an ‘interest’ versus a ‘responsibility,’ as they reflected on their development over time. One Latino staff participant describes some of the conversations he has had with his friends from college:

These are the communities we worked with, these are the communities we came from. So we feel like, you HAVE to do something, because you can. So even the next level of responsibility - not just like, “I want to give back.” But I think as we've gotten older it's like, “well, I SHOULD do this. This is where I should be, this is the kind of stuff I should be doing.” Definitely having more of that sentiment as time has gone on.

Sometimes, related to the idea of responsibility was a feeling of guilt for leaving one’s community behind. As noted earlier in the chapter, this is a common theme for students who are the first in their families to go to college. For this same staff person, this combined sense of obligation and guilt played a significant role in his future choice to pursue community engagement through his career. In thinking about the schools he works in now, he explains,

That's my community, that's the kind of schools I go in. When I see the kind of problems they have, I feel like I should go back. Like I should do *something*, cause I think when you get to this point you realize how lucky you were to get to this point...So I always felt a little bit of guilt that I...should help my people. And I think that might be a common thing with other first-generation students... That's part of that 'giving back.' Its like, feeling your own guilt, while trying to work through it. Like, "at least I'm doing *this*, I'm working with Latino students in a [school] here, because I left the ones at home."

As seen in this section, 'giving back' took place most often in an educational context. In other words, not only were participants motivated to give back, but they were motivated to give back in schools specifically. The following section examines the reasons behind this particular choice.

Focus on education. Given the wide range of community-based learning options available, it was interesting to note that the vast majority of participants in this study were engaged in some type of school setting. This pattern contradicts data from the quantitative phase which indicates that first-generation men are less likely to choose tutoring or mentoring, relative to other types of service. Yet, for most of the participants in this qualitative phase, education was a familiar setting in which to initially explore the service-learning experience. One student spoke about his purposeful choice to work in this area, describing, "Focusing on education was important to me because if it was another program I wouldn't be able to apply it to myself as much...Like there's the needle exchange or working with homeless...but they just wouldn't be as valuable because I can't relate." Thus, some students discovered an interest in education as a career, as a result of their community participation while in college.

Several others already knew, prior to college, that they wanted to pursue a teaching career or work with children, and chose education programs to either confirm and refine their career interests, or to gain more experience in the field. In a few cases, students pointed to their personal background as the reason for their interest in education, specifically. One African American student who devoted his time to educational access issues shared,

Sadly we still live in a day and age where people base their thoughts on...your ethnicity...And so that's some things that you deal with as an African American and I've seen how it also affects education. Because there are more African American males who are from my same demographic that are being treated the same way and may not be succeeding in high school or college.

In essence, participants had faced a variety of struggles as a result of their personal and family backgrounds, and felt fortunate to have overcome those obstacles over time. Moreover, they acknowledged and were grateful for the support that they received from others who helped them to “get to where they are.” They believed that they had learned certain important skills and lessons through the process of getting to college, and felt compelled to ‘give back’ so that others in similar situations could benefit and perhaps have an easier time navigating their educational journeys. In addition to sharing knowledge and supporting others from similar economic or racial backgrounds, participants also felt drawn to helping boys and young men. The following section explores this theme in greater detail.

The Significance of Being a Male Role Model

All participants clearly noticed that males were significantly underrepresented in community engagement activities. To follow-up, they were asked whether they felt this lack of

participation was problematic, and if so, why it would be important to have more men involved in the community. A few people indicated that greater male participation would lead to richer experiences at the service-site and more balanced service-learning discussions, because the male perspective would be represented. However, *every* participant felt that the service recipients – particularly boys - would benefit from having more male role models present.

Being a role model to young males. Although most study participants talked about working with people from similar racial or socioeconomic backgrounds, a number of them spoke to the general experience of being a male, or helping other male youth. One student described his motivation for staying with a particular program, despite the large time commitment, sharing, “I always wanted to be there for the boys who were there who didn't have that many father figures in their lives.” He felt compelled to stay because, “especially in the community I was in, there wasn't that many fathers for the preschool children. So it was a big deal for me to not leave, because I didn't want to leave them.” In particular, he reflected on an experience he had working with a male high school student on a college essay. He alludes to the fact that the other mentors did not share the same gender, economic, or racial background with this student, and therefore had difficulty assisting him with his writing in a substantive way. His ability to establish a connection with this student both motivated and inspired him to continue this work. He explained, “I really look for people that I am similar to, because I really want them to make it [to college] too. So it really does influence how I help people.” Similarly, a staff person, who had talked in his interview about the significance of male role models in his own life, articulated,

To inspire the next group I feel like, and as an African American male, as a minority, I have an obligation to do it right. I have an obligation to help every single individual who comes behind me who needs my help, no matter how long it takes, no matter how many

phone calls, letters of recommendation, how many people I need to reach out to. That is my obligation because someone did it for me.

In this case, this man's own personal background and history shaped his deep, lifelong commitment to "pay it forward," particularly to males from a similar background to his.

Being a role model in the classroom. Participants felt strongly that boys across all age levels would benefit substantially if there were more male volunteers in the classroom. Because P-12 educational settings are predominantly staffed by women, boys rarely see themselves reflected in the school, and lack male role models who can emulate positive academic behaviors. One student who worked with preschool children asserted, "[Our program] definitely would have benefitted a lot, especially in a lot of the boy-heavy preschools where they don't get as much positive male role modeling. I think having that in their lives would be very impactful and important." In addition, a staff person who worked for a similar program offered several reasons why he thought male mentors and tutors were so critical:

Teachers tell me, the other [student] leaders tell me, just how important it is to have positive male role models in the classroom. And we're dealing a lot in education right now, of boys having higher rates of behavioral issues and things like that. I think to have other men in the classroom maybe, mitigates that some. Other guys who can think the same way or have the same energy level as they do, and can run around... Like you can see it with the way the boys react to having these big giant tall guys in the classroom...And alot of the women will say [the boys] listen to the guys better.

This last observation brings up a related issue, which is that boys often respond differently to authority based on a person's gender. One undergraduate who worked with middle school youth shared, "If more men did get involved, it would make a significant impact. Because

when I've worked with male students...I noticed that the way they worked with me was very different than the way that they worked with the women.” Another staff person, who was the only female participant in the study, currently works full-time for the program that she volunteered with as an undergraduate. Here, she reflects back on her own experiences when she was a student leader, working with high school students:

There were times when male mentees really could use a male mentor. Whether it's that they didn't really personally respect women - which is not ideal, obviously - but in that case they might need a male mentor in order to really be served effectively...They were reluctant to get involved in [our program], and really needed a strong personality to hold them accountable and be like, “No, sit down. We're going to talk about this.” And a lot of the female mentors...didn't necessarily have the relationship with them that a male might have been able to potentially [have].

Interestingly, a few of these comments draw upon a hypothetical and stereotypically “big” or “strong” male with a high “energy level,” implying that all men are big or that all women are weaker than men, when in reality this is obviously not the case. Nevertheless, most people believed that male youth would respond better to male college students, which in turn would improve the quality and effectiveness of the services provided, and ultimately produce better educational results for the youth themselves.

Being a role model for postsecondary education. Another theme that arose in this section was the notion that male college students from similar racial backgrounds would serve as the best role models to encourage young first-generation males to pursue college themselves. In thinking about the multiple programs he works with, one staff participant mentioned the need for boys to “see people who look like them.” He elaborates:

Not that they *have* to work with males but just be able to, I think the ability to be able to see yourself in someone, and be able to identify [is positive]. I mean if you're working in an after-school program and it's a primarily African-American, immigrant community, and it's all White females coming, I mean how do you think about - how do you see yourself going to [this university]?...It serves our purpose better when we're connecting the broad array of who our students are, to the community.

Another participant, who is Chinese-American, specifically spoke to the significance of race. Based on his own experiences, he believed that, "Male high school students really want to see a male representative, like a male person of color, an Asian, African American, Chicano, Latino...they can see that, "Oh my god, he's a male, I'm a male, he's in college, I can go to college!" First-generation status was named as another significant factor, particularly in the context of motivating young men to go to college. When asked what he would say to encourage first-generation, male college students to engage in the community, one staff member responded:

Because you see where you were at, and you see young people who you can inspire to get to that point. For a lot of them, without that nudge or that direction - because for a minority male, especially a black male and Hispanic males, and even my Asian male friends - the future always looks daunting. Like it looks like it is impossible to achieve that... "I can't go there. I don't know the steps...it's a world that I'm locked out of." And you and I know it's actually not as hard as they think it is... But they don't understand that.

Being a role model for community engagement. Along with being role models for pursuing higher education, a number of participants also suggested that it is important for male youth to see other men who are involved in the community. By seeing other mentors, tutors, and

volunteers who are male, it enables these youth to envision engaging in these types of activities when they get to college. One student notes,

They need to see someone who is like them, doing the same work, in order for them to want to be involved... And if we have males actually there [in the schools]...they can have someone they feel comfortable with asking those questions and seeing themselves entering that same [helping] role when they get into college.

According to one staff person, the presence of males at the service site can even provide validation or permission that community service is an acceptable activity for men to do. He states, "I think men need to see men engaged in service...Like hey, its OK. Like you *should* [volunteer]. This is OK, to give of your time!" This observation raises the question of why males feel like they need permission to pursue community engagement in the first place. This topic will be explored in detail in the following chapter, in the section on community engagement and male gender roles.

One other theme arose from the data analysis, regarding the impact that institutional messaging has on motivation to pursue community involvement. Although this topic was not explored extensively, it does warrant brief discussion, because there was a noticeable difference in participant responses from the two institutions in the study.

The Role of Institutional Mission and Messaging

Institutional context did have an impact on some participants' motivation to serve. More specifically, many of the students who attended the private, religious university named the institution's values as a reminder of the importance of community engagement. Even though the participants were not necessarily religious, they found that the institution's mission to promote

social justice was at the forefront of their consciousness. Therefore, while personal background factors were still the primary motivator for all participants, most who attended the private university also acknowledged the school's role, remarking, "It goes back to the [Catholic] education thing. They focus a lot of their time with community service...that kind of gets some credit." One student explained his thought process in greater detail:

When you are in college you should be doing more than just being a student. You should be supporting the community around you. Especially if you're at a [Catholic] school, because that's the whole model that you signed on to when you first came. And so I always look at it - am I being involved enough to help someone else get the same chance that I did?

In contrast, none of the participants at the public state university mentioned any kind of institutional influence on their decision to get involved. Instead, this group of students attributed their motivation to the personal factors discussed earlier, as well as to the need to find a smaller community within a large campus that served over 40,000 students.

A staff participant, who happened to attend a different religious college as an undergraduate, expressed the same sentiment about the strong impact that institutional mission had on his choices. Although one did not have to belong to the same religious background as the institution, or have any faith background at all, the consistent and ubiquitous emphasis on serving others was enough to instill some degree of commitment to community involvement. The participant shared:

I went to a private liberal arts college and it was affiliated with [a Protestant denomination], and so I feel like service was very much at the heart...the mission of the college...Whether you were a person of Christian faith or not, I felt like the service

component was very integrated into the life of the school. So when I was there, I really kind of latched onto it.

In fact, only one student participant specifically referenced his faith background, and how the university mission complements his religious beliefs, explaining, “The church sort of gives me the direction, but [my university] provides the place to set those goals. Interestingly, he did not apply to this university because of it’s religious focus, but rather due to it’s institutional mission. In thinking about his institution, he shared,

The commitment to the community - that's what really got to me...I remember thinking, if I make it there, I want to participate in a club that helps out the community because I want to make a difference. I don't just want to be the person that laid back and went through college like easy, peezy...And they focus so much on the community. What better place, you know?

For the two institutions in this study, differences in mission were linked to differences regarding how civic engagement was implemented and emphasized in academic and co-curricular settings. As evidenced by the participants comments, this mission was clearly communicated at the private religious university, and noticeably absent at the public institution.

Conclusion

The themes that arose with respect to participant identities as first-generation male college students confirmed much of the existing research on these populations. As first-generation students, they struggled with navigating cultural differences between home and college, and felt anxiety about not being academically qualified or adequately prepared to succeed. In addition, participants’ observations about male behavior and interests were

remarkably similar to the findings on male college students in general, which point to participation in stereotypically hypermasculine activities such as excessive alcohol and substance use, pursuing female attention, and a focus on making money in order to take on a provider role in the future. The intersections between gender, class and race were also evident in the data, as participants often discussed the ramifications of being a male from a minority and low-income background. Specifically, many referred to the added burdens they faced due to stereotypes and racism, and how they constantly felt pressure to prove themselves worthy of being in college.

Findings from this chapter also suggested that these identities and lived experiences of first-generation males were instrumental to their motivations to pursue community-based education opportunities. Their backgrounds as first-generation students, as men, and sometimes as children of immigrants and as people of color, were all directly connected to their interest in working with youth, particularly in educational settings. These connections were most evident in the themes around “giving back” and serving as male mentors. Regardless of what motivated participants to get involved, there were numerous factors that impacted their ability to engage fully, or at least to the extent that they would have liked. The subsequent chapter reviews the main themes that were reported in the data around factors that impacted participation, as well as their direct experiences with community-based education.

CHAPTER 6

Participation in Community-Based Education as a First-Generation Male

The previous chapter illustrated the ways in which identity was a primary motivator for the first-generation males in this study to engage in the community. Moreover, they all felt passionately about their work in the community and had demonstrated their consistent commitment over an extended period of time, either by working with the same program over a number of years, or by participating in a variety of community-based learning programs throughout their time in college. Yet prior research suggests that in general, first-generation students, as well as males, participate in community-based activities at a substantially lower rate than their counterparts. In this chapter I explore some of the possible reasons for these low participation rates. The chapter begins by examining the key factors that may either encourage or deter this population from getting involved in the community, while the latter half of the chapter presents participant observations and suggestions for increasing first-generation male participation.

Factors Impacting Participation

The participants in this study reported a wide variety of factors that influenced either their ability to engage in the community, or their experiences during their engagement. Some of these factors were a function of the environment and were present before they became involved, while others were themes or patterns that they became aware of during their participation. The broad categories that arose were related to financial pressures and time constraints, gender and masculinity, and cultural beliefs or messaging.

Managing Financial and Time Constraints

Virtually all of the phase 2 study participants grew up in low-income households; therefore finances and other external obligations were a constant struggle for them. To pay for their education, many of them had to work many hours a week, thereby making it difficult to participate in activities outside of school and employment, even if they were fortunate enough to be compensated for their community work. Not only did financial pressures cause a great deal of psychological stress for these students, but their work commitments posed a significant challenge in terms of time management and balance.

Financial pressures. Of the 15 first-generation male participants in this phase of the study, only one staff member and two students received substantial scholarships to help pay for their tuition and expenses. The others had to work a significant number of hours to support themselves through school. As is common for many first-generation college students, such persistent financial pressures created a great deal of stress for them. One student, who was heavily involved in two different community-engagement programs, also had to work two jobs while in school. Here he explained his situation:

I relied a lot on financial aid, not grants or anything, but specifically loans, because my family doesn't really qualify for grants and all, so... But at the same time, my family isn't able to fully help pay for my education. So I think that was really stressful and a challenge for me, having to worry about being able to pay for tuition each quarter, having to worry about housing, et cetera...and so it was hard for me to find a balance between being able to have enough money to pay for everything, and also stay engaged with the university with what I was involved in, and also focus on my academics.

These work demands were similar for the vast majority of participants, and hindered their ability to pursue any extracurricular activities, including community involvement. Thinking

back to his undergraduate experience, one staff member described his job that was an hour away from his campus, sharing, “The reason why I didn't volunteer and didn't engage in more activities...is because I had to work... I had a schedule where all my classes were two days a week, and then I would have three days available to [go to work]. Another staff member, who currently works with service-learning students, could understand these pressures because he also experienced them as an undergraduate:

I feel sympathetic for some of our service-learning students, because as part of their class they're asked to work about 3-5 hours a week at a non-profit. And for a lot of students that's fine and it works into their schedule no problem. But, you know, a lot of students are working 20 hours a week, and that means they have to cut back 5 hours on their job around here or something... I can relate to that - you know it stinks when you feel like you really need to have a certain amount of money coming in, and you know you have to cut back on things like that.

The barriers to service participation can be compounded at community colleges, because often there are fewer opportunities to get engaged. Given that most community college students are commuters and work either part-time or full-time, these institutions are less likely to actively promote community involvement because they know that their students simply do not have the time. When asked whether he participated in service activities as an undergraduate, one staff member answered:

You know, I went to community college, and the answer is “no.” Cause I was just trying to make it. I was working, and I didn't even know what community service was. I [just] worked to make money to pay for school. And [service] wasn't even a choice in my

head. What I mean by that is, it wasn't even on the menu of my life options. I didn't even know what it was.

Interestingly, when this person later transferred to a four-year college, he became involved in a number of opportunities in the local community because they were compensated. While the university may have categorized his work as “community engagement,” he was unaware of this concept. This aspect of his story will be examined in greater detail in the last section of this chapter.

Struggling to find balance. Related to the financial challenges that participants faced was the issue of balance, in general. Because most students had to work a substantial number of hours, and because they were committed to their work in the community, almost all of them described having difficulty balancing their multiple obligations. As one student put it, he struggled with “being able to manage my time, as well as being able to commit to a volunteering experience, and as well as maintaining a job and my education all at once-- just trying to blend it all in.” While this is likely a challenge for all college students, it is particularly important to pay attention to this experience for first-generation males, who are at a higher risk of leaving college.

For some students, paid employment was the main obstacle to achieving balance; for others, their biggest struggle was over-commitment. It was common to hear participants say that they spent more time on their community work than they probably should have. When asked about his greatest challenges in college, one recent graduate responded, “I think being able to find a balance between my involvement and also my academics. I loved being involved so I would kind of neglect my academics sometimes.” Despite this issue, he completed school successfully, sharing, “Looking back, I don't know how I was able to juggle all that stuff. I did good in my classes, actually. I was able to stay on top of my homework and my academics and

everything. But I think I had to sacrifice a lot for what I did.” A staff participant who also graduated successfully, shared a similar sentiment, admitting, “I definitely put more time into [my community work] than I did into my classes or to my jobs, cause I liked that more.”

A few other students had greater trouble juggling their academic and community commitments, which negatively impacted their grades. One student in his senior year shared, The school work is suffering a bit, but it's something I've always had struggles with... You have to get caught up in school work when you'd rather be checking up on a kid's grades and how better to help him, and communicating with his teachers or his parents. There's always that homework you have to do, that reading that you don't feel like doing... School, for me it's been an avenue to do other things.

Ironically, he was more interested in keeping track of his student's grades than in improving his own. Although he was on track to graduate, he did feel that he could have done better in school and was somewhat worried about the impact that his grades would have on future job and school prospects. A student in his junior year talked about taking on too many responsibilities, particularly in his first and second years in college: “They always talk about getting involved, and then I tried getting involved...to the point where I was over-involved...I just threw myself in there, and I've learned early what it's like to be burned out.” Wisely, he recognized the problem and decided to cut back on his involvement in his third year, explaining, “I learned a lot through all of that. Now I kind of just want to take a step back because...I wasn't really taking care of myself I guess. So I really just wanted to focus on my studies and improve skills that I realized that I was lacking.”

While all the participants in this study managed to navigate their multiple commitments and still do reasonably well in school, it is likely that there are many others who are unable to

find balance or manage their time wisely. Thus, either their academics or their ability to engage in the community suffers.

Community Engagement and the Social Construction of Masculinity

Gender was a prevalent theme with regard to factors that impacted community engagement. For example, the lack of males in community-based education programs had multiple effects on the participation experiences of men who did engage in the community. In addition, societal messages about male gender roles also played a part in meditating beliefs and perceptions about service and community work.

The gender gap in community engagement. All student participants anecdotally referred to the noticeably higher number of females that were engaged in their service programs. Not surprisingly, staff members had a more accurate, longitudinal sense of participation rates by gender, although only one program was able to provide specific data on this measure. In all cases, the staff participants confirmed that males were involved in their programs at a much lower level than females. Most estimated that their male to female ratio hovered at approximately 20/80, and attributed the main problem to attracting enough male applicants. One staff person described the selection process for a year-long, community engagement program that he facilitated:

We had about 80 students apply for 3 positions, and I mean, I was like, “I really want to interview a male.” There were 3 different positions and we ended up interviewing 5 students for each one, and every person we interviewed was female. There were a miniscule - I would say probably less than 10, maybe like 7 or 8 [men] who applied, and the applications just weren't as strong as some of the others - it just wasn't close enough

where we thought, “Oh let's throw someone in.” So we ended up interviewing 15 females, for 3 positions, for that program.

Another staff member similarly admitted struggling to find male volunteers, and particularly male participants who they felt were qualified to take on more responsibility within their program. In reflecting on their selection processes, she pondered, “As with any underrepresented situation, we've had to balance - do we choose a male candidate for a leadership position who is otherwise less impressive than a female candidate? How do we balance that?”

All staff participants had anecdotal evidence that their colleagues at other institutions around the country struggled with similarly skewed participation rates. They speculated that such disproportionate gender ratios seem to have a “chicken-or-the-egg” effect on male participation; in other words, when men see that a program has only one or two other male participants, they are hesitant to join, which in turn perpetuates the ratio imbalance.

Swimming upstream: Male friends with different interests. Along these lines, a few students reported having many friends who participated in the same community-based activities as they did; however, the majority of participants did not. Some students were very comfortable with the fact that their close friends did not share the same interest in community engagement, saying that “my communities complement each other really well” and “it’s great because we're all very diverse in our own ways.” One young man who worked with preschool-aged children remarked, “I don't know any super-macho guys who gave me any mess for working with kids or anything. Everyone was pretty encouraging all around.” However, other students struggled with this difference in interests because they sometimes found it difficult to have conversations with their friends - particularly their male friends. One person realized that ever since he took on his

community role, “there's not as many of my close friends that I have with me throughout this... They all appreciate it, and they all enjoy what I do, but they wouldn't do it themselves.” When asked to describe what his friends thought about his involvement in the community, he elaborated on how their conversations became strained at times, because controversial issues would come up:

It's hard for me to get a conversation going with them sometimes about what I'm actually learning or what I'm really passionate about because our interests are so different. And then going down that path will eventually lead to a conversation that people don't want to have. Like when you start talking about inequality in education and things like that, those are conversations that are generally just going to turn negative. Especially since my friends are - they're all different sorts of races. So it could really go heavy on one side, and then one side could feel left out, or one side could feel like they're the oppressor or whatever. It quickly turns to that.

Sometimes, certain perceptions of ‘helping professions’ also led to antagonism or emotional distance between friends. This same student, who was a social work major, continued to reflect on his relationships:

Having conversations like that with my friends are hard. And especially since I feel like they're all really just focused on the money aspect of it. And...when they hear me talk about social work, it's not valued as much because it's not making that much money. So I'm in a place where it's just me, and whenever I go in a group I'm with them talking about *their* things.

Many participants pointed specifically to gender differences in the types of interests their friends pursued. Not surprisingly, almost all participants indicated that they had more in

common with their female friends than their male friends. One person from a small, rural town bitterly described his experience going back home and talking to his high school friends about his service work, explaining, “I [tried talking] with my guy friends, and they were not very accepting to it. They just shrugged it off. They were more concerned about other things...they didn’t care.” Another student admitted that he liked talking to his female friends more because, “I just feel like their conversations are more exciting or better for me than the conversations about sports or things like that.” He elaborated on the specific differences between his groups of friends:

The group of girls that are my close best friends...they're going into the medical field and things like that. And I could talk to them - and they're actually interested in what I'm actually doing...And then with the guys, they're interested in all sorts of-- there's sports and all over the place. And I don't care about sports and things like that. It doesn't really matter to me what they talk about, so I'm just lingering around, just hanging out.

For those students who have trouble bridging the gap between their community interests and their friendships, it can become an uphill battle to pursue these types of activities. One staff participant talked about working with students to navigate these relationships, and named it as a barrier to getting males more involved in the community. He explains,

Like most things with young people, it's cool to get involved, but when you're the only male or one of a few males and there's seven, eight women around, it's a little bit harder to want to be involved and constantly come around. And I think we tend to flock to people who look like us, we flock to our nationality, we flock to our culture, we flock to our gender. We do that as people. It's not ill will, it's just what we do naturally.

Despite the struggle to contend with indifferent or negative responses from friends, several participants were able to name some more positive aspects of being only one of a few men in these settings.

Receiving special treatment as a male. As noted earlier, all study participants were acutely aware that they were one of only a few males serving in the community, anecdotally citing an average of 2 males for every 8 females in their programs. In contrast to the literature on women, which indicates that females often feel uncomfortable in male-dominated settings, virtually none of the study participants reported negative feelings about being in the gender minority. One student described how this experience impacted him in the classroom, explaining,

I didn't mind being the only male in my cohort or one of the few men in my service learning courses just because it gave me this kind of responsibility that I should also share my opinion. And...I guess my voice carried more weight because I was able to provide a perspective that was different from the rest of my cohort.”

In fact, a number of participants shared that males seemed to get special, positive treatment in these situations. For example, when applying for a scholarship that focused on civic engagement, a student arrived at the group interview to discover that he was the only male candidate in a group of nine females. In thinking back on that experience, he speculated on the advantageous impact of the scenario, sharing, “I was the only male in the room, so maybe that helped me or something.”

Several other students also reported that their gender was a noticeable aspect of their identity in these settings, because of the preferential treatment they received. Only one participant seemed to feel some discomfort about this, and describes the interactions he had at his service site:

I was always aware that I was one of a few [men] that were actually a part of the program. So my gender is a big deal... I was able to see how I was treated differently just because I was a male. Even if I was a minority in a program, I was still getting unearned privileges. So...the teacher that I worked with in the preschool would treat me differently because I was male, and she was happier to see me. She'd save food for me and stuff like that. It felt nice, but I was like, "I don't want those extra privileges that my other teammates aren't getting." So, it made me really aware of my position...It's a weird kind of dynamic.

A staff participant acknowledged witnessing similar incidents during the volunteer recruitment process as well as at service sites, where teachers and children noticeably treated male volunteers differently. In particular, he shared a story about a preschool classroom site visit he was conducting:

I got there right at the beginning, so everybody's walking in. So the team leader walks in and the kids all cheer, and they come up and they hug her, and they're thankful. And some of the other team members walk in and they're like "Oh!" and they scream out for everyone. And they only have one guy on their team and *he* walks in, and *every* child jumps up and they all know his name, and they're like, "JOHN!!! MR. JOHN!!!" and they run up to him and they hug him. You could tell he was embarrassed by how much attention they were giving him.

While such visible displays of enthusiasm seemed to be more prevalent with younger children, all the participants who worked in the schools felt that male youth appreciated having men volunteers at the service site, even if they did not verbally or emotionally express this feeling. This finding parallels some of the research on men in traditionally "female" professions,

who often receive fair, and even preferential treatment in the workplace – sometimes referred to as the “glass escalator effect” (Williams, 1992).

Needing a tangible feeling of accomplishment. Aside from examining the reasons for low male participation rates, another line of questioning explored what male students might learn from their community-based experiences, as compared to female students. About half of respondents did not notice any difference in the outcomes that students seemed to take away, although most of them admitted that they did not have many examples to draw from because there were so few males in their programs. However, the other half of participants gave surprisingly similar answers to each other, describing a male tendency to prefer tangible rewards or outcomes from their community involvement. When asked to describe what he has observed with students, one study participant, who is a recent graduate and is now working full-time in the service-learning field, explained it very clearly:

I think with females it's more from an emotional standpoint, whereas for men, I think it's more task-oriented... So, for emotional - being able to have some connection or deep conversation with a student, for example, and how that impacted them. Whereas with a male they'll maybe say, “We completed a personal statement,” for example, more so than mentioning that personal connection or more of that emotional standpoint. It's more from a task-oriented or accomplishment-oriented aspect.

This finding may not be surprising, when considering the literature on masculine gender roles and the need to suppress emotional connections and expression. Other participants reported similar observations, although they emphasized the male focus on practical benefits even more explicitly. According to one staff person, this theme is quite common among the men he has worked with:

I think for some of the males, it seems a little bit transactional sometimes. Maybe they have real motivations for doing service work, but I think sometimes it might be really explicitly tied to like a career or something like that...talking about really specific, tangible...transferable work skills.

In some cases, participation in community-based learning was blatantly self-serving. A male student, who had been on the leadership team of his program for several years, indicated that of the males who did get involved, many “just see [our program] as an easy two credits...So [after one quarter] they leave. That's sort of what I've observed...it's never that they're passionate about education or pursuit of social justice or any of that. So it's just - get in, do some work, get out, put it on your resume.” He was clearly frustrated by this pattern of using the community-based program for one’s own personal gain.

Specific examples of the tendency to focus on practical outcomes and concrete accomplishments also came from the participants themselves. When asked about the most rewarding aspects of their work, participants often named the completion of specific projects, or visible proof of movement toward a goal. One student who worked with preschool children twice a week shared, “It was nice just seeing improvement. And you see improvement quick...And it's just that constant improvement every other day. It just made me want to keep coming back.” Another person seemed to think about his work with a middle school student as a time investment that produced results, explaining, “I noticed that she has started to pronounce a lot more challenging words better, so that makes me feel like the work that I'm putting in is actually paying off in a way. That's definitely a positive experience.” Similarly, others viewed their students’ successes as a reflection of their own success, such as this student who volunteered with high school seniors: “When a student calls you or texts you or emails you

saying that I got into this school, I've gotten this scholarship...it's just so self-rewarding - when a student feels accomplished, you feel accomplished because you've done the work to help them.” Across all of these examples, the common theme was the participants’ emphasis on concrete, tangible outcomes as the most satisfying aspects of their involvement.

Participants also seemed to enjoy the *process* of trying to achieve a goal, as if it were like solving a puzzle. Another participant, who plans on working with children as a career, described what he liked most about his community-based work. While he does mention an appreciation for the relationships he developed, he focused mostly on this gradual progression toward a goal, referring to it as a *game*:

When you first start out, you got kids who don't want to do things... And then once you get to spend time around them... you start to be able to find ways to get them to do the things they want to do and start to like to do things that they need to do to progress. I think that game, almost, of ‘how do we get progress?’ is something that I really enjoyed playing... Even if it's a slow progress, just little tiny things that build up over time are just very rewarding and made me feel good, not just in the classroom, but outside as well.

One student found the greatest fulfillment from knowing that he had made a significant contribution, feeling “like I was actually doing something important” and “being recognized for all the work that you do.” When describing the various community-based projects he had worked on, he shared, “these communities gave me a platform to be remembered and to leave a permanent mark in the lives I've been able to improve through my community work.” This same student also brought up the idea of *ownership*, and the importance that it may hold for males in particular, elaborating: “As a male, if I contribute to something, that means I play a role in it. I

feel like maybe my male friends...don't give back because they feel like they don't have any ownership of the work that they do with their community.”

To illustrate even further, he told a story about a group service project with Habitat for Humanity, that he organized for a large group of his fellow male college students. While this group was initially reluctant to participate in the project, by the end of the day they had all enjoyed the experience immensely. Because the recipient family was present to help work on the house, the men were able to learn first-hand about “all the hardships that this family had to endure to even qualify for [this house]. And for them, it got them really inspired. Just to show them how privileged they are to have their own house, to have their own home.” In his final analysis, the student credits their positive experience to the type of work they were doing - namely, building a house. He shares, “Whenever we visit that house, there's the entryway steps, and two of my friends go, “Oh hey, I built those steps that we're standing on.” He revisited the idea of *ownership*, explaining the importance that males place on concrete outcomes:

That's *ownership* of their work - because they actually play a role in doing it, they had a tangible, concrete outcome - and I guess for guys, that's what's really important, to just know that you've done something and you haven't just wasted your time filling soup cups at the kitchen. Or just stocking cans at the food bank - you haven't really done anything. But if you built a wall for children's safety, you've built a wall! You've built a tangible thing! You can see it. You've owned it because you've labored-- you've done the work. But in the food bank, you could walk in the next day, nobody would have known that you've been there.

Of course, this study did not include female participants and so it is difficult to compare these answers to answers that women may have given. However, the findings along this theme

closely corroborate previous research conducted by Chesbrough (2009), who found that men were more likely to focus on the *outcomes* of their service and what they were able to accomplish through their work, whereas women tended to emphasize the *process* of their work and the caring relationships they developed.

The limitations of traditional male gender role expectations. Notions of gender role socialization and restrictive cultural definitions of masculinity clearly played a significant role on male participation in community engagement. In fact, many participants were quite articulate about the pressures of being confined to a narrow set of masculine stereotypes, and the negative impact this has on getting males involved in the community. More specifically, people talked about “the culture we live in” and how it shapes “the roles that you're supposed to play.” One student commented on societal expectations and how they are manifested in real life, saying,

The men are supposed to be the protectors and the females are supposed to be the ones that care about things. And so, the women that I've met through this work care more about other people's futures than they do about just protecting their grades or protecting their lifestyle...they care more about going beyond that even if it hurts what they're doing, to make sure that someone else is being successful.

In other words, this student feels that females are not only more likely to help other people, but may even set aside their own needs to attend to the needs of others. In contrast, he implies that very few males would be willing to make that kind of sacrifice. More significantly, he attributes these behaviors to “the way that society has raised males and females.”

Participants also pointed to stereotypical definitions of “masculinity” and how they are directly counterproductive to the pursuit of community involvement. One student was very specific about these stereotypes, explaining:

I feel like the idea of helping people doesn't fit the "masculinity role" or whatever. They just don't feel like if you help someone that makes you a man. You've got to bring home money to be a man. You've got to do karate to be the man. You've got to be really smart at math-- I don't know why-- to be a man. And helping people doesn't make you a man, it just makes you someone that helps people. I kind of just see that as why [men] don't really want to help that much.

As mentioned in the previous section on male interests, heterosexist notions of hyper-masculinity also dictate the boundaries of what is considered acceptable male behavior, thus influencing the choices that people make. In reflecting on the actions of his male friends, one student observed:

[Helping out] shows that you have a soft heart or a soft spot, which a lot of guys my age don't want to show. Work, gym, school - that's it. Helping out in an organization...they don't want to do that because it shows they have a soft spot. So...to prove their masculinity...they'd rather be going to the gym or chasing after girls.

Along the same lines, gender roles are also restricted by homophobic beliefs and attitudes. Another student shared the story of his own struggles with masculine stereotypes when he was in high school, and described how he was eventually able to break free from those barriers and pursue his own interests, which included volunteer work. As a high school wrestler, he recalled, "people will call you gay because you're wearing spandex, touching guys, so you've *got* to be [gay], you know?...But then as time went on I got past that, and then it was like, "I'm doing things because I like it, not because of what other people say."

A few people attributed these types of gendered expectations to their own family members, as well as to the broader society as a whole. In particular students talked about the men

in their families, and their ideas of what men can and cannot do. One student provided an example of these kinds of messages, commenting, “men are taught to just do the work...and not really concentrate on the compassion...A good example is my uncle - when my mom died, he was like, stop crying, that's not what a male does.” It is also more acceptable for men to exhibit selfish or individualistic behaviors, as another participant explained:

In a way [men] are very narcissistic...The activities that they choose to get involved with are more for their own personal pleasure or their personal interest. And that's usually the case just because, I don't know, a lot of times fathers raise them to be that way, at least mine did. So “just do what's best for you” - that kind of a mentality, which I think is very prevalent in today's American culture anyway.

These ideas of individualism and competition are also more often associated with males, and with dominant Western cultures. An African American staff member commented briefly on some of the racial dynamics that are tied in with gender roles, and more specifically on the types of White males who were more likely to gravitate towards community involvement at his institution:

“I march to my own beat. I am an individual...” Those are the type of white males that are more attracted to be involved in our program. It's the reason we don't have many males from the business world, and those very precise, dominating, powerful type of fields that we see in American society...At this point in life - those social issues that we are dealing with and trying to work with - this is not something on their radar at this point in their lives. It's just not. Their lives are, “I'm going to get really high grades, I am going to make a lot of networking contacts, I'm going to come out and make six figures when I leave here.” Those are a different type of white males than I think we attract to our work.

This focus on money and success is, of course, also influenced by societal expectations about the role of the man as breadwinner in a familial context. One student discussed the impact of these pressures and expectations on males having “a greater affinity toward money, and a greater affinity toward security, greater affinity towards just sustaining themselves and their family.”

This theme of the male “provider” seemed to apply to men across different racial groups and nationalities. One student shared this sentiment about immigrant males in particular, saying that his relatives could not see the value in community involvement. “They just say it's all about money and settling here. So maybe I am different because I was born here and I do have that inherent privilege of being able to get involved because I don't have to work to maintain a home yet.” One of the staff members found that these beliefs were common for men of color as well:

One [African American] young man said to me, “I don't want to go into education. It seems like if I work with youth, we're going more into education and that's not what I want to do. It doesn't pay enough...” For males, it's not always the most financially-appealing field to go into...Society tells you, you need to be the bread winner in your family. If you're making \$50,000 a year, a lot of times, and that's a conservative life, you can't have the sustainable family in the long run, especially in today's time.

Because of the relatively low compensation, another contributing factor to the low number of males in community involvement and helping professions is the lack of male role models in these fields. A number of participants specifically noted the gender disparity in educational professions, observing that “Not a lot of males are within the educational field, but there's so many females” and that “you find a lot of guys in business and other math and science and things that are more perceived as successful careers, in a sense.” One student astutely commented on the impact that these gendered careers have on children, saying, “I think as kids

you kind of model what you see, and a lot of times you reflect your environment.” In other words, traditional notions of masculinity and “being a man” discourage pursuits that involve caring, teaching, or helping others.

The findings in this section highlighted themes around the ways that study participants experienced their community-based involvement as males in a predominantly female environment. Moreover, these findings also provide insight into the connection between male participation in community engagement and the traditional patterns of male gender socialization that exist within the broader societal context. In the next section, the influence of additional identities are considered.

Communities of Color and the Idea of “Service”

Race and ethnicity added another dimension to the challenges that first-generation male students face in getting involved in the community. More specifically, cultural conceptions of “service” or “community involvement” sometimes interfered with what was perceived to be a productive use of time. Several participants alluded to the fact that “volunteer” or “service” activities might seem foreign or impractical to people who are not White, particularly when juxtaposed with the need to generate income. While this idea is clearly intertwined with socioeconomic issues, it is still an interesting one to explore, given that many students of color would also be the first in their families to attend college.

In reflecting on his year-long volunteer experience after college, a White staff participant described a conversation he had with a friend who had been a first-generation college student of color. This friend could not understand why anyone would take a volunteer job after graduating from college, saying, “People wouldn't want to do that type of program. Like, you want to go to

college and be able to have a job and take care of yourself.” Although the participant did not say it specifically, the implication was that only college-educated White students from middle to upper income families would consider participating in this kind of long-term volunteer program.

An African-American staff participant also referred to the challenge of getting students of color engaged in the community. Focusing on financial barriers, he implied that most students of color simply do not have the financial resources to participate in activities such as community service, and notes that many community engagement staff are not aware of this pattern:

Minority males -- we struggle with minorities, period, to have them involved. It's a White, female-dominated department when it comes to college students. And the problem is - we harp about how to get more males, how to get more minorities. But we don't talk about the difficulties for them to get involved. A lot of them are not here on full ride scholarships. [This university] doesn't give as many scholarships as they did 10 years ago...not even close. So these students are paying their way through school. And if I'm paying my way through school, the last thing I'm going to do is spend two and a half hours in the afternoons volunteering at an elementary school or a high school or middle school. I don't have the time, because I need to find a way to take care of myself to get through this school. And that's one thing we don't necessarily always take into account.

One idea that was not originally addressed in the interview protocol, but that arose in a few of the interviews, revolved around the definition or conceptualization of “service.” This topic did not come up for any of the undergraduates, but did arise for a few of the older staff participants. The widespread emphasis on community service and volunteerism in K-12 schools is a relatively new phenomenon, particularly with regard to service requirements for graduation. Therefore, older people who completed high school over 20 years ago are less likely to have had

formalized community service integrated into their secondary school experience. For this generation, a common definition of “service” could be harder to articulate. In particular, one staff member talked about the extensive community-based work that he did as a college student, and how he did not perceive that work to be “service:”

I didn't know it was service. So I think, over time I think it was educative for me to learn, in fact it *was* some kind of service. Cause I had grown up seeing community service as a car wash, or a bake sale, or a lemonade stand on the corner - I just didn't know what it was.

However, when he reflected further he realized that he had done things in his life that could be considered “service.” The main difference was that his family had never used that terminology for it. He continued:

But its interesting - you got me thinking. For my parents, giving was very important. I don't remember them ever talking about service. Being generous was a part of their life. But I don't remember ever, at any point in time, saying, “Hey family...we're gonna go and volunteer time at the library, or... So then all of a sudden I get to college and there's SERVICE. And I'm like, “Er, what *is* that? And is that for someone else? Like, is that because you have free time?” Like I just couldn't...it just didn't compute. Cause I was like, “I got a debt to pay. My quarterly bill. How do I pay it?” So for me I think it was being first generation but also being economically in a place where I needed to work.

What this participant’s experience suggests is that many people from similar backgrounds as this participant, namely, first-generation, low-income, and a child of immigrants, may be involved in activities that could be defined as “service,” and yet they may not identify with that terminology. It is possible that terms such as “community service” and “community

engagement” are cultural constructs that are predominantly used by White, college-educated, middle and upper class populations, and that people who are from first-generation, lower-income, non-White backgrounds engage in these kinds of activities through different channels. A similar theme arose in Gilbride-Brown’s (2008) research on students of color in service-learning, in which her participants “simply did not view their involvement with the high school students as ‘service’” (p. 118). Such confusion over semantics could have substantial implications for recruiting these populations to engage in the community. The same participant explains:

I think if you grow up with that [idea of service], it has meaning. There are a ton of students who say, “I came to [this university] *because* of service.” It has meaning. I wouldn't have been one of those students, had you interviewed me back then. I would've said, “Service - ok, that's of value. It sounds good. Do I wanna do it? Well, could I make money doin it? Like, I need to pay the bills.” And in my experience economics was part of being first-generation. I can't say that economics would be an impact for all first-generation students - I can't make that assumption, but I know for me it was. So the motivation was, I feel some pressure to pay the bills. And how am I gonna do that?

Interestingly, despite this perception of service as being “for someone else,” this participant was extremely engaged in the local community while he was in college. But if you had asked him whether he was doing “service” at the time, he would have answered “No.” This response begs the question about whether students from these backgrounds are already involved in the community at higher rates than data suggests, and whether there are more effective and culturally appropriate ways to engage these populations. For example, another staff person brought up the fact that many ethnically-focused student groups get involved in their local community at least

occasionally; yet it is rare for these groups to think about or market these activities as “service.” He shares the following example:

A lot of students that we work with tend to find their place in those [ethnic] communities, and...those organizations often will do community service work. Sometimes it's multiple one-time kind of things, and sometimes it's sponsoring an agency. When I was at [a previous job], I was an advisor for a Latina sorority that each year would do several events for the Hispanic mother/daughters program...I don't have a great sense of if there's a theme within the types of volunteer activities that people are involving themselves in. But I would say that it's often either related to education as a larger piece, or it's related to some connection to the community that that group is kind of organized around.

Together, these stories speak to the importance of compensation for community engagement, as well as more culturally responsive messaging, in attracting first-generation males to these types of activities. The significance of such engagement lies in the potential it has for transforming a student's life. For the staff participants in particular, these opportunities led them to discover a passion, and subsequently pursue this work as a career. As one person who currently works for a community-based program explained, he was introduced to community work through his work-study job. Initially he thought, “Great, I get to play with kids and get paid for it! Its the best thing ever.” But after getting involved, he realized, "Oh I actually really like this, I wanna pursue this.” Similarly, another staff person reflects on the impact that his community experiences had on his career, sharing, “Had that been an experience that wasn't stipended, I wouldn't have done it. And I don't know how significantly that would have affected my post-graduate plans, but I think it really - I guess alot of times I think about everything kind of building on, one thing to the next.” Although he does not try to predict whether he would have

found his current career regardless of that particular experience, it is clear that he considers it to be the initial catalyst that enabled him to find his “vocation.”

In looking back upon the central factors that impacted participants’ community engagement, it appears that the vast majority had a negative impact on their participation. Financial constraints, time management, and gendered as well as cultural perspectives on service served mostly as inhibitive influences on their ability or inclination to participate. Yet despite these adverse conditions, study participants still maintained their commitment to the community. In the following section, this evidence is considered as the participants explore possible ways to increase the involvement of first-generation males.

Supporting Engagement in Community-Based Education

This portion of the chapter highlights several aspects of community-based learning that enhanced participants’ experiences, or enabled them to participate in these types of experiences. Some of the strategies are drawn from the data on participants’ own accounts, while others are taken from their suggestions, based on what they believe would be effective. For example, offering some type of compensation for participation in community-based education would alleviate at least some of the financial burden that most first-generation students face. In addition, considering the unique perspective of males may be critical to increasing their involvement. The following sections describe these approaches in greater detail.

Compensation For Service

Many of the study participants were compensated in some way for their work in the community. They all expressed a strong desire to pursue this type of work, and compensation was critical to their ability to do so. Some were paid through community-service work-study

positions or stipends, others received course credit for their service-learning work, and still others were able to secure enough financial aid to enable them to pursue some activities in the community. One person talked about his tutoring position in a local school, explaining, “Had I not had a good financial aid package, I wouldn't have been able to do this. I would have had to have a higher paying job.” Another staff participant, who attended an expensive private university, had to work three jobs throughout his college experience. He shared, “it was a *lot* harder if I didn't get paid for something. You know, it was always a thought - like I have to get paid for one of the activities I'm doing, cause otherwise I can't do this.”

Even with compensation, some students still found it challenging to engage at the same level that their higher-income peers were able to do. Because they still had work obligations, they did not have as much time to devote to extra events beyond their scheduled hours. One staff participant described a full-time, service internship experience that he had in college over the summer, and how he needed to supplement that stipend with another job on the weekends. He felt that this extra work commitment hindered his ability to participate in his internship to the best of his ability: “A lot of my peers...outside of their 40 hour a week, were able to be more involved informally in the community of the church. Whereas I felt like I needed to also keep this other job on the weekend.” Because he attended an expensive, liberal-arts college, he was constantly reminded of his financial constraints, in comparison to his peers. Here he explains how these constraints significantly limited his community engagement experiences as an undergraduate:

I feel like at this college you were sort of bombarded with all of these really great opportunities, to do all of these things, all of these programs. But often these types of service things or study abroad things or research things -- there wasn't funding attached to

it. It was like, “Do this summer internship for no money” or something. And so a lot of times I felt like a lot of those options weren't available to me. Or I didn't really know how to access them.

In addition to strategies that address financial constraints, the findings from this study suggest that it is important to consider gendered perspectives on community engagement, with the goal of encouraging more males to participate. A number of these ideas are presented in the following section.

Strategies to Involve Men

With their own community-based experiences in mind, participants were asked to provide ideas or recommendations for recruiting more male college students to get involved in their programs. Given the multiple claims that men are more focused on their own interests, as well as on outcomes and accomplishments, most of the study participants recommended strategies that subconsciously capitalized on the same gendered characteristics that they described earlier. One student admitted, “it kind of goes back to this idea of individualism and kind of how their outlook on life is more geared towards themselves as opposed to the benefit of others.”

Providing incentives that are attractive to males. Across the board, all participants felt that incentives were necessary to attract and retain men. The most prevalent suggestion was to “try to give as many benefits as possible” for getting involved, ranging from food, to quarterly networking events, to recognition dinners and certificates. The most creative idea came from a Business major, who suggested “having mentors come on campus with the high school students and play video games for 30 minutes, and then work on tutoring and stuff, so that everyone feels like their needs are being addressed.”

Along the same lines, people spoke to the importance of highlighting the existing benefits of community engagement, including possible work-study compensation or course/internship credits. It was also critical to emphasize possible career opportunities such as networking, skill-building, and potential internship or job contacts. A staff member talked about downplaying the tutoring or work-focused aspects of the position, and instead emphasizing the fact that “you get to run around outside with these kids.”

People also came up with various ideas to make men “feel special.” One student recommended having someone check in with volunteers about their own mental health and grades, so they feel like they’re being supported academically. He also suggested providing discounts on gym memberships and massage treatments, so “they feel like they’re being treated properly and being respected and being cared for.” To summarize, he said, “It’s about basically creating a family feel through their volunteerism.” Another perspective on this strategy was to explicitly tell males that they were needed. One staff person shared part of their recruitment strategy:

When we go do an info session and talk about it, and you see guys in the room - I kinda tell them - here's why it's important. Teachers say it's important, there's not a lot of guys, it's good for them to have male positive role models. It is to push that idea of responsibility, and also to make them feel special. Like, you *should* do this, and you'll be *loved* for doing it. The kids will just *love* you when you're in the classroom.

In other words, simply being explicitly told that they are needed could be enough incentive for some men to consider participating.

Targeting men in recruitment. Specific recruitment strategies were also discussed, one of which included targeting recruitment in male-dominated places, including fraternities and

majors with large percentages of males. One student suggested “building partnerships with community groups that serve a male audience, or that have a mission statement focused around male empowerment” because men might be more drawn to working with these types of programs.

Other recommendations were to make men more visible in marketing materials and recruitment presentations, in order to break down the stigma of service, and so males can envision themselves participating. A staff person shared, “We put up a lot of posters. We always try to have at least one that has some guys in it, so it doesn't feel as like, “Oh, I can't do that.”

Many people mentioned the importance of personal connections, word-of-mouth, and having current male participants recruit their friends. In fact a substantial number of the study participants themselves initially became involved this way. Paradoxically, one staff member hypothesized, “If we got more males involved, a good cohort of males who could help recruit and promote it with other males, then I think we would get a larger male turnout.”

Systemic strategies to involve males. Although the vast majority of participants shared practical strategies for getting more males involved, a few people came up with more complicated or idealistic suggestions. One staff person thought that the most successful strategy to involve first-generation men in particular, would be to incorporate community-based activities into a larger and more comprehensive program aimed at student retention and persistence. He explained,

I don't think in isolation...that “service” will be the draw for a large group of first-generation men. I think if its part of a structure...or program, that is aimed to support them, invite them in...I think that helps. Even if they don't know its service, “Hey, we're gonna go do this as a group...” Because if I look back on my experience, I still didn't

know it was service... But I loved [those experiences] at the time - they were formative. So that might be a way to engage first-generation men in service - whatever we wanna call it. As a part of their leadership program that's aimed at their retention.

Another student also spoke specifically to recruiting first-generation men of color, indicating that he would try to appeal to their sense of duty and identity. He focused on the empowering aspects of community engagement, and the need for social change in order to "have the opportunities a white male may have... Not for us, but for our children and their children." He went on to say, "I think I would tell them if you continue to ignore this or you just don't feel like it's important, just understand that things will continue to be the way they are. And that your struggle will be the same for your children."

One other student, who was a recent graduate, provided an answer that spoke to the need for systemic change with respect to gender role expectations and stereotypes. He very eloquently shared,

It's something that needs to happen as a collective effort in how we school our children, and how we teach them about social issues, and how we teach them about gender, and how we teach them about how we interact with other people... and just breaking those [barriers] down and understanding what we *can* do, and not what we have to be limited to.

Taken together, these recommendations provide the beginnings of a roadmap, with both immediate steps and long-term goals, to move towards increasing the involvement of first-generation males within community-based involvement and learning activities.

Conclusion

This chapter began by presenting an analysis of the factors that had an impact on participation of first-generation males in community-based education activities. In essence, even though participants were passionate and committed to their community-based experiences, they encountered a variety of conditions that made it more difficult for them to participate. They had to go to extreme efforts to make time for these activities amidst academics and work schedules, and find opportunities that provided some kind of compensation. Moreover, many made the conscious choice to pursue these activities in spite of the different choices that their male friends made, and in spite of the underlying societal messages about masculinity and the types of activities that “real” men should engage in. If one extrapolates out to the broader population of first-generation males, who may not have an intrinsic desire to get involved in the first place, it is no surprise that very few of them participate in the community at all.

If community-based education has the potential to improve academic engagement and motivation for first-generation males, then it is imperative to try to increase their participation in these types of programs. Given the aforementioned obstacles to participation, the second half of the chapter offered a number of structural and programmatic strategies that could be used to increase the participation rates of this population. Financial compensation in the form of work-study or stipends, course or internship credit can make a critical difference in enable first-generation students to participate. Furthermore, gender-specific incentives and recruitment strategies can be adopted in an effort to increase the participation of male students. In particular, approaches that consider the intersectional identities of first-generation males, such as comprehensive leadership or retention programs that target this population, could be especially effective.

CHAPTER 7

The Impact of Community-Based Involvement on First-Generation Males

The previous two chapters examined various factors that impact the choice to participate in community-based education activities, as well as themes regarding the participation experience within the contexts of first-generation status and male identity. In this chapter we turn to research question 2, which focuses on the impact that community-based involvement has on first-generation, male college students. As reviewed in earlier chapters, the impact of community service and service-learning have been extensively documented in previous research. These studies have highlighted a wide range of academic, non-cognitive, and civically-focused results from participating in various types of community-based activities. This chapter explores the outcomes that first-generation males, in particular, described as a result of their community involvement experiences.

Data from participant interviews fell into four main categories: 1) academic and career-related outcomes, 2) psychosocial outcomes, 3) personal or spiritual outcomes, and 4) sociopolitical outcomes. These categories were originally developed in a separate, pilot study on first-generation college students (Yeh, 2010), but were intentionally excluded from initial coding of the data in the current study, in order to be open to other possible thematically-based organizers for the findings. However, the interview data seemed to align with these general themes; thus the four categories from the pilot study were subsequently used to organize analyses.

Academic & Career Outcomes: Connecting Service and Learning

This first category includes outcomes that involve a connection to academics or career-related themes. Findings pointed to the connection between academics and community engagement, as well as the opportunity for hands-on, experiential career exploration and networking connections, which may be more difficult for first-generation males to develop on their own.

Making Academics Relevant

The most prevalent theme that arose in this category revolved around the notion that participation in community-based learning enhances the academic experience because it brings classroom-based learning to life. Certainly, this is a common finding in the research on service-learning, and here we will see how it applies to male students from first-generation backgrounds. Virtually all participants named concrete ways in which their community-based experiences positively impacted their academics, ranging from specific course experiences to their broader perspective on postsecondary education.

Enhancing coursework. Some participants talked about the ways that their community work influenced their course choices, because it gave them an anchor around which to focus their academic efforts. One student, who was enrolled in a computer-related major, shared, “The typical track for my major is that you take a lot of technical courses. But for me...this [community-engagement] scholarship gave me a lens of addressing social justice issues that other students in my major don't have.” He goes on to elaborate, “I've been able to apply the critical thinking skills I learned in the classroom, and then my community work has influenced me to take classes that are more focused on community instead of focused on profit.” Community involvement can also lead people to discover what they are passionate about, which

in turn can influence course-taking and choice of major. A staff participant described the difficulty he had when he first entered college, because he had no guidance about which courses to take. As a result, he enrolled in classes that were too difficult and that he had no interest in, and struggled mightily his first semester. Once he started getting involved in the local schools, he “started to take more education-focused or psychology-focused, or early childhood development type stuff, because I liked those better... and I realized, OK, I need to take things that I'm interested in.” More specifically, the courses he became interested in were the ones that seemed to connect in some way to his community work. He elaborated, “Even in some things like sociology classes definitely, those hit me big for some of the class-differences-type-stuff that you can see in schools.”

Some students also found their experiences to be useful in their classes as well, helping them to improve concrete skills such as writing and critical thinking. In these cases, teaching someone else enabled them to improve their own skills at the same time. One person, who works with high school students, was excited because, “I used to write stupid, crappy essays. But being able to talk it out, working on an essay with my students... has taught me to be a more efficient writer... I was like, wow! I can use the things that I've learned in [my program] within my own work!” In addition, he was surprised to discover that the high school students he worked with were interested in what he was learning in his college classes. He shared the following story of an incident that took place at a mentoring event: “Me and my friend were talking about ethnic studies and how there's this idea of white privilege or dominant power or minorities. And this student who was sitting in front of us was like, ‘I'm really interested in that kind of stuff - tell me more’.” He went on to explain that they bonded over the shared experience of being students of color from low-income backgrounds, and that the high school students “always find it really

interesting that you can actually take what you learn in a class and adapt it to your own personal life...So it's this awesome feeling. Like I'm learning something in my classes!” In other words, the more he explained what he was learning to these students, the more he realized that he was actually understanding the material and retaining it.

Along the same lines, students found that their service-learning experiences often enhanced their participation in college classes. The most valuable learning processes were those that tied their community experiences directly to the material they were learning. One recent graduate reflected, “In an economics or in art history class, even though you have some discussion about topics, about readings and stuff, I think it's a lot different than discussions that are based on your hands-on experience.” He felt that discussions based solely on readings involved “repeating someone else's opinion” whereas incorporating one’s own community experiences encouraged people to formulate their own opinions, thereby developing one’s own voice and higher order critical thinking skills.

Informing community work. Conversely, several students focused on the applicability of their academic experiences to their work at the service-site. One recent graduate in psychology, who now works full-time as a preschool educator, provided a number of examples to illustrate this interplay between course concepts and actual work in the classroom. He talked about the various theories he learned through his broad array of psychology courses, and how they were useful to him:

Having that knowledge and being able to go into a classroom and see a lot of the things that you're talking about in class...there are a lot of times where I could tell a kid was struggling with something. And you can usually kind of have an idea of where it's

coming from, or what kind of background that kid's coming from. And that actually helps with diffusing [a situation], when you have a better idea of what's going on.

When asked to reflect on his current occupation, and speculate on how he has learned to work so well with kids, he shared,

I would say it was the experience combined with school - not so much my classes - had that direct impact. [In school] you read a lot of textbooks and you read a lot of other people's work, but to be able to actually be around a lot of other people in a position where you're responsible...for being aware of emotions and thoughts... I don't think it would have been as impactful if I wasn't able to see a lot of the things that I was learning about, or just experience them.

The participant who is majoring in a technological field also found that he was able to apply his academic learning to a practical, technology access problem that was affecting the impoverished town where he grew up. By combining the ideas and concepts he learned through his computer and business courses, as well as his direct community experiences, he explained, “instead of making these general assumptions...now I'm able to think of it critically, apply cost benefit analysis, just really leveraging everything I learned in the classroom to come up with more innovative solutions to the work I'm doing.” These benefits of community engagement could prove to have a distinct advantage when students enter the workforce, as one staff person believed:

I think it gives them a real life context to things they're studying in school... if you've never stepped foot in the classroom, have never worked with diversity, never worked with these children in the schools and seeing the hardships, and you're only reading in the textbook - well, the person who has the real life experience is really going to be the one

who is going to shape educational policy, who is going to be a better advocate, because they've had the experience.

Integrating the academic experience. In several cases, the impact of community-based learning was broader and more abstract, influencing the way that people understood themselves, and how they made sense of their educational experience. One recent graduate felt that his involvement and community engagement helped him “to better contextualize my whole academic experience in that it allowed me to get more in touch with my passions and my interests... which I think isn't necessarily something that your academics is able to do.”

Several staff members were also better able to step back and view the impacts of community participation from this more holistic perspective. In thinking back over the years of working with her program, one participant noted the connection that evolved between students' community experiences and their majors. She articulated that many students “end up having their [program] experience and their academic experience kind of integrated and parallel - especially those who end up in leadership. Whether it's causation or correlation, I'm not sure but...[their involvement] often kind of connects to some other interest.”

Making academics relevant to life. Perhaps one of the most important outcomes for first-generation males is the potential for community-based learning to bring relevancy to the college experience. Some of the literature on first-generation students, as well as male students, suggests that these populations may have greater difficulty seeing the purpose or applicability of a college education to “real life” (Davis, 2010; Kleinfeld, 2009). This lack of relevancy can have devastating effects on their motivation to complete college, particularly when these students hit a roadblock or challenging experience. Consequently, engaging in an experience that can maintain

one's motivation or sense of purpose can be crucial to persisting in college. As one staff member put it,

Maybe it can even give you perspective as to why you're going through these tests and exams and all that stuff. To think about, "What is this leading to?" Like when I was doing math, it made no sense and it was impossible. But then when I was reading about the history of public schooling in America, then it started to make sense. Like, "Oh, ok I can see how this impacts schooling now," and how I wanna be a part of the change.

Although the current students in this study did not process their experiences in this way, many of the staff participants synthesized their own undergraduate experiences with observations from their current work with college students, coming to the conclusion that community-based experiences could have a profound effect on the way that students view their postsecondary education. It is possible that the ability to see this type of impact comes only with additional life experiences, greater maturity, or time and space to reflect. One staff participant, who almost left college after his freshman year, admitted, "I would have never known this at the time. But the thing that was missing was some sort of relevancy." In the last quarter of his first year, he took a sociology course that engaged him in issues that he cared about; then in subsequent years, he got involved in a number of advocacy-related organizations that coincided with those interests. Eventually, this relevant integration of academic and advocacy-based experiences was what kept him engaged enough to stay and complete his degree. He reflects,

I think that relevancy made it very easy for me to find myself engaged in all these different pursuits outside of academics, these extracurricular things, because it was *important*...I came from a background where I didn't have some of the privileges that others around me did, and I understood that...I had a very good sense of the fact that I

didn't necessarily belong there. And I think understanding that, and finding the place to think about that from an academic perspective was important...So, I think those kinds of activities really helped me to solidify what I was doing academically, and to understand it better, and to think about it in a real way. At the same time, I was also feeling more fulfilled, and more motivated, and more connected to the community, and all the things that make you more likely to stay somewhere and more likely to be successful.

Another staff member had a slightly different perspective on how he made sense of his community engagement experiences. This participant appeared to experience an internal struggle at times, feeling the need to explain or justify his college attendance because it seemed like such a luxury. In thinking back on his work in the community, he explained,

I feel like it helped me be able to answer the question of...how is what you're learning useful? How is it relevant? I think before it was, "I'm taking this sociology or anthropology class or political science class that I think is really interesting," but I'm sitting in a classroom, in this really nice space, up on this hill that overlooks the town...but I think coming from a place where my parents didn't go to college...that isn't the norm for everyone, I guess.

His involvement in the community helped to assuage these feelings of conflict, because he was able to prove to himself that he could actually do something practical with the things he was learning in the classroom. He continued:

Just being able to think about - I'm not just learning these ideas and then just gonna sit with them, but I can actually do something! Like I can actually build a career - these are things that excite me most, what I'm studying. And this is a way for me to not just build a career but also think about how I want to create or carve out my own space in the

world... For me personally, I think that having those experiential opportunities, and having that closely integrated with what I was learning, made what I was learning matter more.

Interestingly, he has noticed similar sentiments from some of the undergraduates that he currently works with, who have found their service-learning experiences to be equally impactful. Through conversations as well as evaluation surveys, he has heard students say things such as, “When I’m doing this service, that’s when my time at [this university] matters,” or “ I feel like it helps me connect the dots more, ” or “This is the first time I’ve felt connected to something bigger than myself.” For first-generation students, such reminders that their education has practical applications can be critical to their motivation to persist.

Developing Career Interests, Networks, and Opportunities

As mentioned in the previous section, another commonly cited outcome of community-based learning revolves around career exploration. For most of the participants in this study, they were interested in learning more about teaching careers, and their involvement was an introductory experience to see if this is something they really wanted to do. After their community-based experiences, many students were able to confirm their interest in education, such as this recent graduate who indicated, “it made me more sure of what I wanted to do and being more confident in not only my ability to do it, but the fact that I wanted to do it and that I don't get too burnt out doing it.”

Some participants left other majors to pursue education and related social services majors. A few students realized that they were not interested in classroom teaching because it was “not a good fit,” but learned about other careers in education that they did want to pursue.

Still others found ways to use unrelated majors, such as business and computer information systems, in ways that could benefit the local community. But most viewed their community involvement experiences as ways to just explore. For one senior, who was coming to the end of his participation in a four-year civic engagement program, his program “was something that played a very vital role in just really understanding what I'm passionate about, and applying it not only in school, but to my community work.” In some ways, these experiences also enabled students to see the interdisciplinary connections between seemingly disparate subjects. For one student who is double-majoring in political science and Spanish, and plans to add a philosophy minor, his community involvement is the thread that connects all his interests. He articulated,

I'm studying these three different areas that in a way, don't really make sense, but at the same time can be useful once they're put together. And I feel like at least the service that I've done so far has given me reasons to pursue those majors and that minor, and being able to utilize it in a way that not only is beneficial for me in maintaining just my livelihood, but also being able to effect some sort of change for people...By going into the service, it makes me realize the problems that are going on in the world, and it allows me to figure out what particular issue or set of problems I want to tackle - whether it be working or starting up a nonprofit or trying to make some legislation or policies that kind of change the way we look at particular issues or certain aspects of life that we didn't really consider initially.

Several students were appreciative of the networking opportunities they gained as a result of their involvement in various community engagement programs. One student talked mostly about the people he met on campus, and how he was able to approach them for guidance and recommendation letters, sharing, “That was a super highlight where I can meet [staff] and faculty

and actually talk to them and know them, allow them to get to know me... And I think it's because of them that I got into my graduate program.” In contrast, another student built most of his networks off campus, in the local school district. He stated, “through my involvement I was able to interact with, I think, people I wouldn't have been able to interact with, like deans and donors, and also people in the community at high schools with the administrators, and also students.”

In addition to networking with people, community engagement also introduced participants to a wider variety of academic and programmatic opportunities that are often inaccessible to first-generation students. The way one student described it, his initial program involvement snowballed into a multitude of additional programs and scholarships that he got involved with. He elaborated, “There was no way I would have been able to find out about any of these opportunities if it wasn't for this [program] and...the rapport I've built over the years with staff.”

Overall, participating in community-based education enabled the participants in this study to have a deeper and more experiential relationship with their academics, thereby highlighting the connections between the sometimes abstract concepts and assignments that they encounter through their courses, and their own lived experience. In addition, they were able to explore and gain more clarity about their future career pursuits. While these types of outcomes are undoubtedly beneficial for all students, they are particularly critical for the postsecondary success of first-generation males, who may be less likely to find these resources or experiences through other sources.

Psychosocial Outcomes: Developing Resilience

Participants also mentioned numerous benefits of community-based learning that helped ease their adjustment to college life. These outcomes included helping students feel more connected to the university, improving their self-confidence, and enabling them to develop coping skills to deal with various challenges and stressors.

Connecting to the University

Finding a connection to one's institution is difficult for all students at first, but can be particularly challenging for first-generation students. Because they are unfamiliar with college culture when they enter, it often takes them longer to understand and navigate the institution, and find places where they feel comfortable. As one first-generation staff participant put it, "More connections that kind of tie you to campus are good. Because it can be hard to want to stick around and go through that." And for another staff person who struggled during his own undergraduate experience, "finding that place and people who saw me as somebody who would be successful really motivated me to stay and to be there and to engage. Had I not found that, I don't know that I would have stayed." For many of the participants in this study, their community-based learning involvement played a significant role in developing these kinds of connections on campus.

Making the campus "smaller." Particularly for participants at the large state institution, finding a place to belong was difficult. A staff person there admitted that a student might not have any sense of community or connection to anyone if they didn't make an effort, "And so I think places like our center are really great ways to feel connected to...staff members and people and a space." Confirming this hypothesis, all four of the students who attended that institution described community-building as one of the outcomes of their involvement. One student who

was extensively involved in two community-based programs reflected, “Both those programs emphasized finding community, finding people around you, and that's probably when I felt the most connected to [my university]... it felt smaller when I went to these programs.” In his case, the program staff actively encouraged community-building among their volunteers. Another student who mentored local high school students through his program, had a similar sentiment, sharing, “I think it was really my involvement in my programs...that kinda made me feel more connected to the university, more so than my academics, to be honest... Because being involved helps to shrink the university down to something that you're able to connect with.” For this student, he attributed part of this feeling to his role as a mentor to high school students, explaining, “I think that also makes you feel connected because you are coming in as a representative of the university - so you *are* the university to those people that you are interacting with.”

Although finding community at the other institution in this study may have been easier in some ways because it was much smaller, it could have been more difficult for first-generation students because it was a private institution. As such, there was a perception among participants that most of the other students were from wealthy families and had attended expensive private high schools, even when this may not have been the reality. At this institution, four of the six student participants pointed to community-building as an outcome of their involvement, while the other two named other organizations on campus that they felt most connected to. A staff member at this institution elaborated on what he observed among the students he worked with:

[Our office] - we are our own family in a sense...And I really think for college students to be successful, you have to always find your place on campus. And a lot of our males -

I can think of three or four of them in particular... for them this is their home, this is their comfort level and their place in this world...

He goes on to describe one particular student who has taken on a leadership role with his program, sharing, "He found his place. The teachers love him, the principal likes him, he has a good amount of friends that he met through working [there] that he hangs out with now - it's a lot of reasons why people stay around."

Finding mentors. Mentoring is also specific way in which community-based programs can help students build a connection with the institution. As one staff member, who works exclusively with first-generation students, states, "a big factor for students being successful is having a good relationship with someone... some sort of mentor that is there to encourage them to do whatever it is that they need on this campus to feel like they have a home here." In particular, one program in the study intentionally incorporated multi-layered mentorship into their program, in the hopes of supporting their undergraduate volunteers. For example, program staff would mentor student leaders; student leaders would mentor undergraduate volunteers, and undergraduate volunteers would mentor high school students. The staff participant from that program explains, "It's more personal than advising, we have more of a connection. And since the whole goal of the program is getting kids from challenging backgrounds into college, it follows that once they get here, we want to keep them here." As an example, this person described how there was usually someone in the office to support a student who was in crisis, "thinking about dropping out because they couldn't afford tuition or had a hold on their registration and they couldn't afford to go home. Staff has definitely played a role in supporting that student."

Connecting with male peers around a positive purpose. One aspect of building community and connection is developing friendships, which many participants were able to do through their community involvement. In most cases, students had several separate groups of friends, some of whom were involved in the same community-based programs and others who were not. The significance of having at least some friends with similar community-engagement interests lies in connecting with people “who are interested in what you're learning, people...who care about what you care about.”

Only a small number of participants were able to say that they had male friends who participated in the same types of community-based programs as they did. Instead, most participants reported that their male friends engaged in completely different activities; this disconnect was viewed as a barrier or negative outcome of community involvement, and was discussed previously in Chapter 6. But for the few participants who did engage in the community with their male friends, it was a particularly significant bonding experience for them. One staff member reflected back on his experience in college at a large state university in California, where he and his friends created a group together, and became engaged in the local community:

When I was an undergrad, there was a group - it was about getting out into the schools. And I was in it. But it was all men of color... We kinda had some shared values - we had different experiences getting into [college]. So I think that that, for me anyway... it was a way of connecting, a way of being involved with something, and having a shared experience. Looking back, it was a way of hanging out - while doing something that felt good, you know? Beyond drinking beer and going to the parties every weekend, there was this *thing* that we could do, and we owned it.

Of significance in this story is the fact that the participant was looking for meaningful alternatives to drinking and going to parties. In Sax's (2008) research on gender differences in college, one major difference was that men spend a significantly greater amount of time drinking alcohol and engaging in other unhealthy activities. For the above participant and his male friends, their community engagement offered a better option, at least some of the time. Another staff person, who was also a person of color, relayed a similar story about his undergraduate experience at an elite private university on the East Coast. Here he describes his group of male friends:

Many were also first-generation, or kind of had similar class backgrounds as me - like working-class, low-class. But not everybody. But even that sense of community of like, people of color, within a place that is not very full of people of color - it helped alot. And so a bunch of us joined the middle school tutoring program together...So we did things like that, where we joined activities together and it all helped us go.

Even though these participants attended vastly different institutions, they both felt out of place as students. In both cases, they were able to create bonding experiences with a close group of male friends through their shared community-based learning activities, and in the process find a place for themselves within an intimidating setting.

A third staff participant had a different college experience, because he had been a Division I athlete. As such, he already had a built-in set of male peers whom he spent most of his time with. Their most obvious connection was through sports, but their required service participation at a local children's hospital provided a contrasting way for the team to relate to each other. He shares:

Yeah, I recall those moments...those were powerful weekends, to say the least. And I think it further gave us a bond, you know, when I was 18 or 19 years old... It was a unique shared experience where we all were there seeing someone ill, fighting for their life - our bond grew stronger because we went to this hospital.

Although the circumstances varied in each of these cases, the common theme is that these community-based experiences offered the participants an opportunity to engage with other male peers in a positive and productive way, and in the process also led to a greater connection and sense of bonding between them.

Developing a Sense of Self-Efficacy

Participants also reported developing a number of skills and traits that contribute to a sense of self-efficacy, or the belief that one has the ability to produce a desired outcome. For all students, but for first-generation students in particular, self-efficacy can serve as a valuable coping strategy in dealing with feelings of under-confidence or inadequacy in college, and can be linked to academic success (DeWitz, Woolsey, & Walsh, 2009).

Building self-confidence and empowerment. Several people described ways in which community engagement can increase one's own sense of confidence and empowerment, through the discovery of what they were able to do as individuals. When asked to speculate on how community involvement could be beneficial, one student thought about his own experience and responded, "Especially for minority males, males of color - just feeling empowered... I just feel like it would develop their own sense of worth, sense of contribution...[Because] by improving yourself you're improving the climate for everyone."

For another student, who worked with kids when he was in high school, the experience taught him a sense of responsibility and caring for others that he admits he did not have before. In addition, it taught him that he had something valuable to offer. He remembers,

They would look up to me and say, “Oh, we're learning a lot from you.” One kid told me “I am changing how I am because you were so nice to everybody.” And he was like a little bully. He was like, “I want to be nice like you because I see all the people like you because you're nice to them, and I want to be like that, too”....So you have to be the example and you have to take that step to be the greater person.

A staff member shared a story of an undergraduate that he worked with at another institution, who underwent a similar experience. This first-generation male struggled in college, was academically dismissed, re-enrolled in another institution and eventually graduated. In retrospect, the staff member believed that engaging in his own community helped this student to see himself in new ways. “He'd visit his own high school – with metal detectors, gang violence, drugs - and try to help them see that there was possibility after high school. For him, going back was a way of contributing... it helped him understand the responsibility he had.”

Learning to lead. Developing leadership skills can also lead to a greater sense of self-efficacy in students. Almost all of the participants in this study gave detailed descriptions of the ways that they gained organizational and leadership skills through a variety of different roles in their community work. Many students grew into leadership positions within their programs over time. One student, who described himself as “super shy and awkward,” eventually overcame his fear of talking to people. He was proud to share, “I became more confident within my own leadership skills. I became more outspoken because you literally have to speak in front of 50 students almost every week.” Another talked about how he learned to share a vision and inspire

others, because he had to “keep everyone in my [organization] motivated - not just me - making sure that *everyone* saw the importance of giving back.” Their growth seemed to be a progressive transformation over time, as one student reflected, “I've gone from someone who doesn't want to be involved to someone who is a leader in the community, to someone who's not only just leading, but someone who - people that are older than me come to for counsel and information.”

A number of people had either applied for or been nominated to leadership positions within local community organizations as well. Through these positions they were able to meet and network with numerous other community leaders, who were sometimes much older and already had established careers. Yet even without “official” titles or roles, people still felt like they were developing leadership skills. One student asserted, “Even if you're just being a volunteer tutoring, you're still a leader to that kid.” A few participants even talked about taking on ‘leadership’ roles within their own families. A student who worked with a preschool program for several years, explained,

Now that all my siblings are having kids, I'm glad I got that experience, too, because now I'm able to work with them and I could do things like grab my nephew and, “let's read, let's practice your writing skills” and do things like that. And I know that my brothers and sisters aren't going to be doing that. They didn't learn that when we were young, so now that I know, I could just help them out.

Coping with College Stressors

A number of participants also found their involvement in the community to be a source of stress relief, or a way to cope with the pressures of being in college. Some described their experience as helping them to “stay grounded” or “keep perspective.” As one student shared,

“especially in school when I was stressed out, having tough days, I would just go and...work with after-school kids, and they just didn't have a care in the world. Life was so simple. It always brought me back to the center.”

Some students also learned specific strategies to cope, or to become more resilient. One student described his work at a community non-profit, and how he learned to become less defensive and more open to constructive feedback. Another student was able to adjust his own mindset by watching others around him – both fellow college students as well as the high school students he worked with. He observed, “it taught me to persevere through a lot of things, like a lot of my students persevere through their own hardships.”

Interestingly, some participants appreciated the opportunity to get away from campus, which in the end, helped them to stay engaged in college. At first glance this may seem counterintuitive, because it is harder to build connections to your institution if you are always leaving. However, for first-generation students who may feel out-of-place on campus, having the opportunity to go somewhere that is more familiar may be therapeutic, in a sense. One student talked about his experience in college, admitting, “it's been difficult just because I'm a transfer student, and more because I'm a student of color as well... I'm used to seeing so many different faces... And I think here, it's been really hard, sometimes almost unbearable.” These feelings of being alone or different can be extremely challenging, and often lead students to drop out of college altogether. However, this student describes how his community work made him stronger, and served as a reminder of why he needed to finish school:

In the community it's taught me that yes, the stories are like mine, and I shouldn't feel that nothing can be done - like how I felt a few years ago. That I can use my [college] education to fuel change here, because a college education automatically moves you up in

privilege. Because I've been blessed with the privilege that I have the opportunity to raise myself and raise up [my community] at the same time by bridging them together.

A staff member also talked about his undergraduate institution, which was highly selective and therefore had a miniscule number of students from low-income, first-generation backgrounds similar to his. His university was also located in an urban area, which afforded many opportunities to engage in the local community. When asked about his involvement, he shared,

I liked that it got me off campus - we got to meet people from the city - and that was always one of my favorite things...And I was looking for that, in particular...So, [my involvement] didn't make me feel *more* connected to the campus, but that was good. I wanted to feel more connected to something bigger than the campus. I *wanted* to get out.

I was *trying* to get away from the campus a little bit. The community... I think of them as like, real people, and being around them was always more comforting to me.

As he explained it, it seemed as if working in the community enabled him to recharge and be himself. After being in the schools for an hour or two, he felt ready to go back to campus and adopt his 'college persona' again. Speculating on the impact of community engagement for other college students, he said, "I think it can be good for other male first-generation [students], cause it can also pull you away from the college just enough, so you don't feel like that's ALL you're doing. Maybe it can give you a little bit more of a perspective." This sense of perspective enabled him to stay grounded and connected to an important part of his identity, and ironically helped him to cope with the culture shock of being in college.

One counterexample to these instances of mitigating stress is when students overcommit or dedicate too much time to their community activities, to the detriment of their academic

pursuits. Two participants described the stress they felt from juggling their multiple commitments. However, as detailed in Chapter 6, they were both ultimately able to learn how to manage their time, and successfully move towards graduation. Developing this ability to navigate their time management challenges – which will certainly be useful to them in the future – is perhaps an unintended and beneficial byproduct of their over-commitment in the community.

In general, study participants developed a number of skills that made them more resilient to some of the stresses they faced as college students. The concept of educational resilience generally refers to the ability to succeed in school despite difficult or adverse circumstances, due to the presence of protective, psychosocial factors (Waxman, Gray & Padron, 2003). In this study, participants were able to draw upon the institutional connections, self-efficacy, and coping skills that they developed through their community-based learning experiences, to support themselves throughout their postsecondary education.

Personal and Spiritual Growth Outcomes: Exploring Identity and Meaning

Community-based learning had an impact on participants' internal selves as well, leading to personal growth, deeper self-awareness, and even greater motivation to pursue their goals. Asked to reflect on what he gained from his community involvement, one student felt that it "helped me grow as an individual, and also find my own identity and my personality." These introspective explorations of personal meaning could be viewed as spiritual outcomes according to some definitions of spiritual development, which conceptualize it as a process of "seeking personal authenticity, genuineness and wholeness," "developing a greater connectedness to self and others through relationships and unions with community," and "deriving meaning, purpose, and direction in one's life" (Love & Talbot, 2005, pp.155-156).

Exploring One's Path and Purpose

Through their community-based involvement, many participants spent time reflecting on questions of identity and purpose, and on where they felt like they could best contribute in the world. While these experiences could be categorized as “career exploration,” the deeper explorations of self and meaning seemed to be qualitatively different from superficially thinking about jobs, and more reminiscent of the idea of vocation or calling. One student described how he enjoyed stepping back and observing people during his community work, because “there are moments where I do question, and I'm like - why am I doing this again? And by seeing these people and what they're doing with their lives and what they're trying to do, it brings more perspective back into me...to see the goal that I'm trying to reach.” Another person valued the opportunity to examine his own beliefs and commitments more critically through his involvement, explaining, “it allows you to challenge your own beliefs, when it comes to education, when it comes to your place in the world.”

Other students also talked about the greater sense of self-awareness they developed as a result of the multiple duties and responsibilities they had, as well as the wide variety of people they worked and interacted with. One young man observed,

It has made me more aware of my own abilities and what I'm capable of as an individual. I had a lot of apprehensions going into these programs because I didn't really feel like I had the ability to do some of the things. So in that way it made me learn more about my skills, my abilities, what I'm able to do... Because having a stronger sense of awareness about myself - being more in touch with who I am, what I'm interested in, my passions, and my background - I think that has done a lot to change me.

Sometimes this kind of introspection, coupled with exposure to community issues, can be life-altering. A staff member who was an athlete in college explained how he initially had a very narrow view of his future path, believing that his only option was to pursue a professional athletic career upon graduation. After taking a service-learning course he subsequently developed a connection with several faculty mentors who helped him to see his greater potential, and the wider range of options that were available to him. This combination of experiences led him to realize that he no longer wanted to pursue athletics, and he eventually went on to complete a graduate degree instead:

They really pushed me to see things more in the surroundings communities, around life, and things that affect me as a minority male, African American on top of it. And it really helped me open my eyes to a lot of things in society in a very short period of time... I think it opened my horizons to more of what I wanted to do, you know. And I think the [service-learning] advocacy project... really pushed me to really start thinking about more community issues and things like that.

Thinking Beyond Self

Several participants spoke about how their community engagement reminded them to think about how they treated and interacted with others – something which they otherwise forgot about in their busy, everyday lives. One student appreciated his experience because, “It's just something that makes me see that you have to take others into consideration besides yourself.” It was as if his consistent work in the schools kept him in check, and helped him to be a better version of himself. The staff participant who was a former college athlete described a similar result from his team’s service experience at the children’s hospital. He felt that he and his team

members were somewhat “arrogant” because they were so often immersed in the world of competitive athletics. In contrast, “The service experience brings you down to reality. It lets you see someone who doesn’t have your gift, who is fighting for their life more times than not, who is struggling...and it puts things in perspective... I think it gave us humility.” Another student elaborated on this idea, explaining that working with young kids helped him to keep a healthy perspective on life:

One of the things I've discovered about myself is probably the overall sense of - I don't want to sound too spiritual or anything - but just being able to appreciate a lot of the things that I have, and not be superficial... or not caught up in a lot of the things that are easy to get caught up in, that are distracting from what I really want out of life.

The fact that he is hesitant to sound “too spiritual” indicates that he believes what he is experiencing is, in fact, a spiritual process. He goes on to describe how his understanding of happiness has evolved as a result of his community-based learning experience:

I'm a lot less selfish, and instead of thinking about what I can do that makes me happy...it's more so, “How can I be a part of other people's work, and how can I help people along with their process?” And as a byproduct of that, and the progress that's gained through that, I think that that ends up making me happy.

Being more mindful of others also led to a change in attitude about those who were different from themselves. A number of participants noticed that they had become more open-minded about others as a result of their community engagement – something which they felt was a positive aspect of their personal development. As one person put it, “I was getting past my prejudices.” Working with youth whom he felt were very impressionable, another student began to take his responsibilities as a role model very seriously. He indicated that he learned “rules

about life - like how you should act in front of others. Not just in front of the students, but in front of others. Like, have a sense of respect for others and their different perspectives and situations.”

Some described their shift in perspective in terms of lessons learned about humanity. One student, who felt that he gained a much greater sense of self-awareness, shared, “I think individuals who have a good sense of themselves have a better sense of the world around them. So I think it has also helped me develop a stronger sense of empathy for other people, my community.” A staff member who has taught several service-learning courses reflected on the students he has worked with, and what he feels they took away from their community experiences, asserting, “Certainly if the program is set up well...I think it helps students apply concepts that they're learning in the classroom, in ways that become human.” He went on to share a message that was especially meaningful to him:

[The quote] that always brings me to tears is, “When you look into someone else's eyes, you can no longer dehumanize them.” And that for me is service at its best – it takes the word ‘oppression,’ or ‘community’ or ‘ leadership’ and all of a sudden makes it...human. And that, I think, is what students get from it.

Another student developed a set of beliefs that is central to Buddhist teachings about compassion, unconditional love, and suffering, although he likely did not realize it. He revealed, “One thing I learned is to not hate anyone - because people are just who they are because of their environment. Even the worst people, you could find that everyone's got heart and love in them. Its just how much they've suffered, that kind of destroys it.” These more nuanced perspectives on humanity were a valuable result of the participants’ long-term, consistent engagement in the community.

Finding Personal Motivation

Motivation could be considered an academic outcome, in that it can propel people to finish their schooling. However, the manner in which participants discussed their motivations seemed to suggest a deeper or more fundamental kind of motivation that was integral to who they were as people. A staff member considered the idea of motivation within the context of his own work, observing, “I think we still struggle not motivating students, because you can't really motivate somebody – it's *connecting* them to motivation. Connecting them to things that will help them be motivated.” What he is essentially saying in this quote is that true motivation cannot be externally imposed by others. In order for one to be truly motivated, it must be cultivated from within. A student echoed this sentiment when he stated, “I think volunteer work does keep more students in college. But it has to be meaningful and relevant to something that they're interested in.” For example, one student who clearly loved young children talked about his experience working in a preschool. Because he genuinely cared about these children, he was intrinsically interested to learn more about how to work with them. He explained, “It motivated me to do better in school and to pay attention more. Not just be able to recite information, but to understand it more because it is practical. And I think it just made me realize how practical a lot of the things you learn in school are.”

Many participants talked about how they drew motivation from their relationships with the people they mentored in the community, because of the expectations that were placed on them. A student who worked with high school students exclaimed, “you want to help them so much, so you learn how to be motivated in order to push the students!” Similarly, another student who almost failed in his first year of college articulated:

It keeps me in check knowing that I'm telling other people that "You have to focus on school," that "You have to do well in school." And I've got to practice what I preach, I have to show them. I tell them... "if you don't do well then you'll get these grades, and I know from experience, I got those grades. And then I know from hard work, you get on Dean's list and you get recognized. And all these things really make a difference if you apply yourself." And that really makes me want to apply myself, too.

In his work with undergraduates, and men of color specifically, a staff person reminds students of this responsibility in the hopes of motivating them to persist. He shared the example of a young Latino male who was engaged in his community-based program at a local school, and who was also struggling in college:

He has a lot of Hispanic males drawn to him. And [I always tell him], "You have an obligation to make it through, because when you see that kid on the street from the community five years from now, he has to see that you completed that degree and you're successful. Because if you drop out and you're not successful, he's going to feel like, you know what, this is a guy I looked up to, and if he can't do it, I can't do it either."

Two participants spoke in depth about deriving a strong sense of motivation from their own families and communities as well. One young man from a rural, agricultural area described the pressure he felt to succeed, because virtually no one from his community had ever attended college. He explained,

We're all first generation... So the pressure's on me and if I fail, I fail my whole family, and that's what's leading me to try my best... it makes me feel good that I'm doing the right thing. And in a sense it's serving my community - my community are my family. I'm setting that example that I've always wanted to set, as someone they can look up to.

Another student, who felt alienated throughout his college experience, talked about his extensive involvement in the local community where he grew up. His university was located about one mile away from his childhood home, and therefore he was able to stay involved there while he attended college. He specifically stated that his continued connection to his community was the primary reason that he was on track to graduate in the coming semester. Although the expectations and obligation he felt did create pressure for him, it was a pressure that he needed and welcomed:

Being so close in the community...it kept me motivated, definitely. I think that one, seeing the struggles in [my neighborhood], and two, being involved with empowering programs have certainly kept me afloat, like, "You have an objective, you have a calling, you have this work to do, so do it now. So don't wait, don't fail, and don't disappoint-- this is your time now, and you won't have a time later..." And because I've been involved in the community, they want to see another person of color achieve what they want to achieve. I think without that, that would have been another reason why I wouldn't have finished.

Across all of these cases, the source of motivation varied. For some participants, the motivation was intrinsic because it came from a personal interest in the subject matter or the population they were working with. For others, the motivation came from external sources such as family, community members at home, or the people they worked at a service site. Regardless of the source, this added motivation seemed to be a positive influence on the educational experiences of these participants.

Liberation from Traditional Male Gender Roles

One unexpected theme that arose was that, for some participants, the community-based experience occasionally provided a space for men to temporarily abandon the traditional masculine behaviors that were expected of them. Although they felt the ever-present pressure to adhere to stereotypical masculine roles in most other places, a few people talked about the rare chance to feel their emotions through their community work. Here, one staff person recalls the shared community engagement experience with his sports team when he was in college:

I think - and especially college athletics and sports in general – it's an alpha male world. It's the macho of the macho...So I think I've always valued those times when I was [in the community], because...you know, you'd see guys crying once you leave the hospital, about a little kid having cancer or leukemia. And you wouldn't see this guy showing emotion, other than yelling at you or pushing you down in practice. Those moments were when people let down their guard. And you could see that people were actually human.

Another student specifically explained how his work with children became more liberating over time, with respect to traditional gender role expectations. The way he describes it, once he broke free of societal judgments about the work he was doing, he was able to focus his mental energy on maintaining a more positive and productive mindset. He elaborates:

Because of the social construction we have of men having to be very stoic and “not nurturing” in a sense, I think that if you put a lot of these men in these situations where kids are, I think it kind of softens people up a little bit and kind of breaks down those barriers...where you're not so much worried about what you might look like or what people think about you. You're more focused on, "I'm doing pretty well, I have a lot going on for myself, and how can I use what I have to help other people?" I think that kind of becomes more prominent.

In one case, the experience of mentoring youth challenged a participant to critically examine his own subconscious definitions of “maleness.” Here he elaborates on his work with Latino middle school youth in a local neighborhood near his college:

Little did they know, that in fact I was learning a ton about what it meant to be *me*. And particularly being male, in a society that says don't show weakness, don't be vulnerable, don't share that you are afraid of something, be independent, be strong, all of that - the terms ascribed to men. And I was really battling that, you know?

Although he did not realize it at the time, this Latino staff person retrospectively explained how his involvement with the male youth, in particular, eventually prompted him to question his own behaviors and beliefs. He continued:

And I can't say it was resolved there, but the journey was sparked for me... It's not enough to just say that I want to be a positive role model. I've really gotta take responsibility for defining what exactly that looks like for me, and to be a positive example of being Latino and being male... Cause I saw *them* looking for that. They were asking questions like, "How did you get where you are?" and "Wow, I don't have to have eight girlfriends to be cool, and to be accepted, and to be a *man*?"

To summarize, engaging in the community was just the starting point for some participants to acknowledge their internal selves. For others it was a catalyst for them to reflect on broader existential questions of personal meaning and purpose, and on what kind of people they wanted to be. The concepts of purpose and meaning have long been considered significant to positive youth and college student development (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Damon, Menon, & Cotton Bronk, 2003; Moran, 2001; Nash & Murray, 2010). Moreover, these concepts are tied to notions of spirituality, and have been linked to the retention of college students in general

(DeWitz et al., 2009), and persistence of African-American male college students in particular (Herndon, 2003).

Sociopolitical Outcomes: Developing Critical Consciousness

A majority of participants, and particularly those who were older, also shared stories of how their community-based involvement led them to notice issues that they had not been conscious of before, and to begin questioning certain patterns that they had previously taken for granted. Their responses indicated that they had developed a greater awareness of inequities within society, broadly speaking, and within educational settings specifically. Some had also begun to process their own personal backgrounds using this alternative lens. In essence, their experiences within the community introduced them to new and more “critical” perspectives about the way society is structured, in the Freireian sense of the word. In Freire’s (1993) conceptualization, *critical consciousness* describes a process of learning about oppressive socioeconomic, historical, and political situations, and eventually questioning and taking concrete action to change those conditions. For the participants in this study, their community-based learning experiences placed them in situations that heightened their awareness and understanding of social injustice, and in many cases, solidified their commitment to search for solutions to these issues.

Becoming Aware of Inequity

While every participant talked about differences between people with more and less economic resources, it is interesting to note that only the two youngest participants (a first-year and a second-year student) presented a solely personalized analysis of these issues. For example

they talked about the struggles that they and other low-income minorities faced, but never verbally linked these issues to broader societal patterns. In contrast, all of the older participants were able to locate their understanding of inequity and discrimination within the context of critical sociological concepts, at least to some extent. This difference could be attributed to the fact that the process of developing critical awareness appeared to take place over time, as people stayed involved in the community over a consistent period and as they took more coursework that touched upon these topics. For example, one senior mentioned that he has “taken a lot of law courses that have really opened my eyes up to the white privilege and the white supremacy that's happening in our communities.” Another senior described how his community involvement helped him to draw connections between his own life, his work in the schools, and ideas that he was learning about in his academic major. He shared, “it introduced me to how education influences politics and also influences how minorities are able to have access to higher education or how politics...it's sort of like this giant connecting network.”

In most cases, the older people were, the better they were able to express their understanding in more complex terms. For example, when asked to name things he had learned through his community work, one senior used relatively simple terms to describe a concept based in social conflict theory, observing, “Right now it's not equal. It's good for others, but it's also like, for people to be up, a lot of people have to be down, too.” In comparison, a recent graduate reflects a bit more extensively on his community-based experiences over the course of his college career, and how his perspective changed over time:

It did a lot to help me build a stronger sense of awareness of different issues that exist within my own community. Even though I grew up being in some of these issues, given the environment I went to school and grew up in -- even though I was part of that,

growing up I don't think I necessarily thought of them as "issues." Like it was just something that I came to see as a norm. I think being able to come from this environment going in to the community, I think it does a lot to contextualize some of the issues and some of the greater inequities and inequalities that are going on within my own community, and even my own environment that I grew up in.

Not surprisingly, staff participants who had had several more years to reflect were better able to retrace the steps that led them to a greater awareness of social inequities, and draw connections between their community-based experiences and their learning process. In thinking back on his undergraduate experience, one person observed:

Its sort of an interesting shift in how you think about things. I think prior to going to [college], I probably wanted to do some good in the world, or do something meaningful. But intentionally talking about service and having some space and opportunities to reflect on what that means - I think that was the first time I was really intentionally thinking about all of the larger social things in our society.

Questioning & Applying Critical Insights

As participants' awareness of societal inequity grew, they also began asking more complex questions and applying their understanding to specific issues of injustice and oppression. A senior who focused on educational equity issues described his initial work with children at several public and private schools, explaining, "I started to see the differences between public education and private education... and from that I started saying, "Well why can't we have these things...at the public school?" For one Latino staff participant, his journey

toward critical consciousness began when he started comparing the local schools with his predominantly White college campus. He explained,

One minute I was in this beautiful campus, and the next minute I was in this high school...And it was a different world racially. And that was very apparent to me. I was like “Wait a minute, I've got a class of 32 students, 28 of which were Latino. But then in my experience back in the classrooms at [college], I'm the *only* one... I remember thinking, “*wait*, something's wrong here.”

These types of revelations applied to fields outside of education as well. A student who worked on digital divide issues shared, “now I can think critically with social justice issues in the back of my mind and apply that to engineering problems or computer problems. I can see where these kind of problems fit in with the overall vision of improving technology access.” In the context of economics and business, a staff person talked about an international community-based experience that he participated in as a college senior, and how his perspective evolved over time:

I had this very bright-eyed, bushy-tailed view of microcredit finance lending, and I think that through my time there, I have a lot more of a critical perspective on it, in terms of seeing the power dynamics between some of these really large banks and institutions, and the people, and how...for a lot of people, it felt like it was kind of...keeping them in this cycle of poverty.

Regardless of the topic or area of study, participants began to see broader connections between the patterns of inequity that they were becoming aware of, and the communities in which they were immersed. As a result, they began to think more critically about the world around them. These types of observations were further developed and refined through courses that focused on sociology and critical perspectives.

Connecting with Critical Coursework

Academic concepts and coursework – particularly courses that were taught from a critical or social justice perspective – were fairly integral to this progression in critical consciousness, because they encouraged students to reexamine their community experiences and, as one participant put it, “think a little bit more critically about race and class and all of those things that influence who has what in society.” For one staff member, it played a significant role in his ability to complete his degree because he was able to make sense of what he was seeing in the local schools. He elaborated, “Finding classes that I enjoyed - and I realized it was like, cultural types of classes, dealing with both class and race and American culture, and education, sociology - if I hadn't found those...I probably would have fallen out right away.”

Two participants felt a particularly strong connection between their coursework and their community engagement. One Vietnamese student, in his junior year, was intensely moved by his courses in ethnic studies and particularly his first course on schooling in America. He remembered, “that's what really brought it home, was just seeing how it affects the school. And then I started taking the 101 classes and then I was like, oh, this is how it affects everybody!” He began looking at his community experiences through a different lens, explaining,

That's when I really started to feel like I was learning about social injustice, and I was like, “This isn't right!” In this community, why does this preschool have to be under a church? And they don't have a playground, so they have to play in the big room of the basement. And it's like, “How come they don't get the same sort of stuff? They don't have a bathroom or a wash station in their classroom!” And we were learning these things about how it's unfair... And that's something you don't realize when you're in high

school...you're kind of blind to that. And being able to open my eyes and seeing that just really made a big difference in how I participated.

This new awareness sparked a passion in him to pursue community work as a career, even against his family wishes. He stated, “It made me more aware of my position in the world, and what I could do to keep improving these systems...So my parents wanted me to go to school to make money, but now that I've gone through these programs, I want to go through school and make change instead.”

Similar to the previous participant, a Latino staff member described a profound experience in the ethnic studies courses that he took as well. Here he describes several courses that he took and how they helped him to make sense of his observations in the middle school classrooms where he spent time:

In a way, I started to learn about myself - but I learned a lot about struggle. And I kinda started to think about my time in the classroom through a different, an additional lens. I'm like “Wow, wait a minute – ok, the reason why this group of 30 students in my classroom looks a certain way – there's *reasons* for it!” And I started to make connections... it was like a train running over me - in a constructive way - because all of sudden I felt like I was waking up you know? Like holy s***, here I've got this group of Latino students - well if the expectation is that you're just shiftless and lazy anyway, then [you will be]!

He went on to describe how he then began applying his new understanding of racism and discrimination to his own experiences and behaviors. The critical analysis of his combined academic and community experiences subsequently influenced his choice to work in higher education as a way to create greater educational equity and institutional change:

I started to realize the expectations I'd had of myself and where they came from - it started to make sense. Like, "Oh, when I'm out there drinking, that sends a message." I started to learn and make connections. And learn about who I wanted to be, and what I wanted to represent. And so that helped me then look at the classroom and go, "Wow, this is wrong. It's not lack of motivation or lack of smarts, or a brain, or a heart. There's something really wrong here."

The realizations that participants came to through their community-based learning experiences had a significant impact on their identities as first-generation students and, in many cases, as people of color from low-income backgrounds as well. This newfound knowledge of critical sociological ideas was often jarring and disconcerting at first, especially as they started to understand how social power structures had impacted their own families and their lives. But over time this knowledge became an empowering and motivating factor in their desire to use their education to create change. The process described mirrors the Freireian (1993) notion of *conscientization*. In other words, the development of critical consciousness involves first realistically perceiving one's place in the social structure, and secondly, perceiving one's efficacy as an agent of change (Rosenberger, 2000). Through their experiences in the community, the participants in this study gradually came to an awareness of the idea of social inequality, then began to understand how this concept applied to their own lives. Finally, their work in the community enabled them to see how their actions could contribute, even in small ways, to social change.

Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the outcomes that participants reported from their involvement in various forms of community-based learning. Data indicated that participants experienced growth or development along academic, psychosocial, spiritual, and sociopolitical dimensions, all of which can have a positive impact on persistence in college (Yeh, 2010).

While many of these outcomes have previously been found in the service-learning literature, some of these outcomes might have greater significance for first-generation males, who are at the highest risk of dropping out. For instance, facilitating relationships with faculty and staff is certainly beneficial for any college student, but can arguably have a greater influence on first-generation college students who may not know how to seek out these relationships on their own, and may not have external relationships with people who know how to support them in a postsecondary setting. Similarly, the outcomes around self-awareness, purpose, and meaning would be useful for all students, but may hold greater significance for males, who are far less likely to engage in these kinds of conversations with their male peers, or to seek out these types of reflective practices on their own. An overarching implication of these findings is that community-based education likely leads to very different benefits for different populations, and that it could be particularly valuable for first-generation males in college, if designed in ways that successfully engage them.

It should be noted that the vast majority of reported impacts of participation in community-based education were positive or beneficial in nature. The only negative outcomes that arose, in one or two instances, were the feelings of distance or alienation from some male friends who did not see the value in community engagement, and the feelings of stress that arose when students had overcommitted themselves in terms of their academic, work, and community obligations. This pattern in the findings may be a result of the participant sample, which

consisted of first-generation males who had consciously chosen to engage in the community on a long-term basis. Their choice to pursue these activities over time suggests that their experiences had been primarily positive and rewarding, and may not apply to all first-generation males who participate in community-based education.

The purpose of this and the previous two chapters was to provide an in-depth exploration of the experiences of first-generation males who chose to participate in various forms of community-based learning as undergraduates. Findings centered around the motivations behind choosing to engage in the community, particular themes regarding the experience of participating in community engagement programs, and self-reported outcomes of participation. These findings were considered in the design of the following phase of the study, which explores predictors of community service participation through quantitative analysis of the NCES dataset. The subsequent chapter provides results from Phase 3.

CHAPTER 8

Quantitative Follow-Up Phase 3: Predictors of Community Service Participation for First-Generation Males

This chapter presents findings from the second quantitative phase of the study. The primary purpose of Phase 3 was to test a predictive model of consistent community service participation for first-generation male college students at four-year institutions, across three time periods: 1) first year in college, 2) third year in college, and 3) sixth year in college, for those who had not yet completed a degree. The research hypothesis was that consistent community service participation is related to the proposed set of person, context, and time variables within an individual's ecological system. A subsequent exploratory analysis was also conducted in order to better understand which mesosystems might be more or less supportive of community service participation for first-generation males.

Consistent Community Service in First Year of College (2003-04)

Blocked entry logistic regression analysis was used to examine whether the proposed set of independent variables would significantly increase the odds of predicting the consistent participation of first-generation males in community service during their first year of college. The dependent variable, consistent community service participation, was defined as having volunteered at least four hours per month during the academic year. The sample is a subset of the sample from Phase 1, and consisted of 1763 first-generation males *who had either entered a 4-year institution in their first year, or who had started at a 2-year institution and later transferred to a 4-year institution*. There were 7 missing cases; thus 1756 cases (99.6%) were included in the

analysis. Of the 1756 first-generation males in the sample, 456 volunteered on a consistent basis in the 2003-04 academic year (26%) and 1300 did not (74%). Descriptive statistics of the independent variables are provided in table 8.1.

Table 8.1
Descriptive Statistics for 2004 Variables ($N=1763$)

Block	Variable	<i>N</i>	%		
Block 1	Minority	Minority	647	36.7	
		White	1116	63.3	
	Low Income	Low-income	477	27.1	
		Not Low-income	1286	72.9	
	Immigrant Status	Foreign-born	195	11.1	
		US Born Foreign Parents	234	13.3	
		US Born	1334	75.7	
	Importance of being a community leader 2004	Yes	842	47.8	
		No	921	52.2	
	Importance of being financially well-off 2004	Yes	1429	81.1	
		No	334	18.9	
	Importance of influencing the political structure 2004	Yes	500	28.4	
		No	1263	71.6	
	Importance of having leisure time 2004	Yes	1544	87.6	
		No	219	12.4	
	Highest degree expected 2003-04	BA or less	624	35.4	
		Post-BA or higher	1139	64.6	
	Block 2	Major in 2004	Humanities	130	7.4
			STEM	414	23.5
			Business	265	15
Vocational			220	12.5	
Social Science, Education, or Health			237	13.4	
Undeclared			497	28.2	
Faculty interaction outside of class 2004		Never	299	17	
		Sometimes or often	1464	83	
Attending study groups 2004		Never	725	41.1	
		Sometimes or often	1038	58.9	
Attendance intensity 2003-04		Part-time or mixed	292	16.6	
		Full-time	1471	83.4	
Block 3		Involvement in school clubs	Never	1141	64.7
			Sometimes or often	622	35.3
		Involvement in sports	Never	1097	62.2

		Sometimes or often	666	37.8
	Campus Housing 2003-04			
		Off-campus	1004	56.9
		On-campus	759	43.1
Block 4	First institution control			
		Private non-profit	344	29.3
		Private for-profit	111	6.3
		Public	1130	64.4
	First institution religion			
		Not religious	1482	84.4
		Religious	274	15.6
	First institution focus			
		Predominantly White Institution	1570	89.1
		Minority Serving Institution	193	10.9
	Transferred from 2-year to 4-year			
		Did not transfer	1413	80.1
		Transferred	350	19.9
Block 5	Age in 2003			
		Non-traditional (24+)	142	8.1
		Traditional (23 or younger)	1621	91.9

Independent variables were entered in five blocks, according to the theoretical model: 1) person, 2) academic microsystem, 3) extracurricular microsystem, 4) exosystem, and 5) time. A test of the full model in comparison to the intercept-only model indicated that the proposed model was more effective than the null model, $\chi^2(27, N = 1756) = 132.22, p < .001$. The overall model was able to correctly classify 97.8% of those who did not volunteer consistently, and 9.6% of those who did, for an overall success rate of 74.9%. Goodness-of-fit statistics suggest that the model adequately fit the data. The Hosmer-Lemeshow test yielded a $\chi^2(8)$ of 11.126, which was not significant ($p > .05$). The Cox and Snell R^2 was .073 and the Nagelkerke R^2 was .106. Both pseudo R-squared statistics increased as each block was added, suggesting that the full model is a better predictor than the null model. Block-by-block analysis indicated that each block contributed significantly to the model, except for Block 5 (Time). The increase in model fit associated with each block is summarized in Table 8.2.

Two variables were significant predictors of consistent community service in Block 1: low-income status ($\beta = -.424, p = .002$), and the importance of being a community leader ($\beta =$

.664, $p < .001$), indicating that low-income, first-generation males are less likely to volunteer consistently than those from higher income households, and that not surprisingly, those who value being a community leader are more likely to volunteer consistently than those who do not.

Table 8.2

Improvement in Fit Associated with Additional Blocks to the 2004 Model

	Block 1 Person Characteristics	Block 2 Academic microsystem	Block 3 Extracurricular microsystem	Block 4 Exosystem	Block 5 Time
Change in model χ^2	54.97	34.01	21.94	20.99	.313
-2 Log Likelihood ^a	1956.43	1922.42	1900.48	1879.49	1879.18
<i>p</i> -value	.000	.000	.000	.001	0.576
<i>df</i>	9	8	4	5	1

^a Initial -2 Log Likelihood with constant only: 2011.40

Block 1 significantly increased the fit of the overall model, $\chi^2(9, N = 1756) = 54.972, p < .001$. The Hosmer-Lemeshow test yielded a $\chi^2(8)$ of 10.516, and was not significant ($p > .05$). Pseudo-R statistics were .031 (Cox & Snell) and .045 (Nagelkerke). The percentage of cases correctly classified remained the same as the null model, at 74%.

In Block 2, the academic microsystem, being a social science, education or health major ($\beta = .458, p = .012$) and attending study groups ($\beta = .344, p = .005$) were both significantly positively associated with consistent community service participation. The variables that were significant in Block 1 were still significant in Block 2. Block 2 significantly increased the fit of the overall model, $\chi^2(8, N = 1756) = 34.013, p < .001$. The Hosmer-Lemeshow statistic was $\chi^2(8) = 8.942$, and was not significant ($p > .05$). Pseudo-R statistics were .049 (Cox & Snell) and .072 (Nagelkerke). The percentage of cases correctly classified increased from 74% to 74.4%.

Only one variable from Block 3, the extracurricular microsystem, made a significant contribution to predicting the outcome. Involvement in school clubs had a significant positive relationship with consistent community service ($\beta = .387, p = .003$). Variables from the first two

blocks were still significant in Block 3, with the exception of attending study groups. In other words, once extracurricular variables were controlled for, attending study groups was no longer a significant predictor. Block 3 significantly increased the fit of the overall model, $\chi^2(4, N = 1756) = 21.935, p < .001$. The Hosmer-Lemeshow statistic was $\chi^2(8) = 16.626$, which was significant ($p < .05$), suggesting that this block did not fit the data well. Pseudo-R statistics were .061 (Cox & Snell) and .090 (Nagelkerke). The percentage of cases correctly classified increased from 74.4% to 75%.

In Block 4, institution control was a significant predictor of consistent community service. First-generation males attending private non-profit colleges were more likely to volunteer consistently ($\beta = .485, p = .004$) while those attending private for-profit colleges were less likely to do so ($\beta = -.683, p = .042$). All variables in Block 3 remained significant; in addition being a business major was negatively related to consistent community involvement ($\beta = -.437, p = .03$), with STEM majors as the reference group. The fourth block also significantly increased the fit of the overall model, $\chi^2(5, N = 1756) = 20.990, p = .001$. The Hosmer-Lemeshow statistic was $\chi^2(8) = 12.218$, which was not significant ($p > .05$). Pseudo-R statistics were .072 (Cox & Snell) and .106 (Nagelkerke). The percentage of cases correctly classified remained the same, at 75%.

Block 5 included only one variable, age, which was not significant. Thus, the fifth block did not contribute to model. In fact, the percentage of cases correctly classified decreased from 75% to 74.9%. One possible explanation is that the cutoff age for traditional students was set somewhat high, thus placing some older students in the “traditional” category.

Table 8.3 presents results from the regression model. Odds ratios indicate that low-income first-generation males were 1.39 times less likely to volunteer consistently than higher

income students, and those who placed value on being a community leader were 1.77 times more likely to volunteer consistently than those who did not place importance on this trait. With respect to major, business majors were 1.54 times less likely than STEM majors to volunteer consistently while social science, education, or health majors were 1.59 times more likely to do so. In addition, first-generation males who sometimes or frequently participated in school clubs were 1.39 times more likely to volunteer consistently than those who did not. With respect to exosystem variables, first-generation males who attended private non-profit institutions were 1.63 times more likely to participate consistently in community service activities than those at public colleges and universities. The rest of the predictor variables in the model did not have a significant relationship with consistent community service participation of first-generation males.

Table 8.3

Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for Consistent Volunteering in 2003-04
(*standard errors in parentheses*)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Minority	.199 (.137)	.201 (.139)	.178 (.140)	.279 (.147)	.275 (.147)
Low income	-.424** (.135)	-.421** (.137)	-.360** (.139)	-.334* (.141)	-.327* (.142)
Immig_Foreign	-.199 (.200)	-.181 (.203)	-.154 (.208)	-.179 (.209)	-.175 (.209)
Immig_1.5 generation	.019 (.176)	.060 (.179)	.083 (.181)	.071 (.183)	.067 (.183)
Impt04 community leader	.664*** (.120)	.584*** (.123)	.534*** (.125)	.569*** (.126)	.572*** (.126)
Impt04 financially well-off	-.162 (.144)	-.107 (.147)	-.086 (.149)	-.083 (.150)	-.087 (.150)
Impt04 influence politics	.100 (.127)	.049 (.129)	.065 (.131)	.091 (.132)	.089 (.132)
Impt04 leisure time	-.245 (.170)	-.283 (.172)	-.272 (.174)	-.293 (.176)	-.294 (.176)
Highest degree expected 2003-04	.166 (.119)	.051 (.123)	.007 (.124)	-.062 (.126)	-.062 (.126)
Major04 - Humanities		.140 (.232)	.180 (.234)	.140 (.238)	.139 (.238)
Major04 - Business		-.375 (.196)	-.375 (.198)	-.437* (.201)	-.433* (.201)
Major04 - Vocational		-.163 (.200)	-.159 (.202)	-.197 (.204)	-.193 (.204)

Major04 - Social sci, educ or health	.458*	.480**	.461*	.466*
	(.182)	(.184)	(.186)	(.186)
Major04 - Undeclared	-.069	-.061	-.093	-.091
	(.158)	(.160)	(.163)	(.163)
Faculty interaction 2004	.292	.189	.122	.123
	(.169)	(.171)	(.174)	(.174)
Attending study groups 2004	.344**	.170	.145	.145
	(.124)	(.131)	(.132)	(.132)
Attendance intensity 2003-04	.080	-.024	-.023	-.040
	(.158)	(.164)	(.166)	(.169)
Hours worked 2003-04		-.005	-.004	-.004
		(.004)	(.004)	(.004)
Involvement in school clubs 2004		.387**	.333**	.328*
		(.129)	(.130)	(.130)
Involvement in sports 2004		.230	.210	.206
		(.132)	(.133)	(.133)
Campus housing 2003-04		.035	-.131	-.138
		(.134)	(.141)	(.142)
Institution - Private NP			.485**	.489**
			(.167)	(.167)
Institution - Private FP			-.683*	-.648
			(.336)	(.342)
Institution - Religious			-.278	-.281
			(.198)	(.198)
Minority Serving Institution			-.340	-.340
			(.210)	(.210)
Transferred from 2 to 4-yr inst			-.220	-.225
			(.174)	(.174)
Traditional college age				-.144
				(.260)
Constant	-1.134	-1.538	-1.436	-1.253
				-1.230

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Collinearity testing was conducted on all predictors in the model to ensure that they did not correlate too highly with each other. All variables had tolerance levels higher than .1 and VIF values lower than 10. Thus, multicollinearity was not an issue for this model.

To summarize, for first-generation males, significant predictors of consistent participation in community service during the first year in college included placing value on being a community leader, being a social science, education or health major, being involved in school clubs, and attending a private non-profit institution. Coming from a low-income family

and being a business major were both negatively associated with consistent community service involvement. However, the small R-squared statistics suggest that the effect size of these variables is small.

Consistent Community Service in Third Year of College (2005-06)

Blocked entry logistic regression analysis was also used to examine whether the proposed set of 2005-06 independent variables would significantly increase the odds of predicting the consistent participation of first-generation males in community service during their third year of college. Consistent community service participation during 2006 was the dependent variable, and was defined as having volunteered at least four hours per month during the 2005-06 academic year. This sample consisted of 1446 first-generation males who had either entered a 4-year institution in their first year, or who had started at a 2-year institution and later transferred to a 4-year institution, and who were still enrolled in the 2005-06 academic year. There were 8 missing cases; 1438 cases (99.4%) were included in the analysis. 397 of the first-generation males in this sample had volunteered on a consistent basis during their third year in college (27.6%) while 1041 had not (72.4%). A summary of descriptive statistics for the independent variables in this model are provided in table 8.4.

The independent variables in the 2006 model were again entered in five blocks: 1) person, 2) academic microsystem, 3) extracurricular microsystem, 4) exosystem, and 5) time. A test of the full model suggested that the proposed model was more effective than the intercept-only model, $\chi^2(29, N = 1438) = 118.59, p < .001$. The overall model was able to correctly classify 97.0% of those who did not volunteer consistently, and 11.3% of those who did, for an

overall success rate of 73.4%. Goodness-of-fit statistics suggest that the model adequately fit the data. The Hosmer-Lemeshow test yielded a $\chi^2(8)$ of 9.469, which was not significant ($p > .05$).

Table 8.4
Descriptive Statistics for 2006 Variables ($N=1446$)

Block	Variable	<i>N</i>	%
Block 1	Minority		
	Minority	525	36.3
	White	921	63.7
	Low Income		
	Low-income	363	25.1
	Not Low-income	1083	74.9
	Immigrant Status		
	Foreign-born	166	11.5
	US Born Foreign Parents	195	13.5
	US Born	1085	75
	Importance of being a community leader 2006		
	Yes	658	45.5
	No	788	54.5
	Importance of being financially well-off 2006		
	Yes	1033	71.4
	No	413	28.6
	Importance of helping others 2006		
	Yes	1068	73.9
	No	378	26.1
	Importance of influencing the political structure 2006		
	Yes	351	24.3
No	1095	75.7	
Importance of having leisure time 2006			
Yes	1234	85.3	
No	212	14.7	
Importance of finding meaning and purpose 2006			
Yes	1141	78.9	
No	305	21.1	
Highest degree expected 2006			
BA or less	571	39.5	
Post-BA or higher	875	60.5	
Block 2	Major in 2006		
	Humanities	158	10.9
	STEM	325	22.5
	Business	318	22
	Vocational	181	12.5
	Social Science, Education, or Health	277	19.2
	Undeclared	187	12.9
	Faculty interaction outside of class 2006		
	Never	169	11.7
	Sometimes or often	1274	88.3
	Attending study groups 2006		
	Never	432	29.9
	Sometimes or often	1011	70.1
	Attendance intensity 2005-06		
Part-time or mixed	187	12.9	
Full-time	1259	87.1	
Block 3	Involvement in school clubs		
	Never	743	51.5

		Sometimes or often	700	48.5
	Involvement in sports	Never	815	56.5
		Sometimes or often	628	43.5
	Campus Housing 2005-06	Off-campus	1081	74.8
		On-campus	365	25.2
Block 4	First institution control	Private non-profit	432	30
		Private for-profit	72	5
		Public	937	65
	First institution religion	Not religious	1211	84
		Religious	230	16
	First institution focus	Predominantly White Institution	1297	89.7
		Minority Serving Institution	149	10.3
	Transferred from 2-year to 4-year	Did not transfer	1141	78.9
		Transferred	305	21.1
Block 5	Age in 2003	Non-traditional (24+)	89	6.2
		Traditional (23 or younger)	1357	93.8

The Cox and Snell R^2 was .079 and the Nagelkerke R^2 was .114. Block-by-block analysis indicated that Blocks 1, 3, and 4 contributed significantly to the model. Table 8.5 summarizes the increase in model fit associated with each block.

Table 8.5
Improvement in Fit Associated with Additional Blocks to the 2006 Model

	Block 1 Person Characteristics	Block 2 Academic microsystem	Block 3 Extracurricular microsystem	Block 4 Exosystem	Block 5 Time
Change in model χ^2	71.84	12.73	19.20	12.70	2.11
-2 Log Likelihood ^a	1622.73	1609.99	1590.79	1578.09	1575.98
<i>p</i> -value	.000	.121	.001	.026	0.15
<i>df</i>	11	8	4	5	1

^a Initial -2 Log Likelihood with constant only: 1694.57

In the first block, five person variables were significant predictors of consistent community service: low-income status ($\beta = -.295, p = .05$), being born in a foreign country ($\beta = -.614, p = .008$), the importance of being a community leader when asked in 2006 ($\beta = .687, p < .001$), the importance of being financially well-off when asked in 2006 ($\beta = -.538, p < .001$), and

the highest degree a student expected to earn when asked in 2006 ($\beta = .280, p = .027$). Similar to the 2004 model, low-income, first-generation males were less likely to volunteer consistently than those from higher income households, and those who valued being a community leader were more likely to volunteer consistently than those who did not. In addition, immigration status was a significant predictor during the third year of college, with foreign-born first-generation males less likely to volunteer consistently than those who were born in the US. In this model, the importance of finances were also significantly negatively related to community service participation, and higher degree expectations were positively related. Block 1 significantly increased the fit of the overall model, $\chi^2(11, N = 1438) = 71.844, p < .001$. The Hosmer-Lemeshow test generated a $\chi^2(8)$ of 5.471, and was not significant ($p > .05$). Pseudo-R statistics were .049 (Cox & Snell) and .070 (Nagelkerke). The percentage of cases correctly classified increased from 72.4% (null model) to 73.3%.

No variables in Block 2, the academic microsystem, were significant predictors in the 2006 model. Of the variables that were significant in Block 1, low-income status and highest degree expectation were no longer significant in Block 2, while the importance placed on influencing the political structure became a significant predictor ($\beta = -.315, p = .041$). This suggests that once major and other academic factors were included in the model, low-income status and degree expectations no longer had predictive value. Block 2 did not significantly increase the fit of the overall model, but the percentage of cases correctly classified did increase from 73.3% to 73.4%.

Similar to the 2004 model, the only variable from Block 3 that was a significant predictor of consistent community service was involvement in school clubs ($\beta = .509, p < .001$). Significant variables from Block 2 were still significant in Block 3. Block 3 significantly

increased the fit of the overall model, $\chi^2(4, N = 1438) = 19.201, p = .001$. The Hosmer-Lemeshow statistic was $\chi^2(8) = 10.495$, and was not significant ($p > .05$). Pseudo-R statistics were .070 (Cox & Snell) and .101 (Nagelkerke). The percentage of cases correctly classified increased from 73.4% to 73.8%.

In Block 4, institution control was again a significant predictor of consistent community service. First-generation males attending private for-profit colleges were significantly less likely to volunteer consistently than those in public institutions ($\beta = -1.216, p = .004$). All variables from Block 3 remained significant. Block 4 also significantly increased the fit of the overall model, $\chi^2(5, N = 1438) = 12.702, p = .026$. The Hosmer-Lemeshow statistic was $\chi^2(8) = 8.708$, which was not significant ($p > .05$), and pseudo-R statistics were .078 (Cox & Snell) and .112 (Nagelkerke). Interestingly, the percentage of cases correctly classified decreased from 73.8% to 73.4%.

The age variable in Block 5 was not significant, similar to the 2004 model. Therefore the fifth block did not contribute to model. However, being a minority became a significant predictor in the final block ($\beta = .330, p = .041$). The percentage of cases correctly classified remained the same as in the previous block, at 73.4%.

Individual regression coefficients and standard errors for this model are summarized in Table 8.6. Odds ratios suggest that minority first-generation males were 1.39 times more likely to volunteer consistently than White students. By calculating the inverse odds ratio for odds ratios that were less than 1, it was determined that foreign-born students were 1.76 times less likely than US-born students to participate in consistent service activities during their third year in college. Those who placed value on being a community leader were 1.83 times more likely to volunteer consistently than those who did not place importance on this trait. Conversely, those

who placed value on being financially well-off were 1.66 times less likely to volunteer consistently, and those who hoped to influence the political structure were 1.4 times less likely to do so than those who did not value these traits. In addition, first-generation males who sometimes or frequently participated in school clubs were 1.6 times more likely to volunteer consistently than those who did not. Perhaps most notably, first-generation males who attended private for-profit institutions were 3.86 times less likely to participate consistently in community service activities during their third year in college than those at public institutions. The other independent variables in the model were not predictive of consistent participation in community service for first-generation males.

Table 8.6
Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for Consistent Volunteering in 2005-06
(*standard errors* in parentheses)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Minority	.258 (.151)	.265 (.153)	.266 (.154)	.314 (.161)	.330* (.161)
Low income	-.295* (.151)	-.282 (.152)	-.243 (.153)	-.170 (.157)	-.188 (.157)
Immig_Foreign	-.614** (.230)	-.582* (.232)	-.536* (.234)	-.547* (.236)	-.566* (.236)
Immig_1.5 generation	-.236 (.198)	-.209 (.200)	-.148 (.201)	-.158 (.204)	-.147 (.204)
Impt06 community leader	.687*** (.136)	.650*** (.138)	.587*** (.140)	.604*** (.141)	.606*** (.141)
Impt06 financially well-off	-.538*** (.135)	-.495*** (.137)	-.493*** (.139)	-.509*** (.140)	-.510*** (.140)
Impt06 helping others	.282 (.164)	.282 (.165)	.269 (.167)	.281 (.168)	.275 (.168)
Impt06 influence politics	-.290 (.153)	-.315* (.154)	-.324* (.156)	-.334* (.156)	-.334* (.156)
Impt06 leisure time	.178 (.186)	.195 (.187)	.245 (.189)	.256 (.190)	.274 (.191)
Impt06 meaning & purpose	-.200 (.163)	-.239 (.164)	-.248 (.166)	-.282 (.168)	-.269 (.169)
Highest degree expected 2006	.280* (.127)	.228 (.131)	.174 (.133)	.158 (.134)	.155 (.134)
Major06 - Humanities		.287 (.221)	.347 (.224)	.368 (.228)	.374 (.228)
Major06 - Business		.008 (.189)	.029 (.191)	.018 (.193)	.006 (.193)

Major06 - Vocational	.132	.133	.116	.113
	(.219)	(.221)	(.223)	(.223)
Major06 - Social sci, educ or health	.181	.226	.197	.192
	(.188)	(.191)	(.192)	(.192)
Major06 - Undeclared	-.232	-.148	-.136	-.127
	(.232)	(.235)	(.238)	(.238)
Faculty interaction 2006	.316	.223	.196	.201
	(.215)	(.218)	(.220)	(.220)
Attending study groups 2006	.223	.076	.077	.081
	(.142)	(.148)	(.149)	(.149)
Attendance intensity 2005-06	.115	.050	.058	.096
	(.192)	(.197)	(.199)	(.201)
Hours worked in 2005-06		.003	.005	.004
		(.004)	(.004)	(.004)
Involvement in school clubs 2006		.509***	.469***	.478***
		(.139)	(.139)	(.140)
Involvement in sports 2006		.139	.100	.112
		(.138)	(.139)	(.140)
Campus housing 2005-06		.055	.044	.047
		(.146)	(.151)	(.151)
Institution - Private NP			-.117	-.131
			(.191)	(.191)
Institution - Private FP			-1.216**	-1.350**
			(.423)	(.436)
Institution - Religious			-.099	-.089
			(.224)	(.224)
Minority Serving Institution			-.137	-.140
			(.226)	(.227)
Transferred from 2 to 4-yr institution			-.291	-.305
			(.171)	(.172)
Traditional college age				.424
				(.286)
Constant	-1.168	-1.743	-1.906	-1.710
				-1.789

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Collinearity diagnostics indicated that all variables had tolerance levels higher than .1 and VIF values lower than 10. Thus, multicollinearity was not a problem for this model either.

Overall, results from the 2006 regression model suggest that in the third year of college, being a member of a minority group, placing value on being a community leader and being involved in school clubs were positive predictors of consistent community service involvement for first-generation males. Conversely, being an immigrant, placing value on being financially

well-off, placing value on influencing the political structure, and attending a private for-profit institution were negative predictors of consistent involvement. Yet again, the effect size of these variables was small.

Consistent Community Service in Sixth Year of College (2008-09)

Blocked entry logistic regression analysis was used to examine whether the proposed set of 2008-09 independent variables would significantly increase the odds of predicting the consistent participation of first-generation males in community service who were still enrolled in the sixth year of college. Consistent community service participation during 2009 was the dependent variable, and was defined as having volunteered at least four hours per month during the 2008-09 academic year. The sample for this model consisted of 650 first-generation males who had either entered a 4-year institution in their first year, or who had started at a 2-year institution and later transferred to a 4-year institution, and who were still enrolled in the 2008-09 academic year. There were 2 missing cases, so 648 cases (99.7%) were included in the analysis. 171 of the first-generation males in this sample had volunteered on a consistent basis during their sixth year in college (26.4%) while 477 had not (73.6%). The descriptive statistics for the independent variables in this model are summarized in Table 8.7.

Table 8.7
Descriptive Statistics for 2009 Variables (N=650)

Block	Variables	N	%
Block 1	Minority		
	Minority	292	44.9
	White	358	55.1
	Low Income		
	Low-income	200	30.8
	Not Low-income	450	69.2
	Immigrant Status		
	Foreign-born	95	14.6
	US Born Foreign Parents	99	15.2
	US Born	456	70.2
	Importance of being a community leader 2006		
	Yes	305	46.9

	No	345	53.1
	Importance of being financially well-off 2006		
	Yes	484	74.5
	No	166	25.5
	Importance of helping others 2006		
	Yes	503	77.4
	No	147	22.6
	Importance of influencing the political structure 2006		
	Yes	175	26.9
	No	475	73.1
	Importance of having leisure time 2006		
	Yes	555	85.4
	No	95	14.6
	Importance of finding meaning and purpose 2006		
	Yes	515	79.2
	No	135	20.8
	Highest degree expected 2009		
	BA or less	260	40
	Post-BA or higher	390	60
Block 2	Major in 2009		
	Humanities	72	11.1
	STEM	158	24.3
	Business	153	23.5
	Vocational	93	14.3
	Social Science, Education, or Health	125	19.2
	Undeclared	49	7.5
	Attendance intensity 2008-09		
	Part-time or mixed	175	26.9
	Full-time	475	73.1
Block 3	Campus Housing 2008-09		
	Off-campus	597	91.8
	On-campus	53	8.2
Block 4	First institution control		
	Private non-profit	132	20.3
	Private for-profit	28	4.3
	Public	489	75.2
	First institution religion		
	Not religious	574	88.3
	Religious	75	11.5
	First institution focus		
	Predominantly White Inst	555	85.4
	Minority Serving Inst	95	14.6
	Transferred from 2-year to 4-year		
	Did not transfer	451	69.4
	Transferred	199	30.6
Block 5	Age in 2003		
	Non-traditional (24+)	55	8.5
	Traditional (23 or younger)	595	91.5

The independent variables in the 2009 model were entered in the same five blocks as previous models: 1) person, 2) academic microsystem, 3) extracurricular microsystem, 4)

exosystem, and 5) time. Because very few person variables were measured in the 2009 survey, the 2006 questions on importance of various person goals were included in this model. A test of the full model suggested that the proposed model was more effective than the intercept-only model, $\chi^2(26, N = 648) = 52.98, p < .001$. The overall model was able to correctly classify 98.3.0% of those who did not volunteer consistently, and 11.7% of those who did, for an overall success rate of 75.5%. However, goodness-of-fit statistics suggest that this model did not fit the data well. The Hosmer-Lemeshow test yielded a $\chi^2(8)$ of 19.158, which was significant ($p < .05$). The Cox and Snell R^2 was .078 and the Nagelkerke R^2 was .115. Block-by-block analysis indicated that only Blocks 1 and 3 contributed significantly to the model. Table 8.8 summarizes the increase in model fit associated with each block.

Table 8.8
Improvement in Fit Associated with Additional Blocks to the 2009 Model

	Block 1 Person Characteristics	Block 2 Academic microsystem	Block 3 Extracurricular microsystem	Block 4 Exosystem	Block 5 Time
Change in model χ^2	33.23	7.50	9.34	2.87	0.03
-2 Log Likelihood ^a	714.67	707.17	697.83	694.96	694.93
<i>p</i> -value	.000	.378	.009	.720	0.857
<i>df</i>	11	7	2	5	1

^a Initial -2 Log Likelihood with constant only: 747.903

In Block 1, four person variables predicted consistent volunteering. Foreign-born immigrants ($\beta = -.589, p = .05$) and U.S. born students with immigrant parents ($\beta = -.630, p = .039$) were both significantly less likely to participate consistently, compared with U.S. born students who did not have immigrant parents. First-generation males who had placed importance on being a community leader in 2006 were still more likely to volunteer consistently in 2009, as compared to those who did not have this value ($\beta = .583, p = .005$), and those who expected to complete a graduate degree were more likely to volunteer consistently than those who only planned to complete a baccalaureate degree ($\beta = .462, p = .02$). Block 1 significantly increased

the fit of the overall model, $\chi^2(11, N = 648) = 33.230, p < .001$. The Hosmer-Lemeshow test yielded a $\chi^2(8)$ of 10.778, and was not significant ($p > .05$). Pseudo-R statistics were .050 (Cox & Snell) and .073 (Nagelkerke). Despite the increase in model fit, the percentage of cases correctly classified decreased from 73.6% (null model) to 73.3%.

Interestingly, one variable from the academic microsystem was a significant predictor of consistent participation in service, even though this block did not significantly contribute to the overall model. Students who attended school full-time were more likely to volunteer consistently than those with part-time or mixed attendance ($\beta = .464, p = .042$). Of the predictors that were significant in the first block, both immigration status variables were no longer significant in Block 2. Block 2 did not significantly increase the fit of the overall model, but the percentage of cases correctly classified did increase from 73.3% to 73.5%.

Only two variables were included in Block 3, and the amount of hours worked was predictive of consistent community service ($\beta = .016, p = .01$). All variables from Block 2 remained significant. Block 3 significantly increased the fit of the overall model, $\chi^2(2, N = 648) = 9.34, p = .009$. The Hosmer-Lemeshow statistic was $\chi^2(8) = 11.284$, and was not significant ($p > .05$). Pseudo-R statistics were .074 (Cox & Snell) and .109 (Nagelkerke). The percentage of cases correctly classified increased from 73.5% to 75.6%.

No institution or time factors appeared to be significant in the 2009 model, and neither Block 4 nor Block 5 contributed to the model. In Block 4 however, being a child of an immigrant parent was again a significant predictor of consistent volunteering ($\beta = -.619, p = .05$).

Table 8.9 presents individual regression coefficients and standard errors for the 2009 model. Odds ratios suggest that U.S. born first-generation males who were children of immigrants were 1.86 times less likely to volunteer consistently than U.S. born students whose

parents were not immigrants. Those who placed value on being a community leader in 2006 were 1.89 times more likely to volunteer consistently in 2009 than those who did not place importance on this trait. In addition, first-generation males with higher degree expectations were 1.56 times more likely to volunteer consistently than those who planned to stop after earning a bachelors degree. Full-time students were 1.79 times more likely than part-time students to participate consistently. Interestingly, for every hour increase in working, first-generation males were slightly more likely to volunteer consistently as well (1.016 times).

Table 8.9

Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for Consistent Volunteering in 2008-09
(standard errors in parentheses)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Minority	.225 (.218)	.103 (.228)	.097 (.229)	.142 (.242)	.144 (.242)
Low income	-.051 (.205)	-.087 (.209)	-.052 (.210)	-.014 (.214)	-.016 (.214)
Immig_Foreign	-.589* (.300)	-.503 (.306)	-.501 (.309)	-.504 (.312)	-.506 (.313)
Immig_1.5 generation	-.630* (.305)	-.571 (.308)	-.576 (.312)	-.619* (.316)	-.618* (.316)
Impt06 community leader	.583** (.207)	.597** (.211)	.626** (.213)	.637** (.215)	.636** (.216)
Impt06 financially well-off	-.347 (.212)	-.332 (.218)	-.322 (.220)	-.343 (.223)	-.347 (.224)
Impt06 helping others	.139 (.254)	.175 (.259)	.138 (.261)	.148 (.262)	.146 (.262)
Impt06 influence politics	.191 (.216)	.159 (.219)	.121 (.222)	.115 (.225)	.116 (.225)
Impt06 leisure time	.117 (.286)	.099 (.291)	.064 (.293)	.083 (.295)	.086 (.296)
Impt06 meaning & purpose	-.305 (.243)	-.299 (.245)	-.316 (.247)	-.311 (.248)	-.308 (.248)
Highest degree expected 2009	.462* (.198)	.449* (.203)	.467* (.205)	.442* (.207)	.443* (.207)
Major09 - Humanities		.193 (.328)	.144 (.333)	.109 (.336)	.110 (.336)
Major09 - Business		-.038 (.278)	-.113 (.280)	-.145 (.283)	-.145 (.283)
Major09 - Vocational		.339 (.306)	.263 (.309)	.295 (.311)	.294 (.311)
Major09 - Social sci, educ or health		.082 (.285)	.108 (.287)	.056 (.290)	.051 (.291)

Major09 - Undeclared	.058	-.089	-.102	-.107
	(.413)	(.420)	(.425)	(.426)
Attendance intensity 2008-09	.464*	.581*	.579*	.583*
	(.228)	(.234)	(.235)	(.236)
GPA at all institutions attended	-.155	-.149	-.144	-.146
	(.136)	(.137)	(.139)	(.140)
Hours worked in 2008-09		.016**	.016**	.016**
		(.006)	(.006)	(.006)
Campus housing 2008-09		-.526	-.549	-.549
		(.372)	(.377)	(.377)
Institution - Private NP			-.403	-.403
			(.374)	(.374)
Institution - Private FP			-.689	-.724
			(.541)	(.575)
Institution - Religious			.264	.263
			(.441)	(.441)
Minority Serving Institution			-.094	-.093
			(.291)	(.291)
Transferred from 2 to 4-yr institution			-.032	-.035
			(.220)	(.221)
Traditional college age				.070
				(.386)
Constant	-1.305	-1.307	-1.692	-1.624
				-1.619

*p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Collinearity diagnostics indicated that all variables had tolerance levels higher than .1 and VIF values lower than 10. Thus, multicollinearity was not an issue in the 2009 model.

In summary, consistent community service participation of first-generation males during their sixth year of college was positively predicted by the importance placed on being a community leader, the expectation to earn a graduate or professional degree, attending school full-time, and working more hours during the school year. However it is possible that if participation in school clubs was included in this model, the influence of work hours might be non-significant. The only negative predictor of consistent participation was being a U.S. born student with immigrant parents.

Further Exploration of First-Year Mesosystems

A follow-up analysis was conducted to determine whether some mesosystems might particularly encourage or prohibit the participation of first-generation males in consistent community service, during their first year in college. Based on results from the 2004 logistic regression model, two mesosystems were created by using microsystem variables that were significant predictors of the dependent variable – one mesosystem that was conducive to community service participation and one that was prohibitive.

The initial conducive mesosystem included first-generation males who were social science, education, or health majors at private non-profit institutions in their first year of college ($n = 64$). The prohibitive mesosystem initially included first-generation male business majors at private for-profit institutions, but because there were only 13 participants who fit this category, this mesosystem was adjusted to include first-generation male business majors at public institutions in their first year of college instead ($n = 148$). Using the formulas described in chapter 3, it was determined that the odds of volunteering consistently for first-generation male social science, education, or health majors at private non-profit institutions was .829, while the odds of volunteering consistently for first-generation male business majors at public institutions was .213. The odds ratio between these groups indicates that first-generation male social science, education, or health majors at private non-profit institutions were 3.89 times more likely to volunteer consistently in their freshman year than their counterpart business majors at public institutions.

In order to refine these mesosystems, a second analysis was conducted using a third microsystem – school club involvement. In this analysis, the conducive mesosystem included first-generation males who were social science, education, or health majors at private non-profit institutions, and who participated in school clubs during freshman year ($n = 30$). Conversely,

the prohibitive mesosystem included first-generation male business majors at public institutions, who did not participate in school clubs during freshman year ($n = 103$). The odds of volunteering consistently for first-generation male social science, education, or health majors at private non-profit institutions and who participated in school clubs was 1.308, while the odds of volunteering consistently for first-generation male business majors at public institutions and who did not participate in school clubs was .157. Thus, the odds ratio reveals that first-generation male social science, education, or health majors at private non-profit institutions, who participated in school clubs were 8.33 times more likely to volunteer consistently during their freshman year than first-generation male business majors at public institutions, who did not participate in school clubs.

These exploratory findings suggest that the combination of major, campus involvement, and institutional type can have a substantial impact on the community engagement rates of first-generation males, and that further exploration into these varied mesosystems could provide more information about the best ways to recruit and engage students from such different types of environments.

Discussion and Conclusion

All three of the logistic regression models proposed in Phase 3 of this study significantly increased the probability of predicting consistent participation in community service at three different points in time along the college experience, for first-generation male students. However, the percentage of cases correctly classified increased only minimally, suggesting that the models may not have substantial practical utility. Nevertheless, several variables emerged which seemed to have more consistent predictive value, including immigration status, the value

placed on being a community leader, involvement in school clubs, and institution control.

Although a number of other variables also emerged as significant, these four were significant predictors in more than one model.

Along these lines, perhaps the most interesting finding from this phase of the study lies in the fact that the significant individual predictors changed over time. In fact, placing value on being a community leader was the only significant predictor across all three years. In the first year of college, income level, major, and school club involvement were predictive of consistent involvement, suggesting that external factors served as the most influential barriers and catalysts for first-generation male community engagement. Additionally, being a student at a private non-profit institution was also related to higher participation rates in the first year, perhaps because these types of institutions place a greater emphasis on getting their first-year students involved in the community.

As first-generation males entered their junior year, a greater number of person-based variables seemed to be related to consistent community engagement. In addition to wanting to be a community leader, being a member of a minority group was related to higher consistent community service participation. On the other hand, those students who placed a high value on being financially well-off and/or on influencing politics were less likely to volunteer on a consistent basis, as were immigrant students. This finding supports previous research showing that materialism is negatively related to community service participation (Astin & Sax, 1998; Astin et al., 2000). It could be argued that these variables are related to identity, and that college students in their junior year are immersed in the work of identity formation, which heavily impacts how they choose to spend their time. With respect to institutional factors, in the third year consistent engagement was negatively related to beginning college at a private for-profit

school, indicating that differences between public and private non-profit institutions had evened out, thus highlighting the lack of emphasis on community engagement at for-profit colleges.

By the sixth year in college, those first-generation males who were still enrolled were presumably focused on graduating and starting a career. These concerns were reflected in the variables that emerged as significant predictors of community service participation in the last regression model. In addition to placing value on being a community leader, students who expected to earn a post-baccalaurate degree were more likely to volunteer consistently, perhaps because they needed to gain additional experience to enhance their graduate school applications. Those who attended school part-time were less likely to participate in the community, most likely because they were focused on graduating and had other external obligations to meet. U.S. born students with immigrant parents – who might be more likely to put pressure on students to graduate soon – were also less likely to volunteer. It is interesting that hours worked was positively related to consistent community services, but it does not necessarily contradict other studies which have sometimes found a positive relationship between college student employment and student involvement (Cruce & Moore, 2007).

Useful information can also be gleaned from the variables that were not significant predictors of community service participation. Generally speaking, GPA, campus housing, transfer status, age, were not related to community engagement for first-generation males once other factors were controlled for, which could imply that such factors are less of a barrier to involvement than originally thought. More surprising was the finding that the importance placed on helping others, finding meaning and purpose, and leisure time were not related to consistent community service. One would assume that people who value helping others and/or finding meaning and purpose would be more likely to engage in the community, while those who value

leisure time would be less likely to do so. However, these findings suggest that first-generation males may help others, or look for meaning and purpose through other avenues besides community service. In addition, some students who value leisure time may view their community involvement as an enjoyable and leisurely activity, as evidenced by some of the qualitative findings in this study. Finally, attending a religious institution was not predictive of consistent community service, perhaps because these institutions were included in the private non-profit sample. No differences were found between Predominantly White Institutions and Minority Serving Institutions either, which suggests that these institutions do not place differential emphasis on community engagement.

In the next and final chapter, the findings from both quantitative phases and the qualitative phase of this study will be considered in relation to each other, in an integrated discussion of what has been learned from these multiple analyses.

CHAPTER 9

Discussion: An Ecological Perspective on the Community Engagement of First-Generation Males

The primary objective of this study is to contribute to the scholarship on first-generation college students, and how participation in community-based learning might enhance their college engagement and outcomes. In particular, by taking a specific focus on male students, the current study hoped to advance the research on first-generation college students as well as on community engagement, because men are falling behind their female counterparts in the first area, and conspicuously missing from the picture in the latter. More importantly, this population is at greater risk of postsecondary attrition, and my hope is that the findings from this study can help promote their engagement and persistence in college.

Because virtually nothing is known about first-generation males and community-based learning, this research took an exploratory approach to the topic. Community service participation patterns were examined in an effort to provide a baseline picture of the rates at which this population is engaged. I also studied the reasons for participation in order to better understand some of the motivations behind the choice to engage in community service and community-based learning, with the hope of improving efforts to recruit more first-generation males to participate. By examining the outcomes of community-based learning, the study hoped to gain a clearer understanding of the impact that participation can have on not only academic outcomes, but developmental or non-cognitive outcomes as well. All of these questions were considered within an ecological framework, in order to better understand how different contexts

shape participation, motivations, and outcomes of community-based learning. Three central research questions served as a guide for the mixed-methods investigation of these issues:

1. **Participation:** How, and how extensively do first-generation college males participate in community service and community-based education activities? What facilitates or inhibits their participation in these types of activities?
2. **Impact:** What impacts does participation in community-based education have on learning and engagement for first-generation males? How do they interpret and understand the benefits of participation in community-based education?
3. **Context:** How do institutional settings and environmental context shape what first-generation males learn from and believe about their experiences in community-based education?

In mixed methods research, a more complex understanding of the research problem can only be achieved if “the outcomes of research strands are effectively linked or integrated, if possible areas of agreement or disagreement are identified through comparisons of results and inferences, and if the possibility of a higher order conceptual framework of the phenomenon is actively explored.” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 286). The purpose of this final chapter is to synthesize and interpret the findings from all three phases of this study, and to situate these results within the existing relevant literature.

In accordance with the broad research areas described above, the chapter will be organized into the following sections: 1) participation patterns, 2) impact of community engagement on participants, and 3) contextual influences on participation and outcomes, as seen through the lens of the ecological framework. This discussion will also consider the theoretical

and practical implications of these findings for educational policy and practice, review several limitations of the study, and offer recommendations for future research.

It should be noted that the quantitative data focus on patterns of community service and volunteer participation, while the qualitative findings pertain to participation in community-based learning (or education) activities. The main distinction, as defined in this study, is that community service and volunteerism do not necessarily involve a structured learning or reflection component, while community-based learning does. In this chapter, I will use the broader term *community engagement* when discussing themes that are relevant to both community service as well as community-based education.

Community Engagement Participation Patterns Among First-Generation Males

This section synthesizes the quantitative and qualitative findings from this study regarding general participation rates in community service, the types of activities that first-generation males tend to engage in, the factors that impact their participation, and the reasons or motivations behind their participation.

Participation Rates

This study was based in part on the premise that first-generation male students participate in community-based activities at lower rates than other college student populations. One goal of this study was to provide empirical evidence to support this hypothesis. Data from the first phase of the study confirm previous research indicating that males participate in community service at significantly lower rates than females (Astin & Sax, 1998; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Salgado, 2003; Sax, 2008). Additionally, the findings from this study reveal that first-generation

and low-income college students participate in community service at significantly lower rates than continuing-generation and higher-income students, but that virtually no differences in participation exist between White and non-White groups. More specifically, analysis of the large-scale dataset shows that first-generation males volunteer at significantly lower rates than continuing-generation males and females, but at equal rates to their first-generation female counterparts.

Interestingly, closer analysis of the quantitative data indicate that the difference in participation rates between males and females, while statistically significant, is actually smaller than one might imagine, with 60% of females reporting that they volunteered at least once during college compared to 57% of males. Yet, the qualitative data paints a different story, as both student and staff participants across different programs and institutions consistently reported a much larger gender gap in the programs in which they were involved (20% males to 80% females). This stark contrast between the quantitative and qualitative data is puzzling, and warrants further consideration. First, it is possible that the two institutions included in the qualitative phase simply have different participation rates than the national sample. Another hypothesis is that the types of programs sampled in the qualitative phase (mostly education-focused) have much more skewed participation rates than other types of community service programs, which were included in the national dataset. A third possibility is that of response-bias in the national survey data, where male survey respondents felt pressure to falsely report that they had participated in community service, resulting in inflated participation rates.

In any case, the comparative conclusions about basic community service participation rates of first-generation students and males supplies a baseline level of information that has not

been available to date. Moreover, it provides the necessary context for the remaining phases of this study.

Participation Types

Quantitative data about the types of service that first-generation males choose indicate that a greater percentage of them provide service to a church as compared to any other category type. Other commonly reported activities included work with kids that was not tutoring or mentoring, neighborhood improvement, and “other types of service.” However, these types varied by student major and a variety of institutional factors. In general, first-generation males who were STEM, social science, education and health majors were significantly more likely to engage in tutoring or mentoring than others, while business and vocational majors were significantly less likely to be involved in these activities. STEM majors were also more likely to engage in health-related services. These patterns could reflect the degree of fit (or lack thereof) between one’s major and the nature of the service activity.

With respect to institutional variables, first-generation males at private non-profit and religious institutions were more likely to serve in programs that involved direct contact with others, including health service activities, homeless shelters or soup kitchens, or tutoring and mentoring. Across the six-year time span, students who began at 2-year schools and/or for-profit institutions were less likely to participate in almost all the activities than their counterparts at 4-year schools and private or public non-profit institutions. As noted in chapter 4, these findings are not surprising, given that 4-year institutions, as well as private non-profit and religious institutions, tend to promote the importance of and devote greater resources to student civic engagement (Campus Compact, 2011).

Compared to other groups (namely continuing-generation men and first-generation females), first-generation males were significantly less likely to participate in activities that could be categorized as nurturing or caring – including working in homeless shelters, soup kitchens, hospitals or nursing homes, or educational/childcare settings. Instead, the data suggested that they were more likely to engage in activities that involved physical activity rather than working with people, such as neighborhood cleanup and improvement. On the one hand this finding is unexpected, in light of the fact that the vast majority of participants who agreed to participate in the qualitative phase focused on education and working with youth. However, this trend does confirm one particular theme from the qualitative findings, which described the tendency for men to prefer community-based activities that were task-oriented and that provided a tangible feeling of accomplishment.

One limitation to consider is that these conclusions are somewhat constrained by the response categories that were included in the survey. For example, it is unclear what “other work with kids” involves – perhaps they play sports together, or provide basic supervision. It is also impossible to know what is included in “other types of service.” Perhaps this category includes environmental justice work, advocacy, social entrepreneurship, or political organizing – just a sample of activities that did not fit into one of the available survey responses.

Factors Impacting Participation of First-Generation Males

Another goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of the factors that impact the participation and experiences of first-generation college males in community-based learning. Findings on this topic came primarily from the qualitative phase of the study, and centered around three broad themes: financial and time constraints, gender socialization, and cultural

perspectives on the notion of service. For the most part, all three of these factors seemed to act as barriers or inhibitive forces to participation in community-based education for this particular population.

First, and most obviously, the heavy financial burden of paying for a college education was a major obstacle to engagement in all types of extracurricular activities, including work in the community. Most participants had to work many hours to help pay for college, so unless students could earn compensation for their community work, the amount of extra time they had was quite limited. Secondly, participants described a wide range of gender-related factors that either made it difficult to engage in community-based work, or made community-based work less appealing to males. These included basic issues such as the lack of male representation in community-based programs, the general sense of disdain that male peers expressed toward community service, and the scarcity of community-based projects that might be considered more “appealing” to men. These concerns were tied to more complex issues involving restrictive gender role expectations for males. Third, there was some evidence that communities of color might hold different conceptualizations about the definitions and value of “community service.” In some cases, participants retrospectively described holding a subconscious belief that service was an activity for “other people” – in other words, White people or people with more financial resources. At the same time, they engaged in activities that would be defined as service or community-based learning by practitioners, yet they did not name these activities as “service.” This finding corroborates research by Gilbride-Brown (2008) on the service-learning experiences of students of color, and implies that current efforts to include minority populations in the community engagement movement – many of whom could be first-generation males – may not be sufficient.

Reasons and Motivations to Participate

Analysis of the quantitative data from phase 1 on reasons for volunteer participation indicated that only 12% of the first-generation males who participated in community service did so as part of a program requirement. Instead, a majority of them (52%) cited “other” reasons that fell outside of the categories listed in the survey. Closer examination of this group reveals that STEM majors are more likely to participate through a campus organization, while undeclared, and social science, education or health majors were less likely to do so. Additionally, first-generation males at private non-profit and religious institutions were significantly more likely to report that volunteering was required as part of a program, and/or that they participated through a campus organization. This finding is aligned with other results in Phase 1 of the study, which suggest that private non-profit institutions, and particularly those that are religious, are more likely to have requirements and campus organizations that promote community engagement.

The prevalence of “other” reasons for volunteering among first-generation males was of particular interest to the researcher, and was subsequently explored in more detail in the qualitative phase of the study. While some interview participants cited external motivators as the initial catalyst for their community involvement, such as course credit, work-study, or club-sponsored activity, most of them sought out these experiences on their own. Paradoxically, the same themes that surfaced as barriers or disincentives to community-based engagement also emerged as the most influential motivators for study participants to continue their community involvement – namely financial background, gender, and racial or immigrant background. The most common theme cited was a strong sense of obligation or duty to “give back” to low-income, minority, and/or immigrant communities that were similar to their own. The other

significant notion that arose was the importance of serving as a male role model to younger males from similar backgrounds, particularly within the context of college access and academic success. This somewhat unexpected alignment between barriers and motivators for community-based engagement might suggest that the interview participants were exceptional cases, because they somehow turned their community engagement obstacles into inspiration. However it also highlights the potential for encouraging other first-generation males to tap into their own personal histories and backgrounds as motivation to engage in the community. Metaphorically, this phenomenon is reminiscent of a “sound barrier” effect – in other words, it is extremely difficult to get these students involved in such experiences initially, but once they do engage they could lead to profound outcomes – more so than for other student populations. A number of these findings are related to themes in the following section, which considers the impact that community-based involvement can have on first-generation males.

Impact of Community Engagement on First-Generation Males

Another premise of this study was that participation in community-based education could lead to a variety of positive outcomes for first-generation male college students. Accordingly, one of the research questions focused on the impact that community service and community-based education experiences had on the learning and engagement of this population. This portion of the discussion integrates findings from phases 1 and 2 of the study, and is organized into the four growth areas described in Chapter 7: academic, psychosocial, personal/spiritual, and sociopolitical. For the most part, the quantitative and qualitative findings in each of these areas supported each other, with the caveat that volunteering and community-based education are

different, albeit related constructs. In addition, they supported and elaborated on thematic conclusions from Yeh's (2010) pilot study on first-generation students and service-learning.

Academic Growth Outcomes

The quantitative results from the BPS:04/09 survey on benefits of community service participation indicated that over half of the first-generation males who had volunteered consistently in 2006 believed that they discovered how to apply their knowledge, skills, and interests to real world issues. Moreover, first-generation males were significantly more likely to report this result than their continuing-generation male counterparts; social science, education and health majors were more likely to feel this way than other majors, and first-generation males at Minority-Serving Institutions were more likely to feel this way than those at Predominantly White Institutions. These findings could be a result of a selection effect, whereby those who wanted to apply their skills and knowledge practically were the ones who chose to volunteer. On the other hand, these results could suggest that participation in community service could have greater academic benefits for some populations than others, or for students in different institutional settings. More specifically, they provide some indication that community involvement could be particularly beneficial for first-generation males, although the nature of the data do not allow for further exploration of this question.

This finding also corresponds with many of the qualitative themes that emerged regarding the connection between service and learning, indicating that community-based education enhanced participants' understanding of coursework, while conversely, relevant academic material informed their work in the community. Additionally participation in community-based

education helped participants to reflect upon and integrate their academic experience on a broader level, and consequently made their academic pursuits feel more relevant to real life.

The quantitative and qualitative data did contradict each other in the area of career development however. While the qualitative results pointed to meaningful opportunities for major and career exploration through community-based engagement, only a small percentage of BPS:04/09 respondents reported that volunteering helped to clarify their choice of major or career. This contradiction could be a result of selection effects, or of the difference in constructs that were measured in the quantitative versus qualitative phases. In other words, it is possible that community service participation has less of an impact on career outcomes than does community-based learning, either because of engagement duration, or the inclusion of reflection and other structured learning activities. Qualitative analysis also highlighted the networking benefits that community engagement provided; however this construct was not included in the BPS survey.

Psychosocial Growth Outcomes

As discussed in chapter 4, a majority of first-generation males in the BPS:04/09 sample felt that their community service experiences helped to expand their leadership, communication, and other related skills. In particular, those who were vocational or technical majors were more likely to report this result than those in any other major. It is possible that students in these majors are less likely to acquire these skills in college, due to the content or nature of the courses in their curriculum. Thus, volunteer participation can be especially useful to them in this particular area.

This theme of expanding leadership and communication skills corroborates a number of the qualitative psychosocial outcomes that were described in chapter 7 – most notably in the area of developing a sense of self-efficacy. Gaining competency in leadership and communication skills can certainly contribute to building a person’s self-confidence and empowerment, both of which lead to greater self-efficacy. Other qualitative themes that emerged in the area of psychosocial growth included developing a deeper connection to the university through community-based education by making the campus feel smaller, finding mentors, and connecting with peers around shared interests. Community-based education also served as a way for first-generation males to cope with the stress of college by helping them to maintain perspective and providing an opportunity to get off campus.

Personal and Spiritual Growth Outcomes

The third category of outcomes of community-based education revolved around what I call personal and spiritual growth. Participants I interviewed described the opportunity to explore questions of calling and purpose through their direct experiences in the community. They were also challenged to think beyond themselves and their own interests – a finding that parallels the quantitative analysis indicating that a majority of first-generation males felt that volunteering made them a more compassionate person. Community engagement also provided a source of personal motivation for many participants to persevere academically, by reminding them why they were in college and also by positioning them as role models to individuals who looked up to them and expected them to graduate. Finally, participation in community-based education seemed to have the effect of allowing men to engage in activities or behave in ways that stretched, or moved beyond traditional male gender roles.

This last outcome warrants further discussion, because the initial study (Yeh, 2010) did not focus on gender, and therefore did not uncover this finding. As noted in chapter 2, the research on college males and male gender socialization suggests that most male-inhabited spaces on college campuses do not encourage honest self-expression and reflection, nor do they provide much emotional support (Davis, 2002; Edwards & Jones, 2009; Ludeman, 2004). Instead, in most spaces and peer groups, males tend to feel restricted in the behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes they are permitted to express, which can be detrimental to their psychological well-being and development (Levant, 1996, Ludeman, 2004). Data from this study suggest that community-based educational experiences have the potential to serve as spaces that can interrupt, even briefly, the traditional hypermasculine gender roles that they are expected to conform to.

Sociopolitical Outcomes

The final theme that emerged from the investigation on impact centered around the development of a sense of critical consciousness, as conceptualized by Freire (1970, 1993). Participation in community-based education led the first-generation males in this study to become more aware of societal inequities at a local level, as well as in national and international contexts. This finding was supported by the quantitative data, as a majority of first-generation males in the national sample reported an increased awareness of social issues as a result of their community service work. Additionally, participants reported being prompted to question the inequities they saw through their direct experience, and to step back and apply their insights to their own lives and to the larger societal problems that they observed. In particular, those who took courses that adopted a social justice perspective felt a powerful connection between their

coursework and their community-based learning experiences, because they were able to see many of the concepts they were learning about first-hand.

Summary

Overall, community-based learning appeared to be a positive developmental experience for the students in this study, both as first-generation students and as men. Engaging in communities that felt similar to their own and providing meaningful assistance empowered these students to feel that they had valuable knowledge and skills to share, and that they were “giving back,” both at a micro and macro level, while also simultaneously building their knowledge and skills. At the same time, the opportunity to interact with people in a genuine way without the pressures of having to perform masculinity, enabled these students to envision and create healthier, alternative notions of what it means to be a man.

Moreover, the outcomes that emerged from this portion of the study demonstrate that community-based learning, as an educationally purposeful activity, contributed to the educational engagement of the first-generation male interview participants. Using the multidimensional lens of school engagement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004), it can be argued that community-based education encouraged *behavioral engagement* simply through the hands-on nature of the experience. By interacting with others in the community and completing their service responsibilities, the participants were, by definition, behaviorally engaged in their work. Community-based learning also appeared to promote *emotional engagement*, as evidenced by findings along the themes of psychosocial and spiritual growth. The sense of community and personal connection that participants described, as well as the opportunity to reflect on their own identities and interests, were all examples of how their experiences enabled

them to engage with their education at an emotional level. Finally, community-based learning enhanced participants' *cognitive engagement* by highlighting the relevancy of their education to real-world issues and thereby increasing their motivation to succeed in college, as described in the findings on academic and sociopolitical outcomes.

Perhaps more importantly, the act of working with populations that are similar to one's own seems to intensify the impact that these experiences have on engagement – an effect that is likely unique to first-generation males and other marginalized groups. By working in schools and communities that were resembled those where they grew up, and serving as role models to youth who have similar life experiences to their own, the interview participants were able to acknowledge and honor their own identities, develop an understanding of and language around the societal inequities that impacted their own lives, and become empowered to take action and create change in whatever ways they chose. These findings corroborate those of Delgado Bernal and colleagues (2009), who proposed that developing connections with people who are similar to one's family and community can have a positive impact on student engagement and success in college, contrary to traditional persistence theories.

In summary, the findings from this portion of the study provide further evidence to support the model of developmental outcomes for first-generation students who participate in service-learning, identified in an earlier study (Yeh, 2010). It also expands upon the initial research by considering the added dimension of gender. In the following section, the ecological framework will be used to interpret study findings in an effort to better understand the factors that impact the participation and experiences of first-generation males in community-based learning.

Contextual Influences on Participation, Motivation, and the Community Engagement

Experience: Revisiting the Ecological Framework

In this section I synthesize what was discovered about contextual influences on community engagement by revisiting the ecological framework that was used to shape the inquiry for this research. Findings from phase 2 and 3 of the study are analyzed through an ecological lens, to gain a better understanding of the person, context, and time elements that impact the proximal process of community engagement for first-generation males. Figure 9.1

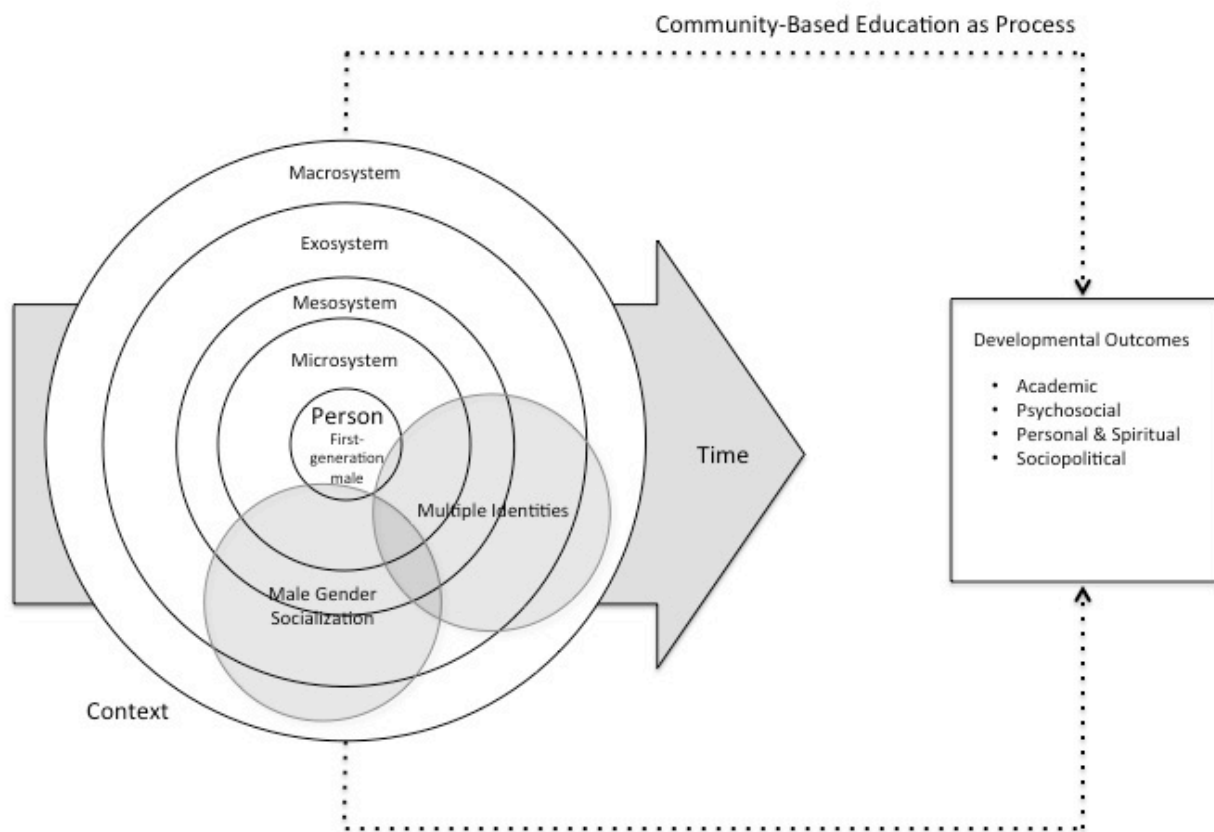


Figure 9.1 Revised Ecological Framework for Community-Based Education and First-Generation Males. Adapted from “The Nature of Nurture,” by T. Wachs, 1992, p. 143. Copyright 1994 by John Wiley & Sons.

presents a revised version of the original conceptual framework for the study, which depicts the *person* who is surrounded by the *context* components of the model, as he engages in the *process* of community-based learning, and arrives at a set of *developmental outcomes*.

Person

The Person element of the ecological model describes aspects of a person that impact engagement in community service or community-based education. Two main factors emerged from the findings that fall into this category: personal values and personal identity.

Personal values. Based on definitions by Bronfenbrenner & Morris (2006), personal values could be considered force characteristics – traits of temperament or personality. A number of personal values emerged as significant predictors of first-generation male participation in community service at a consistent level – that is, at least four hours per month during the academic year. Analysis of the logistic regression results from phase 3 indicate that the most consistent positive predictor of community service participation was the importance that a person placed on being a community leader. Not only was this the only significant variable that appeared across all three years of measurement, but it also had the highest significance level in each model. This finding is quite logical, given that one would have to be involved at a consistent and deep level in order to hold a leadership position in a community-based organization. Conversely, two variables were negative predictors of consistent community service participation, specifically in 2006 during the third year of college: the importance placed on being financially well-off, and on influencing the political structure. These findings might be plausible if one takes the view that a focus on financial well-being or political power could be at odds with expending one's personal time and resources on helping others.

The qualitative data was consistent with these results, in that all of the interview participants had become leaders within their respective community-based programs by the end of their time in college, and each of them had devoted well over four hours per month to those programs. In addition, when asked about barriers to community engagement, virtually all participants named a male tendency to focus on money and other self-promoting activities, at the expense of doing things that could benefit others.

Personal identity. According to the qualitative findings, personal identity characteristics seemed to have the most critical influence on the ability or choice to participate in community engagement activities, the motivation to continue participating, and on the participation experiences themselves. As discussed in the previous section of this chapter, for first-generation males, their financial, gender, and cultural background (race, ethnicity and/or immigration history) often posed the most significant barriers to participation, but at the same time also served as the primary motivation behind their deep commitment to their community work. In terms of impact on the community engagement experience, having a similar financial and/or cultural background to the people that they worked with in community seemed to generate a very personal connection and commitment to the work they were engaged in, and clearly served as a lens through which they interpreted their experiences. Gender also had a substantial yet varied influence on the community engagement experience, where some males felt pressure to stop volunteering and engage in more “masculine” activities, while other males reported receiving preferential treatment at their service sites.

Phase 3 quantitative findings also produced mixed conclusions regarding these resource and demand characteristics. Some variables discouraged engagement in community service, such as income level (a resource characteristic) and immigration status (a demand characteristic)

which were both negative predictors of consistent volunteerism among first-generation males, in certain years. It is certainly plausible that lack of income, as a material resource, would inhibit one's ability to devote time to community work. Demand characteristics are traits that can elicit reactions from others, either positive or negative. When considering the inhibitive effect of immigration status from this lens, it is possible that people in the community might have negative reactions to immigrant students, particularly when they have limited English skills, thereby discouraging them from participating. On the other hand, being a minority (another demand characteristic) was predictive of higher participation in the third year of college. While there is certainly some overlap between immigrant and minority status, those minority students who are not immigrants may elicit a more positive reaction from people in the community, particularly if they come from a similar ethnic background. In these cases, a positive reaction could encourage students to continue their engagement.

Context

The Context component of the ecological model refers to the broader environment in which a person lives and operates, and which can also impact the community engagement process. The four levels within this component include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. Findings across each of these levels are discussed below.

Microsystems. Microsystems are the most immediate environments in which people engage and interact on a daily basis. Synthesis of the quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that certain factors seem to impact community engagement, which fall into three main microsystem categories: academic, extracurricular, and family & peer groups.

Phase 3 data indicate that, within the academic microsystem, major was a significant factor for first-year students, with social science, education, and health related majors being more likely to participate in community service and business majors less likely to participate than the reference group. In addition, full-time enrollment was a significant positive predictor for sixth-year students. The qualitative data seemed to support the significance of college major, as virtually all of the interview participants were majoring in the social sciences, education, or a helping profession such as social work, and they indicated that most of their fellow program participants were in similar majors. One academic factor that was mentioned in the qualitative findings was the significance of coursework as an introduction to community-based education for first-generation males. In particular, service-learning requirements and ethnic studies or social-justice oriented courses could serve as important entry points to community engagement for those who did not seek out these types of activities on their own. This finding could not be substantiated quantitatively because these courses were not measured in the survey.

A number of variables in the extracurricular microsystem also had an impact on the community engagement of first-generation males. Regression results indicated that involvement in school clubs was a significant positive predictor of community service participation in the first and third year of college and that work hours were a positive predictor in the sixth year. Qualitative findings were aligned with these results – almost all of the interview participants were involved in community-based learning through student or campus-based organizations. In addition, all of the participants had to work part-time while they were enrolled; for some of them, their community engagement was compensated through work-study funds, so it was considered work. Predictably, the microsystem that was most often mentioned in interviews was that of the community-based program itself – which in some cases could be equivalent to a “school club.”

The participants in this study had all been able to find programs that they could connect with, and thus they remained involved. However, their responses also suggested that many university-sponsored community engagement opportunities were designed in ways that catered to the needs or interests of female students, and therefore felt unwelcoming or foreign to many males.

The third group of influential microsystems included family and peer groups. While these impacts could not be measured quantitatively, the qualitative data clearly indicated that family members as well as peer groups at home and at college all played a significant role in the community engagement participation and experiences of first-generation males. Familial influences were represented by a wide range of family values and beliefs about generosity, helping others, and the idea of “service.” While some participants said that helping others was “not on the radar screen” in their families, others described volunteering at food banks on a weekly basis. Additionally, families that emphasized the “male breadwinner” role seemed to create some internal conflict for participants, regarding their choices to engage in the community. Friends at home and at college had an even greater influence on the community-engagement of first-generation males. When students had friends who invited or encouraged them to participate in a program, they were much more likely to do so, and in fact, most participants said that they first got involved because friends, who were usually female, invited them to attend information sessions. On the other hand, peer groups that held indifferent or negative views of community engagement, and which were often male-dominated, had a developmentally disruptive impact on the first-generation males in study, making them feel isolated or inferior in some way. Collectively, the views and behaviors of these groups could either inhibit or promote community-based engagement.

Mesosystems. Mesosystems describe interactions between two or more microsystems, which combine to have a net impact on engagement in particular processes. Two mesosystems were identified in the phase 3 quantitative analysis which are especially conducive and inhibitive environments for the community-based engagement of first-generation males. More specifically, I discovered that first-generation males who majored in social science, education, or health-related fields, attended private non-profit institutions, and participated in school clubs were eight times more likely to volunteer consistently during their freshman year than first-generation males who majored in business at public institutions, and did not participate in school clubs. On the one hand, these statistics simply give us an indication of who participates in community engagement at the highest and lowest rates. Yet this finding could also encourage development of strategies for recruiting even more students from the most conducive mesosystem, as well as program redesign to attract students from the most inhibitive mesosystem.

Given that the qualitative sample focused on first-generation males who were heavily involved in community-based learning programs, it was impossible to examine mesosystems that were especially hostile for community engagement. However, findings did point to one unique mesosystem that appeared to have a particularly positive impact on the community engagement of first-generation males. In the rare cases when a male peer group and a community-based education program coincided – that is, when a group of male friends intentionally participated in a community-based program together – the resulting combination had an especially profound impact on the bond between the group of male friends, the ability for those male friends to communicate with each other in meaningful ways, the lessons that participants internalized from their experiences, and the overall value that they placed on the entire experience.

Together, these findings support Axlund & Lott's (in press) argument that some microsystems and peer groups provide more favorable conditions for community-based engagement than others, and that exploration of different combinations of these various microsystems can generate a more complex understanding of developmentally instigative factors than by examining single variables or microsystems in isolation.

Exosystem. Exosystems also include two or more settings, but at least one of those settings is more distant or removed from the person of interest. In this study, institutional factors are considered to be part of the exosystem. Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data has identified a number of specific exosystems that seem to be particularly conducive to community-based engagement. First, interview responses suggest that there may be a qualitative difference in the way that private religious institutions conceptualize community engagement, as compared to public institutions. In particular, institutional mission can have implications for the value placed on civic engagement, which can in turn shape the messaging and opportunities that students are exposed to. This difference was evident among the first-generation male interview participants in the study. For example, while the participants at the public institution cited individually-focused reasons for choosing community engagement (such as looking for a smaller community on campus, or choosing a work-study job that sounded fun), virtually all of the participants who attended the private religious institution indicated that the institutional mission played a role in their choice to engage in the community. Certainly this difference could be a function of individual values, which might predispose people to choose certain colleges in the first place. However, the influence that institutional mission can have on students' behaviors, as well as curricular and co-curricular priorities should not be overlooked.

Quantitative results also supported the notion that institutional factors can have a substantial effect on community service participation. Descriptive statistics indicated that first-generation males at religious, private non-profit, and four-year institutions were all significantly more likely to engage in community service than those at secular, public or private for-profit, and two-year institutions. Moreover, regression results showed that after controlling for other factors, students at private non-profits were more likely to volunteer in their first year of college while those at private for-profits were less likely to volunteer in their third year of college. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, institutional factors also impact the ways in which students get involved, with those at private non-profits being more likely to participate through program requirements or campus organizations.

These patterns could suggest that private non-profit institutions tend to place greater emphasis on the community engagement of undergraduates, by having more programs in place to provide these types of opportunities, and incorporating more service-learning requirements into the curriculum. These types of exosystem level policies can lead to substantial differences in the shape of a student's community engagement experience.

Macrosystem. In this study, the macrosystem consists of the overarching historical, sociocultural, political, and economic factors that impact the engagement of first-generation males in community-based involvement. Macrosystem variables were not observable in the quantitative analysis, and I did not examine them directly in the qualitative phase of the study. However, three main themes emerged indirectly from the interview data which could be characterized as macrosystem influences: traditional male gender roles, global economic and racial inequality, and a growing emphasis on community engagement within educational

institutions. While it is beyond the scope of this study to examine these influences in detail, they will be discussed briefly within the context of study findings.

First, it was clear to many of the interview participants that traditional, or hegemonic, notions of masculinity and male gender roles exerted a heavy, inhibitive influence on the participation (or lack thereof) of males in community service and community-based learning. Their comments highlighted the ways in which gender roles shape beliefs about the types of activities and interests that are acceptable and unacceptable for men, the kinds of behaviors and emotions men that are permitted to exhibit, and ultimately the kinds of career pursuits and life goals that men should be focused on. Given that community engagement activities usually involve “caring,” are not financially lucrative, and do not lead to status or power, the evidence suggests that men tend to avoid them. Certainly, societal views on gender have shifted towards a greater focus on equality over the years, which is one possible explanation for the smaller gender gap in volunteerism rates in the BPS:04/09 data than has been previously reported.

Racial and economic inequality likely play a role in most social phenomena, and in this study they seemed to have both inhibitive and supportive influences on the community engagement of first-generation males. The qualitative data showed that lack of economic resources prevents some students from participating in activities that do not earn an income. At the same time, participants’ personal understandings of racial and economic inequality – both national and global – appeared to act as a significant motivator for all people in the qualitative component of the study, who came from both US-born and immigrant families. They described a deep commitment to issues of social justice, and providing greater opportunities for people who had similar racial and/or economic backgrounds to their own. Such convictions represent

an untapped resource that could be used to engage more first-generation males in community-based education.

The final macrosystem level factor that seems to have played a role in the study findings is the increasing focus on volunteerism in secondary school settings and civic engagement in higher education settings. This factor did not emerge from the data directly, but results instead from my consideration of historical trends during the data analysis stage of this study. Over the last several decades, there has been an increase in the number of high schools with service requirements for graduation (Marks & Jones, 2004), as well as university initiatives and federal policies that promote volunteerism and community service (Jacoby, 2009). This element of the macrosystem actually appears to counter the effects of restrictive male gender roles and likely helps to explain the apparently smaller gender gap in community service participation, because these policies have positioned community engagement as a more “mainstream” activity than in earlier years. Collectively, the qualitative data suggests that all of these macrosystem factors interacted with each other to influence the community engagement of the first-generation male participants.

Time

In this study, I observed the construct of time as a context for community engagement in two different ways: first, as a function of the wide age range of the interview participants, and second through the analysis of data at three different points in time which represent three distinct periods during the college experience.

Bronfenbrenner & Morris (2006) state that, “The life course of individuals is embedded in and shaped by the historical times and events they experience over their life time” (p. 821).

The age of the participants ranged approximately from 20 to 40 years old, because some were current college students while others were staff. The impact of this age spread was that the men who had gone to college 20 years ago had a very different understanding of “service” than the men who were currently in college now. This difference is, in part, a result of the macrosystem factor mentioned earlier – namely that “community service” was not a common activity in educational settings 20 years ago, but is extremely common now. In addition, older participants had much more time to reflect on and process their college experiences with community-based education. Their identities as men had evolved since their time in college, and the content and depth of their interview responses, as compared with current college students, reflected this developmental growth.

Examination of the predictors of community service participation in the first, third, and sixth year of college also revealed that most of the significant individual predictors changed over time, suggesting that different issues are salient for first-generation males at different times during the college experience. In freshman year, external or structural variables such as income level, major, and school club participation had the greatest influence on community engagement. In junior year, individual-level variables such as personal values and immigrant and minority status were more salient to community service participation. One interpretation of this shift is that by junior year, students are developing a clearer sense of their identity and values, which in turn shape their curricular and co-curricular choices. By the sixth year in college, the types of influential variables shifted again, to factors that mostly pertained to academics, work and career. It is likely that those first-generation males who were still enrolled were primarily focused on graduating and starting a career, and thus the choice to engage in community service might have been more practical or utilitarian, and dependent on their future goals.

Summary

Table 9.1 presents a summary of the specific ecological factors that emerged from the study as having a substantial influence on the community engagement of first-generation males. As can be seen in the table, community engagement participation is not only related to individual personal characteristics, but also to a myriad of environmental and institutional factors as well.

Table 9.1

Ecological Factors Impacting Community Engagement of First-Generation Males

Component	Influential Factors
Person	Personal values Personal identity
Microsystem	Academic Extracurricular Family and peer groups
Mesosystem	Social science, education, or health-related majors, private non-profit institutions, school club participation (+) Business majors at public institutions, no school club participation (-) Male peer group & community-based education program (+)
Exosystem	Religious institutions Private non-profit institutions Four-year institutions
Macrosystem	Traditional male gender roles Global economic and racial inequality Growing emphasis on community engagement within educational institutions
Time	Age range of the interview participants Change in individual predictors over time

In this section I discussed the study findings within the framework of the ecological model, in order to generate a clearer picture of the multiple factors that can either inhibit or promote the community engagement of first-generation male college students. The next section outlines some of the limitations of this study.

Limitations

This study contributes to the literature by providing a broad, yet detailed picture of the community engagement experiences of first-generation male college students. However,

interpretation of the findings must be considered within the limits of the study research design. Most notably, it is important to reiterate that the quantitative and qualitative data focus on slightly different constructs – namely, community service and community-based education, respectively. Therefore, the conclusions about one experience cannot necessarily be applied to the other. For example, the findings regarding impact of community-based education cannot be extrapolated to community service or volunteer activities, because they are qualitatively different learning experiences. Conversely, the participation rates in community service and volunteerism do not describe participation rates in service-learning, although they likely do *include* service-learning participation. However, one premise of the study design is that the quantitative findings are meant to provide a broader picture of community involvement, and that they serve as a backdrop or context for the more detailed qualitative findings on one particular type of community involvement. This inclusion of two constructs was a function of the limitation of available data, yet ultimately, the benefit of including the data on community service outweighs the cost of creating some confusion for readers. And to counter this confusion, I made every effort to clearly distinguish between these two constructs throughout the entire document.

The sample of qualitative participants also create some limitations with regard to what can be said about the community-based engagement of first-generation males. First, these findings only pertain to the first-generation males who chose to participate in a community-based learning activity. Thus, we still do not have much information about those who do not participate, besides that which is based on the observations and opinions of the study participants, or what we might hypothesize based on the quantitative findings. Second, the sample was primarily comprised of first-generation males who were working in educational settings – which, based upon the quantitative data, may not be representative of all the types of

programs in which most first-generation males participate. Thus, it is possible that inclusion of a greater variety of project types would have generated different responses and conclusions. Finally, although three of the qualitative phase participants had transferred to four-year institutions from two-year colleges, this study did not focus on the community engagement experiences that they had while in community college. Given that a large percentage of first-generation males attend two-year institutions, and that community engagement might look very different at these types of institutions, it is important to acknowledge that this perspective was not examined in the study.

Despite the various limitations discussed, this study provides a multi-faceted understanding of a population that has traditionally struggled in higher education, and of an engagement strategy that holds promise for enhancing their educational experience. The implications of these findings are discussed next.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The implications from this study are pertinent to higher education practice and policy in a number of areas. First, they suggest that community-based learning, as an educationally purposeful activity, could be used to pursue a much wider range of educational and developmental outcomes than it is currently utilized for in most institutions. Secondly, the findings point toward a number of policies and practices which might increase the participation of first-generation males in community-based education, as well as improve their experiences when they do participate. Finally, the significance of institutional context is considered with respect to implications for implementation and institutionalization of community-based education strategies.

Considering New Roles for Community-Based Education

Traditionally, community engagement has most often been promoted and utilized as a way to increase one's sense of civic responsibility, to teach about people and perspectives that might be different from their own, to deepen learning by enabling students to apply academic concepts in real-world settings, and to provide students with practical, hands-on experience (Butin, 2003; Jacoby, 2009; Melaville et al., 2006). In more recent years, scholars and practitioners have begun to explore the potential for community-based learning to impact college persistence as well. This study expands upon this range of possibilities by exploring the ways in which community-based education can be used to engage males as well as first-generation college students.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the conclusions from this research suggest that community-based learning has the potential to promote behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in ways that are uniquely different from most other academic experiences, and that might be particularly effective for male students. In addition, if coupled with critical discourse, community-based education can provide opportunities for first-generation students to work with communities that are similar to their own, while at the same time developing a more complex understanding of the societal structures in which their lives are situated. Similar to the findings of Delgado Bernal et al., (2009), these kinds of community engagement experiences may enable first-generation students to develop supportive social connections within an environment that may seem foreign and unwelcoming. Students might also build their sense of self-empowerment, as they began to more clearly see the “possibility of transforming self and society” (p. 578). For those who seek to promote the educational engagement and success of first-generation males as

well as females, community-based learning is an untapped yet promising strategy that educators may want to more seriously consider.

Additionally, the findings from this study contribute to the discussion on men and male identity development from an anti-deficit perspective. In their exploration of what is “right” with college men, Harris and Barone (2011) point out that much of the literature on college men focuses on the negative aspects of their beliefs and behaviors. The authors speculate, “perhaps a more productive way to invest our efforts is to learn how men who transcend hegemonic masculinity and make the most of their college experience...are able to do so, and what elements of their approach could be shared with and encouraged among their peers” (pp. 59-60). Shaun Harper’s work on high-achieving African American males is an example of research that delves into the characteristics of masculinities that can be used to achieve academic success in college (Harper 2004, 2006). Participants in his study spent a significant amount of time involved in educationally purposeful activities, community engagement being a primary example of such activities. Results from the current study – particularly those from the qualitative strand – expand upon this strengths-based perspective by focusing on a group of first-generation males who have successfully navigated their college experience, and by delving deeply into one strategy that seemed to contribute to their achievement – community-based education.

Given the evidence from this study, practitioners who are especially interested in issues pertaining to college men may want to explore the potential for targeted community-based learning to promote men’s engagement and psychosocial development. In their chapter on working with groups of college men, Davis, LaPrad, & Dixon (2011) call for the need to “challenge patriarchal norms and promote positive masculinities” through participation in activities that can “provide space for men to be vulnerable and honest, as well as begin to

reinterpret masculinities for themselves” (p. 150). They further suggest that service-learning experiences could represent one example of this type of space. Findings from this study support their argument in several ways. First, previous research indicates that all-male or predominantly-male environments can intensify the sense of competition and need to “perform masculinity” that men already feel (Edwards & Jones, 2009). Moreover, males often feel more comfortable communicating with women (Davis, 2002). Because most community-based experiences are female-dominated, these settings could provide an alternative space for men to be themselves and have meaningful interactions with peers. Secondly, Davis (2002) found that males tend to prefer communicating or bonding with other men within the context of a side-by-side, shared experience, rather than by talking directly in a face-to-face conversation. Community-based learning experiences can also provide the space for these types of interactions to occur, as evidenced by the study participant who mentored middle-school youth with his male friends, the college athlete who volunteered in a children’s hospital with his teammates, and the student leader who engaged in a Habitat for Humanity project with his fraternity brothers. Finally, evidence suggests that a majority of men feel pressure to avoid help-seeking behaviors, programs or services that address men’s issues, or endeavors that involve self-improvement or self-discovery (Davis & Laker, 2004; Edwards & Jones, 2009; O’Neil & Crapser, 2011), because they are associated with an admission of vulnerability or weakness. Community-based learning provides opportunities for males to engage in activity-based reflection through experiences that are less likely to be associated with “self-help,” because they are providing some type of service to another entity. At the same time, the specific experience of serving as a male role model, which was a prevalent theme in this study, can prompt men to put their best selves forward, and also challenge them to confront restrictive beliefs about gender and masculinity. In these ways,

community engagement can be one avenue for men to channel the positive and productive aspects of their masculinities in college.

Recruiting and Retaining First-Generation Males in Community Engagement

Study conclusions point to the potential for community-based education to engage one of the most disengaged populations in college, yet it is evident that there are still many obstacles that prevent or discourage their participation in these kinds of experiences. The concept of *ecological niches* is pertinent to this issue, as it considers the ways in which individual characteristics interact with particular environments and lead to certain outcomes. An *ecological niche* refers to a setting that can be “especially favorable or unfavorable to the development of individuals with particular personal characteristics” (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p.18). The qualitative data suggest that in general, community service and service-learning programs can be particularly unfavorable niches for first-generation males, and especially those who are students of color, or from low-income backgrounds. This is, in part, because the vast majority of community-based programs attract middle to upper-income, White female students from college-educated families. If it is true that people feel more comfortable around others who are in some way similar to them, then it is no surprise that first-generation males would feel uncomfortable or unwelcome in a setting where most of the participants come from a background that is so different from theirs. The appeal of these programs may also be dependent on the types of activities that are available – for example, working with preschoolers versus building a house.

Findings from this study could be used to inform higher education policies and practice regarding the community engagement of first-generation males, particularly around ways to modify these ecological niches into more favorable environments for this group of students. To

address income barriers, universities could more intentionally connect community-based engagement with various forms of compensation, which could include course or internship credit – particularly when connected to an independent study project. Additionally, institutions – particularly financial aid offices – could take greater advantage of community service work-study funds to pay students for their community work. At a broader level, government agencies might consider increasing funding for community-service work study, as well as for agencies that promote these types of activities, such as the Corporation for National Service.

With respect to recruitment, study findings suggest that service-learning requirements may be an effective way to introduce first-generation males to community-based education, since they seem less likely to find their way to these types of opportunities on their own. More systemic strategies to engage first-generation students could involve incorporating community-based learning activities into existing comprehensive programs that are already aimed at supporting and retaining these student populations. Study participants provided numerous suggestions to recruit and retain males in community-based learning as well, including providing incentives that could be particularly attractive to males, offering a variety of activities or projects that are task-oriented in nature, and building partnerships with community agencies that serve a male audience. They also recommended intentionally targeting males in recruitment by including pictures of males in recruitment materials and websites, having male staff or participants make recruitment presentations, and having current participants bring their male friends.

Institutional Considerations

At an institutional level, examining this issue from an ecological perspective highlights the fact that different institutions have different missions and populations; thus their priorities

and challenges will vary. For example, a primary mission of two-year colleges is to provide open and affordable access to higher education, and as such, often serves first-generation students and students with lower income levels. Community-based education strategies could be a useful tool to promote the engagement of a significant portion of their student population, if designed in high-quality and culturally responsive ways. Yet, these institutions face the most barriers to implementing and recruiting students to participate in community-based programs. Typically, they have fewer institutional resources and structures to provide high-quality, consistent community engagement opportunities, and they primarily serve commuter student populations who work part or full-time, which are major barriers to participation in community-based experiences. In other words, two-year institutions have the most work to do, but they also might have the most to gain. Given the positive impact that community engagement seems to have on first-generation males, and perhaps on first-generation students more broadly speaking, it is worth investigating whether two-year institutions should consider implementing community-based learning on a larger scale to make it available to a majority of their students. Such an endeavor would undoubtedly require an investment of resources to integrate these experiences into institutional practice, and to provide student compensation for participation.

On the other hand, the data suggest that 4-year private institutions are having greater success with first-generation male participation in community engagement. Community-based education is highly congruent with the goals of many private religious colleges, whose missions often reference an obligation to “the common good.” This fit with mission may also be true for some private non-religious schools. As a result, more of these institutions already have the resources and structures in place to promote community engagement among the entire undergraduate population. Simultaneously, private four-year colleges enroll the smallest

proportion of first-generation men. Therefore, the study implications for these types of institutions differ substantially from those for two-year colleges. One way in which four-year private institutions could continue to refine their community engagement efforts would be to more intentionally focus their recruitment on first-generation males, and particularly those from underrepresented majors, as an additional strategy to increase their engagement in college.

4-year public institutions fall in the middle between these two other institutional types – in terms of first-generation male enrollment as well as community engagement participation. In particular, large public four-year universities will have a harder time institutionalizing and implementing a cohesive community-based education strategy because of their size, and the numerous competing goals of different colleges and divisions. In many of these types of institutions, community-based learning is implemented by multiple offices and in multiple formats – and sometimes with little communication between them. These institutions may want to consider using this strategy with first-generation males in more targeted ways. For example, they could target programs or offices that have been explicitly designed to support first-generation students, such as the TRIO Student Support Services programs, Educational Opportunity Programs, or other types of retention programs.

Regardless of the institution type, any efforts to encourage more first-generation men to participate in community-based learning will require greater collaboration between centers that focus on community engagement, service-learning, diversity and multicultural affairs, and perhaps even academic support and counseling. Findings from this study suggest that they could think more creatively about how to help each other achieve goals in which they have mutual interest. For example, academic affairs divisions could work with service-learning centers to integrate community-based education into the curriculum at a more comprehensive level –

especially if it seems to have an impact on academic outcomes. Student affairs units could also collaborate more closely with community engagement centers, since these types of experiences could help enhance student development, leadership development, and student engagement. Service-learning offices could also work more closely with multicultural offices in particular, to target first-generation men as well as women. Financial aid offices could explore the possibility of increasing community work-study funding and advertise these opportunities more aggressively. And, institutional research offices could begin tracking student participation in community engagement, distinguishing between volunteering and service-learning participation, and exploring the relationship between persistence and participation in community-based experiences. The feasibility of many of these strategies depends on where a community engagement center is located within the institution – some are in academic affairs, others are in student affairs, and some are in other divisions. This institutional structure has implications for how an institution envisions the role of community engagement to begin with, and how open its leaders might be to encouraging more students to participate.

Future Research

This study focused on a very specific population that is at high risk for college attrition. In particular, it explored their participation in community-based activities, as well as the possible influence that community-based education might have on their engagement and development in college, under the premise that college engagement can have a positive impact on postsecondary outcomes. Yet it would be interesting to know whether the experiences and outcomes described in this study might be relevant for a wider range of students. Thus, future research could examine the community-based learning experiences of all males, to see whether the findings

applied to all men or only a specific sub-population of men. In particular, more research could be conducted on the potential for community-based education to promote the healthy psychosocial development and college engagement of all male students. The same questions could also be asked with respect to first-generation students, and/or students at community colleges. Additional research could expand upon this study, as well as studies by Yeh (2010), York (2013), and Chesbrough (2009), to further explore the difference in community engagement experiences between first-generation males and females.

Another interesting line of questioning could explore the different definitions and beliefs that various groups hold about “community service,” in comparison to the normative definitions that are most often used in higher education. More specifically, taking a closer look at how first-generation students, students of color, or low-income students think about and define community service may alter the data on their rates of service participation. For example, by changing how researchers conceptualize and ask about service (in survey or interview language), we could refine existing national databases and find that these populations are actually engaged at much higher rates than current data suggests. In addition, exploration of this topic could also lead to the development of more culturally responsive strategies for recruiting these groups to engage in community-based education, and for improving their experiences once they do engage.

A third area of inquiry could focus on participation in community service and community-based education, and specifically on those who do not participate. As mentioned in the limitations section, I specifically sampled for students who were heavily engaged in community-based efforts because I was interested in how those experiences impacted their engagement and persistence in college. However, this prevented me from gathering data on students who may have had brief community engagement experiences, or who were not engaged

in the community at all. Future studies could sample for both of these groups, to provide a more complete picture of the factors that discourage first-generation males from participating in community-based education.

Finally, this study focused on the process of community-based education using retrospective and panel data. A qualitative, longitudinal study design could more accurately examine a particular course or program from start to finish, or follow a group of students over several years, to identify specific community-based education practices that contribute to development and college engagement of first-generation males.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study makes a contribution to the literatures on first-generation students, college men's development, and community engagement by using a mixed-method design to explore the intersection of these topics at a macro- as well as micro-level. By providing evidence that 1) first-generation males are one of the least likely groups to participate in community engagement, and 2) community-based education can have positive, multi-faceted impacts on this population, it highlights a potential, currently untapped resource that could be used to support this population more holistically. Moreover, by presenting a multi-layered analysis of the different environmental factors that influence their participation, it offers a more comprehensive set of strategies to increase their engagement than could be gleaned by studying a single variable or context alone.

At a more theoretical level, this research supports the ecological view that developmental outcomes are a "joint function of characteristics of person and environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 1993, p.18), and that studies of specific populations can provide a more nuanced understanding

of how various educational environments can impact people in different ways. Additionally, it reinforces the importance of studying, or at least acknowledging, the notion of intersectionality in research on educational processes and outcomes. By considering the complexity of interactions that occur within multiple environments and across multiple identities, we can promote a more holistic perspective towards supporting and empowering first-generation college students, male college students, and ultimately all college students.

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Appendix A Student Interview Protocol

A. CURRENT INFORMATION

1. Pre-college

- When and why did you decide to go to college?
- Did you come as a freshman or transfer student? (What was your path like to get here?)
- Why did you decide to come to (this college)?
- What are you majoring in? How did you choose this major?
- In what ways was your family involved in your college application or decision-making process around college, if at all?

2. College experiences

- How do you spend your time in college? What kinds of things do you do (and why)?
- **When do you feel most connected to (your university)? Or what things/activities make you feel most connected?**
- What have you enjoyed most about college?
- What are the biggest challenges that you have faced in college?
 - What are some things you have done to cope with these issues?

3. Service experience

- Did you plan to participate in service when you first started college? Why or why not?
- **What community engagement activities have you been involved in since you started college?**
 - **what types, or what programs? how long?**
 - **how did you come to get involved with these programs? why did you choose them?**
- **What does it mean to “give back”?** (if they use this language)
 - how do you define your community?
- Tell me a little bit about the structure or main components of the program or course in which you have done this service.
 - Where are you doing your service?
 - How often do you go? What do you do there?
 - Did you have a choice about the service component – participation, site, etc.?
- **What has your experience in the program/course been like so far?**
 - **What were the most positive aspects of your involvement in service?**
 - **Did you encounter any barriers? Or what were the most challenging or negative aspects of your experience, if any?**
- **Were you compensated for any of your work or involvement, either through course credit or stipend or work-study, etc.?**
 - **If yes - could/would you have participated if you were not compensated?**
 - **If no - what compelled you to do this, instead of having a paying job?**
- **How would your college experience be different if you weren't involved with your program/community work, if at all?**

- **OR What role has this program played in your college experience? Why did you stay involved for so long?**
- What other activities do you participate in, on or off campus? Why do you do them?

4. Learning

- **Through your service experiences, what have you learned (about yourself, your values, others, the world)?**
 - Do you think you have changed as a result of this experience? If so, in what ways?
- **How has this experience impacted your academic experience? What connections do you see with your academic coursework, if any?**
- How has it affected your career interests, or what you hope to do in the future?
- How has it affected how you feel about (your college?)

5. Gender

- Can you tell me a little about your friends - are they mostly one gender, or mixed? Do you have separate groups of friends, or one primary group?
- Do any of your friends participate in similar programs or experiences? If not, what do they instead?
- **Do you talk to your friends about your work in the community? What do your peers think about your work with this program? More specifically, what do your male friends think (if anything)?**
- **What is the ratio of men to women in the program that you are involved with? (note how it compares to the norm)**
 - Why do you think that is?
 - Do you think your program would be different if more men were involved?
 - Do you think the community would benefit more if more men were involved?
 - Do you think your male friends (or men in general) would be different if they got more involved in the community?
- **In general, why do you think there are so few men involved in “service” activities?**
- **What makes you different? In other words, why are you here when many other men are not?**
- **If you were in charge of a program like this, how would you recruit more men to participate? Or, what suggestions do you have for recruiting more men to get involved with your program, or to get involved in the community in general?**

6. Identity and FG status

- **If you had to name the three aspects of your identity that most define you, what would they be? (eg: gender, race, religion, immigrant, etc) Why?**
- **Let’s talk about your sense of self and identity**
 - How has your identity changed so far, since you’ve come to college?
 - How has it changed, if at all, as a result of your service involvements?
- **You may know that the definition of “first-generation” means that you are in the first generation of your family to complete (or be on track to completing) a bachelor’s degree. Do you ever think of yourself in this way? Is this a conscious part of your identity?**

- If so, how does it affect your experiences in college?
- how does it affect the decisions you make, or the behaviors you exhibit, if at all?

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION - optional, if it hasn't come up already

7. Previous educational background

- Could you tell me a little about where you grew up?
- Could you describe the kinds of things you did when you weren't in school? (Work, extracurricular activities, sports, community service or volunteer activities?)

8. Family background - *I have a few background questions that I'd like to ask you about your parents and family. If you feel comfortable sharing this information with me...great. If you don't, that's fine also...just let me know if you don't want to answer any of these.*

- **What is the highest level of education that your parents or guardians completed?**
- **What are their current occupations?**
- What kinds of messages did your parents send about education? How have those messages influenced you?
- Do you have any siblings? Older or younger? What have their educational experiences been like so far?

Appendix B
Instructor/Director/Staff Interview Protocol
(FG student, SL Program)

The following interview questions will guide the interviews with staff who have worked with FG male students:

1. Do you currently work, or have you worked in the past with students in a community engagement capacity? Please describe.
2. What is the typical ratio of male to female participants in your course/program?
 - a. Have you noticed any differences in the ways that men and women think or feel about the service component? If so, why do you think this is the case?
 - b. Have you noticed any differences in the types of service activities that men and women choose? If so, why do you think this is the case?
3. You are first-generation yourself. Were you involved in any kind of community engagement when you were in college? If so, what was it?
 - a. How did this impact your experience in college?
 - b. Were you ever paid for your work? If no, did this impact your ability to pay for college?
 - c. How did you manage your various time commitments?
4. Based on your own experience and observations, how do you think community-based learning impacts student learning?
 - a. Do you see any differences in learning outcomes between male and female students?
 - b. Do you see any differences in learning outcomes between first-generation and non-first-generation students?
 - c. Can you share some examples?
5. How do you think community-based education might impact a student's engagement in college?
 - a. Can you share some examples?
 - b. Do you think it is important for more men to get involved? why?
 - c. Do you have ideas about how to approach this issue?
6. Are there any other observations you would like to share?

Appendix C
Instructor/Director/Staff Interview Protocol
(FG Program)

The following interview questions will guide the interviews with staff who have worked with FG male students:

1. Please briefly describe the purpose and structure of your program, and the work that you do in your role.
2. What is the typical ratio of male to female participants in your program?
 - a. Roughly speaking, how would male & female students compare, in terms of college success rates? (academic performance, retention, graduation)
 - b. What are some of the main barriers that your students have faced in college? Do you think this differs for males & females? If so, how?
3. In thinking about the students who have been successful in your program and at the university, what patterns have you noticed about the kinds of things that enable them to be successful?
 - a. Have you noticed whether this differs for men and women? If so, how?
 - b. What kinds of things do your students get involved in, besides your program? (Work, clubs, sports, family stuff?) Have you noticed any differences in the types of activities that men and women choose? If so, why do you think this is the case?
4. Have you worked with any students who have been involved in the community, in some capacity? (This could be through tutoring, mentoring, church, or any other kind of activity.) Can you provide some examples?
 - a. If so, based on your own experience and observations, how do you think community-based involvement impacts student learning?
 - b. How do you think community-based education might impact a student's engagement in college?
 - c. Do you think it is important for more men to get involved? why?
 - d. Do you have ideas about how to increase mens' involvement?
5. Are you are first-generation yourself? If so, were you involved in any kind of community engagement or similar activities when you were in college? How did this impact your experience in college?
 - a. Were you ever paid for your work? If no, did this impact your ability to pay for college?
 - b. How did you manage your various time commitments?
6. Are there any other observations you would like to share?

THERESA LING YEH

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EDUCATION

- Ph.D. **University of Washington**, Seattle, WA, December 2014
 Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (specialization in Policy, Organizations, and Leadership). **Dissertation:** First-Generation Male College Students in Community-Based Education: A Mixed Methods Study
- M.A. **University of Maryland**, College Park, MD, May 1997
 College Student Personnel, concentration in Counseling. **Thesis:** Distinguishing Between Racial Identity and Ethnic Identity for Asian Americans
- B.A. **University of Pennsylvania**, Philadelphia, PA, May 1994
 Major: Psychology, Minor: Fine Arts

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION EXPERIENCE**College of Education, University of Washington**, Seattle, WA.

Graduate Research Assistant, October 2014-present

Conduct policy research for a mixed-methods study of the teacher and principal evaluation system in Washington State.

Seattle University Youth Initiative, Seattle, WA.

Evaluation Assistant, February 2012 – March 2014

Assisted with developing and implementing a mixed-methods evaluation plan for a university-wide community engagement initiative. Also co-facilitated an organization-wide process to develop a theory of change for SUYI.

Center for the Study of Teaching & Policy, University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

Research Assistant, January 2008 - June 2009

Member of core study team for one of the three substudies in the national investigation, Study of Leadership for Learning Improvement (*Study 1: Study of School Leadership for Learning Improvement*).

College Success Foundation, Issaquah, WA.

Evaluation Intern, June - August 2008

Assisted evaluation director with creating an assessment plan for a program to help students with the transition from high school to college. Also conducted a comprehensive literature review on policies, programs, and best practices in developmental education.

The University of Washington Pipeline Project, Seattle, WA.*External Evaluator*, January 2005 - January 2006

Designed and implemented an assessment plan for the UW Pipeline Project, a university-sponsored tutoring program for K-12 schools in Seattle and surrounding areas.

RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**Academic Support Programs, University of Washington Seattle, Seattle, WA.***Graduate Assistant*, September 2009 - July 2010

Performed teaching, recruitment, advising, and programmatic duties for a retention program to support academically struggling undergraduates. Created and co-taught service-learning course for graduate students who served as mentors to undergraduates.

Diversity Resource Center, University of Washington Tacoma, Tacoma, WA.*Coordinator*, September 2005 - January 2008

Established the diversity center for the campus. Designed and administered all aspects of development, from creating mission and infrastructure to budget oversight, staffing, grant writing and reporting. Collaborated with campus departments, faculty, community partners, and students on programming and training initiatives.

Education Leadership and Policy Studies, Higher Education Program, University of Washington Seattle, Seattle, WA.*Graduate Assistant*, September 2004 - June 2006

Assisted program chair with graduate program activities including student outreach and recruitment, new student orientation, internship coordination and database tracking, and student advising on coursework and graduation requirements.

Stanford Upward Bound Program, Haas Center for Public Service, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.*Assistant Director*, August 2000 – June 2004

Facilitated administrative and programmatic activities for a federally-funded educational equity program for 70 low-income, first generation college-bound high school students. Oversaw academic year tutorial program, including curriculum development and staff training. Served as liaison to administrators and teachers at seven target high schools. Oversaw residential component of six-week summer program, including supervision of staff. Designed and maintained comprehensive database system for annual government reporting. Designed and administered student academic assessments and program evaluations.

AACE Upward Bound Program, Japanese Community Youth Council, San Francisco, CA.*Academic Coordinator & Assistant Director*, October 1997 – August 2000

Led all aspects of the academic component of a federally-funded educational equity program for 50 low-income, first generation college-bound high school students. Supervised the design and implementation of curriculum for academic year and summer instructional units. Selected, trained and supervised all academic year and summer residential program instructors and tutors. Provided weekly academic, personal and career counseling to all participants at target high schools.

Career Management Center, Drexel University, Philadelphia, PA.*Cooperative Education Coordinator, July 1996 - October 1997*

Provided career counseling and internship placement services for undergraduates.
 Collaborated with faculty to expand prospective cooperative education opportunities for students. Assisted in designing a comprehensive career exploration program for undecided students.

College of Computer, Mathematical and Physical Sciences, University of Maryland at College Park, College Park, MD.*Academic Advisor, June 1994 - July 1996*

Provided academic advising and support to undergraduates, provided targeted counseling for students on academic probation, trained undergraduate Orientation Advisors, and facilitated orientation sessions for first-year and transfer students.

Student Support Services, Baltimore City Community College, Baltimore, MD.*Graduate Intern, August – December 1995*

Assisted staff in daily operations of federally-funded academic support program for low-income, first generation college students by conducting intake meetings, tutoring, and providing academic advising.

ACADEMIC TEACHING EXPERIENCE**Seattle University***Critical Issues in Education, Fall 2013*

Instructor

300-level service-learning course providing an introduction to current issues in education that pertain to schools and communities in low-income environments. Fulfills Social Science and Global Challenges Core requirement.

University of Washington Seattle*Academic Mentoring Practicum in Higher Education, Spring 2010*

Co-instructor

Practicum for graduate students who were serving as tutor-mentors for undergraduates.

Tutoring and Mentorship in Higher Education, Fall 2009, Spring 2010

Teaching Assistant

Service-learning course for undergraduates who were serving as peer tutor-mentors.

Cultural Relativism: An Anthropological Perspective, Fall 2009, Winter 2010

Teaching Assistant

Basic concepts of sociocultural anthropology integrated with study skills strategies and peer tutor-mentor component. Course intended for academically struggling undergraduates.

Race, Class, and Gender in Sports Media, Fall 2009, Spring 2010

Teaching Assistant

Examination of media coverage of sports and athletes, using critical lenses of race, class and gender. Course material integrated with study skills strategies and peer tutor-mentor component.

The Idea of the University, Winter 2005

Teaching Assistant

History of colleges and universities in the United States, including HBCU's, community colleges, and evolution of K-12 schooling and its impact on higher education.

University of Washington Tacoma

Introduction to Educational Equity & College Access, Winter 2008

Instructor

Introductory service-learning course on issues of equity and access. Students served as mentors for first-generation high school students, in collaboration with a local college access program.

Stanford University

Stanford Leaders for Public Service, October 2002 – June 2004

Co-instructor

Year-long course exploring leadership in the context of public service, including leadership theory, critical skills for ethical and effective leadership, and public leadership.

Culture, Class and Opportunity in Education, Spring 2001, 2002, 2003

Teaching Assistant

Service-learning course focusing on academically resilient youth and urban educational issues, for students in the Education and Youth Summer Fellowship at the Haas Center for Public Service.

University of Maryland at College Park

Achieving College Excellence, Spring 1996, Fall 1995

Co-instructor

Study skills course for students on academic probation in the College of Computer, Mathematical and Physical Sciences, covering time management, study skills, goal setting, and related topics.

The Asian American Experience, Fall 1995

Teaching Assistant

Introductory Asian American Studies course including history in the U.S., media, gender, identity, education, and public policy issues.

University of Maryland at Baltimore County

The Asian American Experience, Spring 1996

Teaching Assistant

PUBLICATIONS

- Knapp, M. S., Feldman, S., & Yeh, T. L. (in press). Learning-focused leadership in urban high schools: Response to demanding environments. *Journal of School Leadership*.
- Knapp, M.S. & Yeh, T.L. (2012). Student diversity: Clarifying meanings. In J.A. Banks (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Diversity in Education* (pp. 2088-2091). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yeh, T. L. (2010). Service-learning and persistence of low-income, first-generation college students: An exploratory study. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 16(2), 50-65.
- Portin, B. S., Knapp, M. S., Dareff, S., Feldman, S., Russell, F. A., Samuelson, C., & Yeh, T. L. (2009). *Leadership for learning improvement in urban schools*. Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.
- Yeh, T.L. (2007). Issues of college persistence between Asian and Asian Pacific American students. Reprinted in A. Seidman (Ed.), *Minority student retention* (pp. 149-164). Amityville, NY: Baywood.
- Yeh, T. L. (2004). Issues of college persistence between Asian and Asian Pacific American students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory, and Practice*, 6(1), 81-96.
- Yeh, T.L. (2002). Asian American students who are educationally at risk. In M. K. McEwen, C. M. Kodama, A. N. Alvarez, S. Lee, & C. T. H. Liang (Eds.), *New directions for student services: Working with Asian American college students* (pp. 61-71). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Alvarez, A. N. & Yeh, T. L. (1999). Asian Americans in college: A racial identity perspective. In D. Sandhu (Ed.), *Asian and Pacific Islander Americans: Issues and concerns for counseling and psychotherapy* (pp. 105-120). Commack, NY: NovaScience.

PAPER PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS

- Yeh, T. L. (2014, November). "I've got to practice what I preach": Community-based education as a strategy to engage first-generation male college students. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education, Washington, D.C.
- Yeh, T. L. (2014, April). Engaging first-generation male college students in community-based education. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, Philadelphia, PA.
- Feldman, S., Yeh, T. L. and Knapp, M. S. (2009, November). *Managed and unmanaged instructional reform as an environment for leading instructional leadership teams in urban schools*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration, Anaheim, CA.
- Knapp, M. S., Feldman, S., & Yeh, T. L. (2009, April). *School leader's response to the press for data-based practice in the context of district leadership for learning improvement*. Paper presented at the annual

- meeting of the American Education Research Association, San Diego, CA.
- Yeh, T. L. & Koth, K. W. (2009, March). *A chance to be inspired: Using service-learning and community partnerships to improve retention of first-generation students*. Workshop presented at the annual meeting of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. Seattle, WA.
- Koth, K. W. & Yeh, T. L. (2007 & 2008, September). *Service-learning and first-generation students*. Six-hour training for Americorps members of the Washington Campus Compact Retention Project. Ellensburg, WA.
- Yeh, T. L. (2008, March). *Service-learning and college persistence of students from low-income, first-generation backgrounds*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association. New York, NY.
- Yeh, T. L. & Koth, K. W. (2008, April). *Using service-learning and community engagement to improve access and retention of students*. Pre-conference workshop presented at the Western Campus Compact Annual Continuums of Service Conference. Portland, OR.
- Yeh, T. L. & Koth, K. W. (2007, April). *Serving, learning, and graduating: The service-learning experiences of first-generation students*. Workshop presented at the Western Campus Compact Annual Continuums of Service Conference. San Jose, CA.
- Yeh, T. L. (2005, March). *Asian American students who struggle in college: Beyond dichotomous definitions of race and success*. Paper presented at the Comparative & International Education Society Conference. Stanford, CA. March 2005.
- Avila, C., Yeh, T. L. & Vandenberg, N. (2001, February). *Incorporating service-learning into TRIO programs*. Workshop presented at the annual meeting of the Western Association of Educational Opportunity Personnel. Reno, NV.
- Alvarez, A. N., Liu, W. M. & Yeh, T. L. (1998, August). *Asian Americans and racism: Topics for future research*. Workshop presented at the annual meeting of the Asian American Psychological Association. San Francisco, CA.
- Yeh, T. L. & Toya, G. J. (1997, March). *Racial identity and career aspirations of Asian Americans*. Workshop presented at the joint annual meeting of the American College Personnel Association/National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. Chicago, IL.
- Alvarez, A. N. & Yeh, T. L. (1997, February). *Asian American identity: Racism as an environmental factor*. Workshop presented at the 14th Annual Teacher's College Winter Roundtable on Cross-Cultural Psychology and Education. New York, NY.
- Yeh, T. L. (1996, November). *Student activism as a form of leadership development*. Workshop presented at the Asian American Studies/East of California Conference. College Park, MD.
- Alvarez, A. N. & Yeh, T. L. (1996, February). *Racial and ethnic identity transformations*. Workshop presented at the 13th Annual Teacher's College Winter Roundtable on Cross-Cultural Psychology and Education. New York, NY.

Yeh, T. L. (1996, February). *Transforming the Challenge of Racial Difference: Opportunities for Educating Student Organizations*. Workshop presented at the annual Maryland Student Affairs Conference. College Park, MD.

GRANTS & AWARDS

Fellow, Association for Institutional Research, National Data Institute, 2012
 Participant, UCEA (University Council for Educational Administration) David L. Clark National Graduate Student Research Seminar in Educational Administration and Policy, 2009
 Author, grant from the Pride Foundation to run Safe Zone trainings at the University of Washington, Tacoma, 2007. Grant amount: \$1,500.
 Author, Retention Project grant from Washington Campus Compact, for University of Washington, Tacoma, 2006. Grant amount: \$5000 per year for three years.
 Co-author, Upward Bound grant from the U.S. Department of Education, for Haas Center for Public Service, Stanford University, 2002. Grant amount: approximately \$375,000 per year for four years.
 Co-author, Upward Bound grant from the U.S. Department of Education, for Asian American Communities for Education (AACE), 1998. Grant amount: approximately \$150,000 per year for four years.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Association for the Study of Higher Education
 American Educational Research Association
 Association for Institutional Research
 International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement
 National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
 Washington Campus Compact

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE & LEADERSHIP

University of Washington Tacoma, *Civic Engagement Task Force, Diversity Task Force, Retention Committee*, member, 2005-2008
 University of Washington, *College of Education Scholarship Committee*, student representative, 2005-06
 Western Association of Educational Opportunity Personnel, *Board of Directors*, member, 2001-2003
 Japanese Community Youth Council, *Board of Directors*, member, 2001-2004
 Stanford University, *Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration Committee*, member, 2001-2004
 Stanford University, *Asian American Interactive Mentoring Program*, mentor, 2001-2003
 Western Association of Educational Opportunity Personnel, *Student Leadership Conference Co-chair*, 1999-2000
 University of Maryland at College Park, *Asian Student Union*, Graduate Advisor, 1994 - 1996