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Apoyo Deseado: The Role of Parental Support for Latinx First-generation College Students

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Apoyo Deseado: The Role of Parental Support for Latinx First-generation College Students

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Abstract

Underrepresented groups, including ethnic and racial minorities as well as first-generation college students (FGCS), are less likely to attain a four-year college degree than their white counterparts. This is particularly true for Latinx youth that are often the first in their family to go to college. Existing research on the role of parental support in promoting retention among Latinx college students is mixed. The current study used a qualitative, longitudinal method to examine the perceptions of parental support among nine (9) Latinx FGCS attending a medium-sized private university in the Midwest region of the United States. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyze data. Analysis revealed that Latinx FGCS 1) receive several forms of support from parents that are broadly categorized as emotional and instrumental; 2) experience variable parental support; 3) provide support to their families; and 4) experienced changes in types of support received after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings are of particular importance because of the rapid growth of Latinx within the U.S population.

Keywords: Latinx FGCS, parental support, college retention

Apoyo Deseado: The Role of Parental Support for Latinx First-generation College Students

Over the past quarter of a century, the percentage of individuals attaining a college degree in the United States has increased by approximately 33% (Snyder et al., 2016). This suggests a potential shift in both accessibility to higher education, and in perceptions of the benefits of higher education. Benefits of a four-year college degree can include financial incentives, career accessibility, and social mobility (Chan, 2016; Trostel & Chase, 2015; White & Perrone-McGovern, 2017). Despite these benefits, in 2015, only approximately one third of the U.S adult population held a bachelor's degree, suggesting there are obstacles like increasing cost of tuition/affordability (Mehta et al., 2011; Pratt et al., 2019), preventing some groups from getting into and through college (Snyder et al., 2016). Historically underrepresented groups are disproportionately less likely to attain a four-year college degree compared to white counterparts (Cataldi et al., 2018). This is particularly true for Latinx youth who are often the first in their families to attend college (Skomsvold, 2014). In 2019 alone, Latinx students made up 21 percent of student population enrolled in secondary education, but were only 14.9 percent of adults who conferred a bachelor's degree (NCES,2020; NCES, 2021). As one of the fastest growing populations in the U.S. (Fry & Lopez, 2012), it is imperative to understand what promotes retention and graduation for Latinx first-generation college students.

Literature Review**FGCS Challenges and Needs**

First-generation college students (FGCS) experience greater challenges both in the admission process and in retention compared to their non-first-gen counterparts (Sy et al., 2011). There are varying definitions of the term FGCS (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018). In this study, FGCS refers to students for whom neither parent or guardian graduated from a four-year college or

university. Compared to continuing generation peers, FGCS tend to come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, identify as ethnic minorities, are more likely to live at home, and work while attending school, resulting in less on campus involvement (Barry et al., 2008; Dennis et al., 2005; Hurst et al., 2012; Mehta et al., 2011; Pilar et al., 2009). Consequently, FGCS have higher attrition rates compared to their non-FGCS peers. Research examining retention rates has identified the following as risk factors that impact attrition for college students in general: finances, social connectedness, college adjustment, academic preparedness, and self-efficacy (Pratt et al., 2019). Yet, FGCS must contend with additional challenges that go beyond those experienced by their non-FGCS peers.

FGCS encounter unique challenges due to a lack of social capital associated with having a parent or primary caregiver who completed a four-year college degree. This type of social capital includes knowledge about college norms, on-campus resources, and how to access those resources. FGCS are less likely to report relationships with college personnel (i.e., professors, college advisors), who are critical sources for effectively navigating higher education (Schwartz et al., 2018). In one study examining narrative accounts of female FGCS within the first weeks of college enrollment, students expressed feelings of confusion and worry related to their lack of knowledge about campus norms and expectations (O'Shea, 2007). For FGCS, the lack of access to the "hidden curriculum" can cause them to doubt their sense of belonging.

FGCS are also more likely than non-FGCS to acquire student debt (Furquim et al., 2017) and report less familial financial assistance (Martinez et al., 2009). As a result, FGCS are disproportionately more likely to work part or full-time while attending college and report less campus involvement (Havlik et al., 2020; Martinez et al., 2009; Nuñez and Sansone, 2016). This is important because campus involvement is associated with higher rates of persistence within

higher education (Bergen-Cico and Viscomi, 2012). If FGCS are both unaware and unable to access campus resources or build community on campus, they are more likely to leave without obtaining a degree.

Academic Self-Efficacy

Academic self-efficacy refers to a students' confidence in their ability to complete academic tasks. High academic self-efficacy is associated with psychological well-being, high academic performance, and college persistence (Chemers et al., 2001; Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007; Solberg & Viliareal 1997; Zajacova, 2005). Research suggests that academic self-efficacy serves as a protective factor and contributes to overall college adjustment and high GPA for FGCS (Majer, 2009; Ramos-Sanchez & Nichols, 2007). and on average report lower GPA than their peers (Vuong, Brown-Welty, & Tracz, 2010; Wibrowski et al., 2017). Importantly, a reciprocal relationship exists between academic preparation, academic self-efficacy, retention, and graduation. (Duncheon, 2018). According to College Board data from 2011, high schools with higher proportions of FGCS reported a lower number of offered Advanced Placement (AP) courses then when compared to schools with lower numbers of FGCS (Balemian & Feng, 2013). Schools with more FGCS were more likely to have 0-5 AP courses offered in comparison to 11-20 for schools with fewer FGCS. Without previous exposure to college level course work like AP courses, FGCS may feel less prepared once they enter college. This may result in FGCS having less confidence around their ability to successfully meet academic standards once enrolled in four-year institutions. Research also suggests that FGCS are prone to imposter syndrome and question their place within higher education settings (Davis, 2010). This phenomenon can manifest through doubt about academic abilities, feelings of "going through the motions," and lack of confidence in their identity as a college student (Peteet et al., 2015; Whitehead & Wright,

2017). Thus, self-efficacy and imposter syndrome can be understood as additional obstacles in getting to and through college for FGCS.

Latinx Challenges and Needs

By 2050, the U.S Census Bureau estimates that the Hispanic and/or Latino population will more than double in size (U.S Census Bureau, 2004), making it the fastest growing ethnic group in the U.S (Quijada & Alvarez, 2006). The term Latino, refers to individuals with ancestry in the politically defined region of Latin America that includes South and Central America, as well as the Caribbean. The term “Latino” is not inclusive of individuals that do not identify with either a gender binary. Here I use the term Latinx to refer to all individuals of Latin American decent.

Despite Latinx students enrolling in college at historically high rates, Latinx students are less likely to attain a bachelor’s degree when compared to students who identify as white, Black, or Asian (Fry & Lopez, 2012). In 2016, only 15 percent of Latinx adults 25 or older had obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher (NCES, 2017). In a recent NCES report, Latinx students make up about 27% of the FGCS population (NCES, 2017). Approximately 48 percent of Latinx students are the first in their families to attend college and/or university (Skomsvold, 2014). In addition to the obstacles faced as FGCS, Latinx students also experience challenges based on their ethnicity and in some cases race within the broader U.S. social landscape. Many of the academic related obstacles faced by Latinx students occur prior to actually attending college. They include receiving negative messages from secondary school teachers regarding academic expectations and limited adult support in navigating the college application process, which can result in misinformed decision making about higher education (Immerwahr, 2003; Murphy & Murphy, 2018).

Even after being successfully enrolled into a four-year institution, Latinx FGCS, continue to face challenges that can potentially threaten their ability to sustain through their four-year education (Flink, 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2000). Latinx college students endure ethnicity related stressors on college campuses, particularly at predominantly white institutions (PWIs), that have been found to be related to greater psychological distress (anxiety and depression), lower reports of life satisfaction, and reduced academic success (Ellis et al., 2019; French & Chavez, 2010; Ojeda et al., 2012; Sánchez et al., 2018; Yosso et al., 2009). Ethnicity-related stressors include experiences with prejudice and discrimination including microaggressions (Sanchez et al., 2018). These racial assaults targeted towards Latinx students may involve being treated as a criminal, feeling isolated on campus, and being ridiculed about their culture (Hernandez & Villodas, 2020; McCabe, 2009; Yosso et al., 2009). Latinx students receive these messages at both the interpersonal and institutional level, influencing their sense of belongingness and decision-making related to forming relationships on campus (Ellis et al., 2019; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018; Yosso et al., 2009). In order to combat ethnicity related stressors, Latinx college students rely on cultural resources and attempt to build community with others who share similar experiences (Kouyoumdjian et al., 2017; McCabe, 2009).

When assessing concerns and coping mechanisms of Black and Latinx college students, Chiang and colleagues (2009) highlighted that Latinx students reported that grades, relationships with family, and career choices were their top concerns. It may be that Latinx college students (and likely Latinx FGCS) worry about their relationships with family changing while in college. Research has yet to explore whether concerns about family relationships represent a unique stressor for Latinx FGCS. In line with other immigrant groups, Latinx populations hold strong collectivist values that often revolve around “family collectivity” (Vasquez-Salgado et al., 2015),

meaning Latinx individuals are likely to emphasize familial ties and family related responsibilities. Due to this collectivist orientation, Latinx students can experience conflict because the individualistic values emphasized within four-year institutions of higher education (Burgos-Cienfuegos et al., 2015; Covarrubias & Fryberg, 2015; Chang, 2015; Vasquez-Salgado et al., 2015). This may result in acculturative stress whereby Latinx students encounter dissonance or discomfort related to conflicting messages they are receiving at home and the nature of higher education (Castillo et al., 2015; Cheng, 2022). Acculturative stress has been related to psychological distress, anxiety, and depression (Jardin et al., 2018; Mayorga et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2016). One qualitative study examining cultural influences like collectivism on help-seeking behaviors of Asian and Latinx American college students, found that Latinx students underused familial social support in an effort to mitigate feeling judged and to avoid the self-perception of burdening parents and caregivers (Chang, 2015). Overall, Latinx college students are perceptive about changing relationships with family members due to expectations about and within the college environment.

Family obligation research highlights the importance of collectivism within Latinx families, sometimes referred to as *familismo*. Family obligation refers to “a collection of values and behaviors related to children’s assistance, support and respect for their parents, siblings, and extended family” (Fuligni pp. 97 2007). Although primarily focused on young adolescence, some studies have investigated the longitudinal effects of family obligation through young adulthood for Latinx students (Fuligni and Pederson, 2002; Spees et al., 2017; Tsai et al., 2013; Witkow et al., 2015). Research suggests that for Latinx students, family obligation is related to an increase in school motivation and higher academic aspirations relative to their Euromerican peers (Fuligni, 2001; Witkow et al., 2015). Family obligation has also been related to positive

psychological well-being (Fuligni, 2002; Telzer et al., 2015). However, an increase in family obligation also suggests an increase in students providing their families with support (i.e. taking care of family members, assisting financially) and can disrupt education, resulting in lower GPAs and high college attrition rates (Spees et al., 2017; Telzer and Fuligni, 2009; Witkow et al., 2015). Family obligation appears to be a valuable tool for understanding academic motivation yet, it does not translate to high academic achievement. The relationship between familial values and educational attainment for Latinx FGCS is complex and requires further exploration.

Latinx FGCS navigate the challenges that come with being the first in their family to go to college *and* the potential cultural incongruence that comes with being Latinx within higher education settings. Latinx FGCS must maneuver culturally-specific familial obligations that may not coincide with the individualistic structure of higher education. Qualitative research suggests that Latinx FGCS experience value conflict with peers in college (Burgos-Cienfuegos et al., 2015), suggesting that Latinx FGCS encounter conflict with peers who uphold individualistic ideals. This in turn illustrates that the acculturative stress process is twofold: involving the negotiation of conflicting values between home and school, but also with peers. Given their intersectional identities, FGCS Latinx experience cultural stressors such as acculturative stress and discrimination that can in turn negatively impact mental health (Corona et al., 2017; Perez et al., 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2003). Research does indicate, however, that *familismo* and feeling connected/supported by family can serve as a protective factor for Latinx FGCS (Consoli et al., 2015; Corona et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2016).

Defining Forms of Social Support: Social Provisions Theory

According to Weiss' (1974) social provisions theory, social support is defined by its functionality, or provisions. Weiss' theory suggests that particular social ties or relationships can

lend themselves to meeting the social support needs of an individual. The theory defines six distinct “provisions” or components to social relationships: 1) attachment, 2) social integration, 3) nurturance, 4) reassurance of worth, 5) sense of alliance, and 6) obtaining guidance.

Relationships where a person feels safe provide an individual with feelings of attachment. When an individual perceives that they can share their concerns with an individual or group, they experience social integration. Nurturance is defined by feelings of being needed. Opportunities for nurturance occur most often when an adult takes on the responsibility of taking care of a child. Reassurance of worth is solicited via relationships that can affirm one’s capacity within a social role. For example, it is possible for a FGCS to find reassurance of worth in relationships with peers who validate their presence as a student at a college/university. According to Weiss (1974), a sense of alliance occurs primarily within kinship. He argued that familial ties that foster a sense of allyship develop into relationships that prevail regardless of received reciprocity. Thus, this social support function is provided whereby an individual can consistently feel supported and that they can rely on family. Finally, guidance is most sought out when an individual is in a stressful situation. This social support function is provided through relationships where an individual feels emotionally supported as well as appropriately guided to create courses of action that can reduce stress.

Weiss (1974) theorized that different social relationships vary in importance for any given individual. In other words, differential social ties aid an individual depending on the nature of the relationship. For example, friendships established at college for a FGCS have different value than an established relationship with a parent. FGCS can assume that peer relationships will aid them in feeling more socially connected on campus. Weiss’ social support provisions theory illustrates the various forms of support that one might need and from whom support might

be needed. Without receiving a sufficient amount of all six provisions, an individual is at risk of being deprived of critical social connections. If social support is understood in terms of its “purpose,” then it is important to examine how and why it may be received from particular individuals within a social network. One social relationship that is important for college success is that of parental support.

Weiss’ theory has become the theoretical basis for the Social Provisions Scale (Cutrona & Russell 1987), an instrument that measures the hypothesized support domains and the importance of receiving various forms of social support. The Social Provisions Scale has been used to assess the role support plays in the well-being of individuals (Abbott Salazar, 2021; Dukes Holland & Holahan, 2003; Mancini et al., 2015; Walker O’Neal et al., 2016). In one study conducted with youth within military families, researchers found that youth who reported high relational provisions (i.e. receiving high level of support across all six domains) reported less anxiety and depressive symptoms and reported an overall high quality of life and academic performance (Mancini et al., 2015). An additional study was run to evaluate the role of social provision amongst military members and their partners (Walker O’Neal et al., 2016). A path analysis found that for civilian respondent military personnel, feeling integrated within their community, rank, and deployment was positively associated with their partner’s relationship provisions. This in turn, decreased anxiety and depressive symptoms and increased self-efficacy. These findings provide support for Weiss’ (1974) theory and offer evidence for the importance and validity of feeling socially connected and its positive implications for well-being. Although this theory has not been explored within Latinx FGCS populations, it can provide valuable insight in understanding the role of support.

Parental Support

Parental support broadly encompasses the ways in which parental behaviors and/or attitudes aid in both the physical and emotional development of their children. Literature examining family and parental support has not explicitly defined the individuals who are able to offer said support. In this study, parental support includes not just biological parents, but any primary caregiver. Definitions regarding parental support for college students vary, sometimes including just emotional support and or parental encouragement. Barry and colleagues (2008) propose a model of parental support for college students that includes, but is not limited to, emotional support and encouragement, tangible/instrumental assistance with things like financial aid, as well as guidance/informational support rooted within parents own college experiences (Bryan & Simmons, 2009). Parental and familial support has been linked to students' academic achievement, psychological well-being, and motivation in college (Bryan & Simmons 2009; Cutrona, 1994; Cycle & Gofen, 2009; Nuñez & Sansone, 2016; Perez et al., 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2003). Although these findings have been informative for conceptualizing the potential positive role of parental support for college students, there is also evidence for the contrary.

Some research on parental and familial support challenges the notion that this form of support impacts college academic behaviors, GPA, and overall college adjustment (Dennis et al., 2005; Purswell et al., 2008; Yazedjian et al., 2009). For example, in a study examining academic intentions, parental support, and peer support as predictors of academic behaviors, Purswell and colleagues (2008) found that parental support did not predict students' academic behaviors. Some research also supports the idea that parents/caregivers can adversely affect college students (Bryan et al., 2009; Chiang et al., 2004; Hurst et al., 2012; Jenkins et al., 2013). In a systematic review of qualitative research focused on college student stressors, Hurst and colleagues (2013)

examined 40 studies conducted between 2000 and 2012. They found that family was the most often cited as a stressor for college students due to academic pressure from parents, having to leave family in order to go to school, and the obligation to also care for family members while in school. Hurst and colleagues' did not specifically focus on FGCS, however, raise important questions about the role of family stress within the population. The role of parental support can be understood as a double-edged sword for college aged students; its influence on the college experience is nuanced and therefore should be further explored.

FGCS require diverse forms of support from their primary caregivers. When comparing the academic success of FGCS and continuing generation students, individuals whose parents *did* attend college/university are able to acquire knowledge to navigate college spaces due to informational support that primary caregivers can provide (e.g. explaining office hours, helping students navigate institutional units like the bursar's office¹, etc.). This knowledge is specifically acquired through conversations with parents about their parents' college experience. However, parents of FGCS have less ability to provide this type of informational support. Given their parents level of educational attainment, FGCS are unlikely to receive informational support regarding the social norms often needed in order to navigate college institutions (Pratt et al., 2019). This, in turn, can also be a risk factor for FGCS in completing and attaining a bachelor's degree.

Although limited, some research has examined the complex relationship between parental support and FGCS. In several qualitative studies, FGCS endorse family being the main reason for their desire to attend college (Bryan & Simmons 2009; Cycle & Gofen 2009). In particular, participants reported feeling as though they owe a debt to their parents for the sacrifices they

¹ A bursar is an officer in charge of funds

have had to make, in order to give them a better life. Therefore, family, particularly parents, serve as a motivating force for degree attainment. Paradoxically, relationship dynamics with parents can shift during college, negatively impacting FGCS. FGCS often report feeling isolated from families due to their family's lack of knowledge regarding college and are less likely to view parents as resources for their college success (Bryan & Simmons, 2009; McCallen & Johnson 2019). Parents and other family members can also serve as stressors because FGCS worry about how family dynamics change during college years (Hurst et al., 2012; London, 1989). FGCS also reported receiving less instrumental support from parents when compared to non-FGCS (Barry et al., 2008; Clayton et al., 2017).

Barry and colleagues (2008) examined various forms of parental support for FGCS and non-FGCS and found that FGCS report discussing college experiences with their parents and receiving instrumental support such as academic assistance less frequently than non-FGCS. In addition to experiencing lower levels of instrumental support, Sy and colleagues (2011) found that FGCS reported receiving lower levels of both emotional and informational support from caregivers compared to non-FGCS peers.

Although FGCS report a perceived lack of instrumental support or tangible aid from their parents, some research has found that caregivers provide critical emotional support to FGCS. In an exploratory study assessing parental involvement in first- and continuing-generation students, Hicks (2006) found that FGCS perceived more support for attending college from their families than non-FGCS. In particular, FGCS endorsed higher rates of parental involvement and the belief that their parents believed in their child's ability to get through college.

While the existing literature has primarily focused on how parental support influences academic outcomes, some research suggests it may also impact psychological outcomes for

FGCS (Jenkins et al., 2013; Sy et al., 2011). Psychological distress refers to unpleasant feelings or emotions that impact one's level of functioning. Jenkins and colleagues (2013) compared stress reactions, use of social support, and psychological well-being in FGCS and non-FGCS. They found that FGCS reported less social support from family, less life satisfaction, and higher PTSD symptoms. In another study examining the influence of parental support on stress of female FGCS in their transition between high school and college, Sy and colleagues (2011) determined that perceived parental emotional support predicted lower levels of stress. These findings suggest that there could be a relationship between lack of parental support and psychological distress for this particular group.

Parental Support and Latinx FGCS

Although parental support does not seem to influence academic success for Latinx FGCS (Dennis et al., 2005; Michel et al., 2019; Yazedjian et al., 2009), students report feeling encouraged and emotionally supported by family, while also acknowledging that their families cannot offer direct informational support (Clayton et al., 2017; Michel et al., 2019). Michel and colleagues (2019) conducted an ethnographic study to explore the social preparedness and familial support experiences of low-income Latinx FGCS. Participants expressed receiving academic encouragement and support from their families but, no direct academic support. Clayton et al (2017) found similar outcomes in their qualitative research of Latinx FGCS, who discussed feeling emotionally supported by family but lacked in instrumental assistance. Parents and family are also a motivating factor for Latinx FGCS to pursue a college education (Marrun, 2018; Michel et al., 2019; Nunez et al., 2016; Sáenz et al., 2018; Taryn et al., 2020). Latinx FGCS perceive college as a means for upward mobility. They recognize the potential barriers and sacrifices that their parents might have had to make and, thus want to pay it forward.

Research suggests that family support is a significant predictor of psychological well-being for Latinx youth and college aged students (Gloria & Castellanos, 2012; Perez et al., 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2019). In their exploratory study, Vasquez-Salgado and colleagues (2015) investigated the relationship between potential home-school conflict and its impact on Latinx FGCS well-being during their transition to college. Using a qualitative design, the researchers found that Latinx FGCS who experienced home-school conflict (i.e. attempting to balance responsibilities to both) also emphasized increased guilt, stress-induced physical concerns (not eating). A similar study examined the relationship between family involvement and support with depressive symptoms for Latinx immigrant youth (Perez et al., 2011). Results from this study indicated that when family involvement was included, depressive symptoms decreased.

Theoretical Framework: Optimal Matching Model

The Optimal Matching Model of Stress and Social Support proposes five dimensions of support; emotional, informational, tangible, esteem, and social integration (Cutrona, 1990). The model also proposes two dimensions of stress; controllability and life domain affected by the stressor. Cutrona (1990) argues that different forms of stress require different forms of support and her model attempts to match type of stress with the appropriate type of support.

Controllability is defined by whether or not an event is avoidable by the individual. When an occurrence is unavoidable, the model argues that it is imperative that the individual attempt to mitigate any negative emotions caused by the event. In this case, the model hypothesizes that emotional support is the most optimal form of assistance when something unpreventable has occurred. For instance, a FGCS from a low-income household who attends an expensive university cannot avoid exposure to students from higher income backgrounds. This exposure can elicit feelings of discomfort for a FGCS. Emotional support would provide the best form of

aide because the FGCS can neither control their short-term family income, or the class background of college peers.

Avoidable events or controllable events, however, solicit different forms of support. When an event is deemed controllable, the model predicts that what would benefit the individual most are forms of support that “foster effective instrumental action” (Cutrona, 8, 1990), defined as informational or tangible aid in addition to esteem support. If a FGCS is presented with a challenging situation like difficulty with course material, informational or tangible aid like telling the student about office hours or free tutoring services would provide a useful intervention. By nature of the stressor being hypothetically avoidable, problem-focused coping like seeking tangible help affords the individual to avoid the stress in the future.

Literature related to parental and familial support has illustrated the complexity of its influence on FGCS. The potential for parental and familial aide to serve as both a form of support and/or stressor, highlights the need to conceptualize instances in which parental support is deemed as a hinderance or not. By determining what form of support is needed, depending on the controllability or level of stress for a given event, one could analyze to what degree parents can help their children in situations related to their college experience. To my knowledge, there is no research to date that exists on the Optimal Matching Model within FGCS of Latinx populations.

Study Rationale

Currently, limited research exists examining how different forms of social support function and impact persistence for FGCS. Given that a student’s first-generation status is determined by their parents, it is important to understand the role parental support plays in the college experiences of these students. Latinx students represent an increasing portion of the U.S.

population and research on parental social support and its role in college persistence therefore needs to expand to Latinx FGCS. Very few have looked specifically at the role of parental support in the persistence of Latinx FGCS. To my knowledge, this is the first study to focus specifically on the role of parental support within the FGCS Latinx population. The current study explores the types of perceived parental support Latinx FGCS endorse receiving using a portion of Cutrona's Optimal Matching Model of Stress and Social Support. To be FGCS is not within the control of the student, thus the current study will emphasize types of support to something "uncontrollable." The author asks the following research questions: 1) What types of parental support do Latinx participants described receiving/not receiving? 2) How do participants' descriptions of parental support evolve over the first year of college?

Method

Positionality

My lived experience as a Latinx FGCS informed this study. My epistemological stance is grounded in constructivism and the need to situate individuals experiences and narratives within socio-political, cultural, and historical contexts (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). I believe FGCS perceptions about college, specifically parental support, are subject to change over the course of college, given the rapid personal growth that occurs during college years. I think that this is ultimately the nature of college transition for most students. I predicted that feelings of uncertainty and the need for financial assistance when first entering college would be salient aspects of participants' narrative.

Going into this research project, I expected that by the end of their first year in college participants would feel like they are "adults" and have begun to learn how to navigate spaces in ways that minimizes the amount of support that they either seek out or endorse, from their

parents/primary caregivers. Given the cultural context of Latinx students, coupled with the nuances of being FGCS, I expected that there will be some conflict between the students and their familial roles/responsibilities. This point is something that has been studied in the literature and something that I encountered in my own experience. I anticipated student to discuss perceived forms of parental support, in addition to rich discussion regarding the ways in which parents were not, or could not, be supportive to students. Inability and/or refusal to provide forms of support as the student sees fit, was likely to also contribute to dissonance between Latinx FGCS and their parents/primary caregivers. Based on my assumptions, I expected financial support to be the most endorsed form of parental support received by Latinx students. The least endorsed form would be instrumental support, due to their parent's inexperience with college level work/norms.

Study Design

Data for the current study comes from a multisite, mixed-method, longitudinal study examining retention and graduation of FGCS titled, "The Roles of Identity and Supportive Social Networks in College Persistence for First-Generation College Students." This study examines two cohorts of Latinx FGCS, over three time points during their first year of college. The first year of college is a crucial transition period for college students. During the first year, FGCS are confronted with many "firsts" in acclimating and adjusting to college life/expectations, including having to grapple with their expectations versus the realities of college. As time continues, it is likely that the novelty of college life decreases, and expectations evolve. A longitudinal design can help capture how perceptions of parental support evolve over time for Latinx FGCS.

Study Sites

All data for the larger study comes from three four-year higher education institutions: DePaul University, The College of William and Mary, and Norfolk State University. Data for the current study includes Latinx participants from DePaul University. DePaul is a medium-sized, private university in the Midwest. DePaul is also considered a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) in reference to its demographics. With an undergraduate student population of 14,507 at the time of initial data collection for the first cohort, 39 percent of the student body were students of color. Of the admitted freshman class for 2018, 33 percent ($N = 846$) identified as FGCS. Of those who identified as FGCS, 41.7 percent were also Latinx ($N = 353$).

Participants

Participants include students who enrolled as freshman for the fall term for both the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic year. Approximately 190 students from the survey portion of the study agreed to be contacted for participation in interviews. Some of students who were contacted, rejected, or did not respond to the invitation. A major study goal involved exploring the experiences of Latinx FGCS and interview recruitment reflected this. The current study intended to analyze interviews from the 12 Latinx FGCS from both cohorts. Three participants were excluded from analysis due to missing data (i.e. did not complete at least one of the three interviews). Participants ranged in age between 17 and 19 years old. Participants identified as Chicano/Mexican-American ($N = 6$), Biracial ($N = 2$), and Guatemalan ($N = 1$). Unlike most studies regarding FGCS, our sample consists of majority male participants ($N = 5$). Participants were also more likely to identify as heterosexual ($N = 7$), have at least one foreign born parent ($N = 7$), speak Spanish at home ($N = 6$), and live in off campus housing or live with family or a partner ($N = 7$). This sample also highlights heterogeneity across family income and immigration

history. See Appendix A for a detailed description of these demographics for each individual participant.

Interview Guide

A distinct interview guide was administered at each of the three data collection time points. The interview guides were developed by a research team under the guidance of Dr. Ida Salusky. Content areas included in interview guides were informed by literature on retention of FGCS. After the research team developed a draft baseline protocol, it was workshopped with a focus group of FGCS. Revisions were made to both the content and structure of questions. Subsequently, the revised interview protocol was administered to a volunteer FGCS who provided an additional round of feedback. Additional edits were made prior to finalizing the protocol. Follow-up protocols were modified from the baseline interview guide and workshopped with both undergraduate and graduate FGCS. The protocols included questions about their academic preparation and expectation for college, social expectations, family support/obligations, decision making about chosen institution, and personal strengths. The current study used data from sections covering family support/obligations and decision making about chosen institution (See Appendices B-E). Example questions include: Can you talk about how you made the decision to apply to college? Are there ways in which you think [family members listed] are not able to help with your educational pursuits? Can you talk about your family's expectations for college?

Procedure

Participants for the qualitative arm of the study were drawn from the larger study's survey participants. Survey participants were recruited in the following manner. During the 2018 cohort recruitment, all incoming students who completed the study screener and met the study's

minimum criteria (i.e. FGCS status and an incoming, non-transfer freshmen) were invited to participate in the survey portion of the study, which were conducted in-person. Survey enrollment for the 2019 cohort was done online. Researchers were deliberate about recruiting a more diverse sample with regards to race/ethnicity and sexual orientation in order to ensure participation of historically underrepresented groups.

As part of consent for the survey portion of the study, participants were asked about whether the study team could contact them about the interview portion of the study. The researchers examined survey participants' background information to determine risk level for attrition. Risk level was determined based on a participant's family income, financial aid award, help-seeking attitudes, perceived social support scores, and anxiety index scores. Individuals who were identified as either at a very high or low risk of attrition were contacted for enrollment. Participants were contacted via phone, text, and email with a brief description of the qualitative arm and follow-up information if they wanted to participate in interviews. Out of the nine participants in the current study, five (5) were categorized as high risk for attrition.

Baseline interviews were all completed face-to-face. Follow-up interviews were completed either face-to-face or via Zoom. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in private classrooms on campus. Prior to the beginning of the baseline interview, students were informed of the longitudinal nature of the study. This would mean that the research team would follow up with them three (3) times in total during their first year or until they transferred or dropped out. If they left the university prior to graduating, the participant would be asked to complete an exit interview. Baseline and follow-up interviews ranged between 60 and 90 minutes. Participants were told that they could skip any questions and terminate the interview at any point and still receive remuneration. Participants were remunerated with a \$20 gift card for each interview they

completed. After each interview, interviewers completed a memo to document interview highlights and to provide feedback on interview questions.

All interviews were audio recorded. After each interview, audio recordings and memos were uploaded onto a secure servers. Recorders with the audio were kept locked in the Research lab. Audio recordings were transcribed and transcripts were de-identified. These memos were typed and then uploaded onto a secure server, in addition to the audio file.

Analytic Plan

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used as the methodological framework to guide the analysis. According to Smith et al., (2013) “IPA is concerned with the detailed examination of human lived experience. And it aims to conduct this examination in a way which as far as possible enables that experience to be expressed in its own terms, rather than according to predefined categories” (p.32). IPA is focused on investigating how individuals make sense and *meaning* of experiences or significant life events. IPA draws upon the principles of phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography to analyze individuals’ interpretations of experiences. IPA’s heavy reliance on situating the individual within their context and allowing their experiences to guide findings makes it the most appropriate analytic choice for my study.

Analysis of data required three processes: sense making of experiences, contextualizing experiences, and specificity regarding the individualized nature of experiences.

Phenomenological studies rely on how individuals describe and make meaning of an experience, rather than trying to establish one “objective” or “factual” account. This principle-- and IPA research-- requires that the individual must engage in introspection and reflexivity towards their own perceptions of the occurrence. The researcher must also attempt to immerse themselves within the context of the observed individual. In doing so, the researcher toggles between the

individual's interpretation of the experience, and their own evaluation of said experience. This process has been coined as double hermeneutics, by which the researcher is attempting to balance both an emic and etic perspective. The third major principle IPA relies on is idiography. Idiography is not concerned with generalization, but rather, analysis of the particular (Smith et al., 2009). The “particular” involves extensive and thorough analysis of the specificity of experiences for an individual and/or a specific group of people within a homogenous context. It is because of this, that IPA is inclined to review accounts independently, before attempting to make comparisons across participants. Specificity, allows the researcher to thoroughly examine each narrative account and provide thoughtful analysis. These principles are valuable for my analysis of a potential homogenous group of Latinx FGCS because they facilitate a critical approach to understanding how this population is making meaning out of a life changing event (going to college) and how they perceive the role of their parents/primary caregiver within it.

Data analysis for this study was done with involvement of an undergraduate research assistant who identifies as Mexican-American and a second-generation college student. Our analysis used a multi-step process. The full process was completed one transcript at a time. The primary focus was to establish conceptual, linguistic, and descriptive comments for each respective interview, in order to generate emerging themes. Each transcript was reviewed three times. First, an undergraduate research assistant and I attempted to fully immerse ourselves in the data. We did so by reading one transcript at a time and listening to the audio recordings of the interview in order to get a sense of the structure and flow of the interviews. In tandem with rereading the transcript, we initiated in preliminary note taking and annotations of the texts. After this step, we will began a second round of analysis in which we took note of important relationships the participant has with things, people, places, and events within the transcript. In

the final round of review the transcript we took notes and comments that focused on exploring the specific use of language by participants.

Once notes were acquired for each class of comments, we began to develop emergent themes within the individual interview. Once a list of emerging themes was curated, connections between themes were found and clustered according to conceptual similarities. This occurred within each transcript and across participants. Subordinate themes were condensed and collapsed to eliminate any redundancies and then organized under superordinate themes. Data was analyzed by participant across timepoints; all three interviews for each single participant were individually annotated following IPA procedures, before moving on to the next participant. By doing this, I was able to address continuity and posterity within participants. In accordance with Cutrona's Optimal Matching Model of Stress and Social Support, I paid close attention to whether participants discussed the role of controllability. If narratives related to controllability emerge but are not explicitly defined by the participant, I intend to use Cutrona's preexisting definitions to categorize said events.

Validity

In order to ensure credibility, I engaged in specific checks. First, the undergraduate RA who assisted with analysis identifies as Mexican- American. The RA's ethnic-identity provided general insight in relation to this specific identity that participants hold. My identity as a FGCS and my racial-ethnic identity ensured that, to a degree, we approached this work from an emic perspective. We simultaneously read the transcripts and took notes. After each read through, we met to discuss our impressions and talked through any discrepancies in our respective analysis and notetaking. We collaborated on identifying emergent superordinate and subordinate themes.

Results

Several themes emerged from participants narratives including students receive multiple forms of parental support, students lack some types of parental support, and students provide family support. In the analysis below I discuss themes that emerged across participants. In doing so, I highlight the commonalities between participant experiences. Experiences differed for participants at the third time point based on cohort due to the implications of the COVID- 19 shelter in place order. Thus, themes are discussed separately. Emerging themes were not mutually exclusive, therefore students often endorsed seemingly contrasting concepts.

Students receive multiple forms of support

Latinx FGCS' discussion of parental support illustrated the ways in which caregivers both tried to provide key resources, even though they themselves did not have experience with higher education systems that lead to a bachelor's degree. Participants defined parental support as the way parents or legal guardians assist them as they matriculate through college. All participants endorsed receiving or feeling like they could receive support from either or both parents at any given time during their first year in college. Participants identified three types of support: emotional, instrumental, and academic support.

Emotional support

Participants discussed their parents' ability to provide emotional support that assisted them in getting to and through their first year of college. Emotional support involved demonstrating compassion, encouragement, motivation, and understanding towards that participant. At least at one time point, all participants endorsed receiving emotional support from their parents. In addition to encouragement and empathy, students also described how parents created an environment where participants knew they were being cheered on from the sidelines

and understood that parents were available and willing to take on a more active role if desired or needed.

Esteban described an impactful moment when he received encouragement from his mother. He described that his decision to go to college was not initially supported by his parents. Esteban's father questioned his career goals. However, Esteban's mother continued to encourage him to invest time in his interest [computer science], pursue it in college and she advocated for Esteban to his father. "My dad would say, 'Get off the computer.' And my mom would be like, 'No, he's doing something.' And my dad would ask, 'What is he doing.' And then she would say, "I don't know but he's doing something.""

Although, Esteban's mother did not entirely understand his interests, she recognized that it was important to Esteban and supported his decision to seek a computer science degree. Esteban's mother served as a buffer between Esteban's desires and that of his father's and encouraged Esteban to keep going.

Most participants ($N = 5$) also described the importance of their parents supporting their independence as a critical form of emotional support. All students endorsed feeling excited to begin college, which they discussed as a first step toward adulthood. Participants identified having more freedom to decide how to spend their time, as well as navigating newfound responsibilities, as things that occur during college. They reported feeling supported and heard when parents recognized their agency and autonomy as adults. Most participants discussed preferring a "hands off" approach by parents, where students were allowed to make their own decisions and parental involvement only occurred at the participant's request. In this way, caregivers supported the individuality of their children. Gloria provided an example of parent supported agency in choosing which college to attend:

It was mostly my choice because they [parents] told me, “It’s your school, your career, and we really can’t have as much as a say.” When it came to choosing, besides them telling me the benefits, like of leaving and staying [attending school out of state], they didn’t have much other than that. It was my say.

By providing consultation rather than intervention, Gloria’s parents supported her autonomy in decision making, an important developmental process in emerging adulthood. By allowing Gloria to make her own decision, her parents supported her positive growth as an adult.

Motivational Support

One way that parents expressed emotional support or caring for participants is by providing motivation. Emotional support is likely to influence an individual’s motivation or drive towards accomplishing a goal. Thus, participants that felt emotionally supported by their parents channeled this concept to fuel their motivational drive. Most participants attributed a portion of their motivation around college admissions and persistence to parents and family. Participants described acknowledging sacrifices their parents have made in order to give them access to opportunities they themselves might not have had the means to pursue. Participants expressed that their parents were explicit and intentional about ensuring they could get an education because parents believed it would improve their children’s quality of life. Marco shared that throughout his upbringing, his parent’s believed education was the key to avoiding future hardship.

I mean I guess my whole life I’ve been told I’m going to college. You know, it wasn’t really up for discussion but I knew I wanted to go to college too. My parents would always tell that they regretted not going to college and that their lives would be easier if they went to college. So yeah, I wanted to go to college.

Marco's parents' belief that their lives would have been better had they attended college, was a driving force behind Marco's decision to attend college. Vanessa echoed similar sentiments regarding higher pay. She said, "My parents push me to be in school even though they didn't get a chance. They wanted me to start off my life having higher pay than they took ten years to get." In Vanessa's case, her parents wanted their daughter to have an earning capacity that would better position Vanessa to achieve a secure financial future. In the minds of Vanessa's parents a college degree could help facilitate that goal. Participants shared the ideals their parents instilled in them, not because their parents were able to speak firsthand about the benefits of obtaining a degree, but rather highlighting difficulties they endured for lack of one.

Instrumental Support

Parents provided participants with multiple forms of instrumental support, which participants described as key to academic success. This kind of support included helping participants with navigating college resources, homework assignments, queuing them to external resources, providing food, housing, transportation for college, and monetary financial assistance. Additionally, almost all participants discussed that their parents do "small things" to lessen their load and give participants the ability to focus on school work. The most notable way that students highlighted this was in the ways their parents facilitated access to financial support, both directly and indirectly.

Most participants (5) lived at home with their parents while they attended college, which minimized expenses related to campus housing. Parents contributed to their children's education by providing free room and board during college years. Although Vanessa's father was unable to assist with tuition costs, he did provide other forms of instrumental support:

He [their father] feels like I'm using them as a house. My mom thinks the same thing basically, that she's just going to be here the first year and a half helping me with the things that she could easily do for me so I have more time to focus on other stuff, so like giving me food when I'm busy working she'll bring me something, taking care of laundry so that way I can keep working at my job.

Although Vanessa's tone suggested her parents resented providing housing, by doing so they ensured that Vanessa's basic needs were being met. If Vanessa, did not need to worry about her basic needs (i.e. shelter, clothing, food, etc.), she could fully dedicate herself to both school and working to pay for school. Ultimately, Vanessa's parents assisted financially. While participants were able to see this form of support as highly valuable, it is possible that parents might not view tangible aid as higher education support because they provided this type of aid for their children prior to college.

In addition to food and housing, participants also highlighted ways that parents used their network and resources help locate informational support. Participants' parents were aware that their limited knowledge of the education system could often hinder their ability to directly assist their children. In order to mitigate this, parents often "referred their children out" to others that may be more knowledgeable. This could mean encouraging participants to reach out to an extended family member who's attended college or seeking resources that could further assist the participant.

Marco highlighted his mother's attentiveness to both his mental health and academic needs as a form of instrumental support. "My mom, she helps a lot. She recognized when I was doing bad in school and she would send me to a tutor. She saw[...] well I had depression one time and she saw that and she sent me to a therapist." Marco's mother was able to identify his

needs and quickly find and refer him to the resources that she needed. By acknowledging that she was not the expert and that Marco needed more assistance than she could offer, Marco's mother facilitated his future success.

Financial Support

Participants discussed monetary financial assistance as a critical form of direct instrumental support. Participants discussed financial assistance as critical in college decision making. For participants, financial support referred specifically to monetary assistance provided to help them pay for schooling. In addition to having received scholarships, grants, and taking out loans, parents also provided monetary assistance to the participants. Most participants ($n = 8$) endorsed that their parents had been eager to assist them financially in order to get them through school. For these participants, this meant parents were taking out large loans on their behalf or choosing to pay out of pocket.

Isabel described a conversation between her and her father related to financial support. Once Isabel committed to attending DePaul University and received her award letter, her parents agreed to take out parent loans in order to fill her gap. By doing so, Isabel expressed that her parents were a substantial financial support. Isabel shared that her father told her, "you know, we'll do what we have to do to put you through school". Although taking out loans might not have been the ideal, Isabel's father highlights parents are willing to go to great lengths in order to put their children through school.

Participants parents who offered monetary support became significant beneficiaries to their children's education. Parent loans made up a large sum of how participants paid for school. Gloria shared that her father took out loans that "were pretty major loans, in order to, consider paying for my school." Additionally, Marco said, "My parents[...] I think they pay like \$33,000

for each year.” Tuition at DePaul University varied between \$40,000 and \$42,000 depending on the college within which a participant enrolled and the year they entered the university. For Marco, over half of his tuition was covered by his parent loan. Not only does this offer an example of just how large of a sum parents were borrowing to get their children through university, it also highlights the strong emphasis on the value of education.

Students lack some types of parental support

Almost all (the majority) students expressed the feeling that there were limits to how much their parents could aid them in their college journey. Reasons for lack of support highlighted by participants involved things like their own desire to be independent and therefore not ask for help, not wanting to feel like a “burden” to their families and acknowledging that parents might be unable to assist with school related needs because of a lack of requisite knowledge. Generally, participants discussed lack of support from their parents less frequently than they discussed support received. Participants identified academic, financial, emotional, instrumental forms of support that caregivers could not, or would not provide.

Academic Support

By nature of being a FGCS, participants felt they could not—or would not-- ask their parents for academic help, because their parents had either not attended college themselves or obtained a university degree. For participants, being the first in their family to attend college, involved venturing into uncharted waters. Participants often expressed feeling that both they and their parents were novices to the rigor of higher education and that asking for academic help would simply be like the blind leading the blind. Participants highlighted the fact that they had surpassed their parents “threshold” of academic knowledge. When asked why would she rely on university resources for academic support over her parents Vanessa said, “they [parents] don’t

know a lot about college stuff. I surpass my parents' knowledge on a lot of things already, and I am the guinea pig." In referring to herself as a "guinea pig", Vanessa is cognizant that she has and will continue to experience many firsts in her family while simultaneously acknowledging the limits to support her parents can provide her. For example, when explaining why she does not seek out academic support from parents Vanessa said, "Yeah like when I'm confused about something, they're going to be confused too. When I want advice on something, they might not have answers about it."

Similarly, Esteban discussed the possibility that university course work is too difficult for his parents and therefore he does not ask for their help. When discussing subjects which his parents could not help, Esteban said "Every subject except for Spanish they are not able to help me. Because you know that's too much for them." Esteban also goes on to say "My parents can't do anything for me academically because they never achieved that high level of education." Without course content knowledge, participants find that parents are simply unable to meet this need.

When discussing lack of academic support from parents, participants did not indicate resentment. Instead, participants took an "it is what it is" attitude towards this specific form of support. This tone of pragmatism stems from students having acknowledged the limitations of their parents being able to provide academic support *prior* to entering college. As the eldest and first in her family to attend college, Isabel explained that it has long been the norm to not rely on her parents for academic help. Isabel expressed,

[...] it's always been where my parents have never really been able to academically support me in that sense, being the oldest and being the first-generation college student. I'm kind of on my own with this [...]

Isabel's comments parallel Vanessa's feeling of being a guinea pig. For participants who are first-generation college students, parents do not have the institutional knowledge to assist in coursework.

Instrumental Support

A majority of participants endorsed not receiving different forms of instrumental support from caregivers that they described as important to academic functioning. Some participants specifically reported not receiving assistance from parents on navigating and accessing educational resources. While some parents were able to successfully liaison for participants to help find tangible school related resources, some participants felt that their parents did not have the means to do so. Isabel highlights where she sees the limitations in what her parents can help her with.

I'm just like well, not even to be offensive at all but I'm just like neither of them attended a four year university so it's just like they don't really know of what's available to me. They kind of, were both in the same boat basically we both don't really know what's available to us.

Similar to participant's discussion of lack of academic support, participants were not upset by parents inability to provide instrumental support. Instead, participants respectfully admitted that parent's own educational barriers left both the participant and parent unaware of instrumental support available. Isabel highlights this while discussing the ways she felt her parents could be supportive of her in college Isabel does not blame her parents for being unable to assist her, but rather admits that both her and her parents have the same amount of knowledge regarding what's expected and needed to succeed at a 4-year institution. In the same way that Isabel does not know of effective resources, her parents do not have the lived experience to help facilitate.

While finances play a significant role in college decision making for participants. Some did not seek monetary support from caregivers after college enrollment. About a third of participants indicated that it was not feasible to financially rely on parents to assist with university expenses like tuition and books. While school may be a decision that is supported by parents, it is not necessarily an expense that they can afford. Skyler, shared how her parents prepared her for their inability to help with university expenses.

Like they would tell me to get good grades. They would tell me how it's a necessity to get scholarships because they wouldn't be able to fully financially support me. So they would tell me to look into that, to look into things besides if the school offered financial aid, like local financial aid.

Participants expressed that their parents' inability to provide financial support which included any school related expenses (e.g. tuition, books, etc.) required them to seek out other outlets for financial help. All participants that endorsed a lack of financial support from their parents highlighted that they were not upset with the fact that their parents did not have the means to financially support their education and indicated that they understood it was not feasible for their parents to do so.

Some participants also discussed refusing to ask for financial support from their parents because they were aware this would pose a burden for parents. Reluctance to seek out financial support was rooted in participants recognizing that although parents might want to help, they would not have the resources to provide financial assistance. When asked who they would talk to about financial struggles, Vanessa expressed apprehensions about discussing things with their parents. Vanessa acknowledged that she would likely consult with her parents but would rather attempt to avoid such a situation altogether. Vanessa explained, "Because I don't want them to

feel like they have to give me money.” Vanessa’s response highlights the tension around going to parents for financial assistance and not wanting parents to feel an obligation to provide support beyond their financial means.

Emotional Support

Several students expressed a desire to receive more understanding from parents and endorsed sadness about not having a stronger emotional connection with parents. All participants who endorsed a lack of emotional support were self-identified females and the eldest sibling in their family unit. These participants discussed juggling several roles within their families and not feeling equally supported. For example, Isabel shared her feelings towards her relationship with her parents.

I could never open up to my parents in that like emotional way. I can’t tell them about how my day was. Like how, like if I’m struggling with something or if I’m feeling sad.

My parents have never really been my emotional outlet. It just makes me feel sad that my friends have that relationship with their parents and I’ve never really had that.

Isabel’s tone indicated that she felt she was missing out on something because her relationship with her parents is not the same as that of her friends. Isabel’s feelings of being unable to connect with her parents suggest a lost opportunity for social and emotional support.

Gloria expressed similar desire to receive more empathy from parents when it comes to schoolwork demands. As a commuter student, Gloria must factor in travel time to get to classes. She described often being questioned by her parents about whether she was truly attending class or spending her time elsewhere.

I’d try to tell them, “oh, I have class at this time” and they were like, “Wait, so what time are you leaving?” and if I didn’t leave they would be like, “So, are you even going to

school?” and it would turn into a whole argument of like, “listen this is what’s going on” and then I had to create a whole physical schedule for them to look at to see that I’m going to classes, but even if I left early they’d be like, “Oh are you sure you’re going or are you going just to hang out with your friends and just like wasting our money?”. So, I guess that like also[...] there was like trouble trying to prove to them that I was actually going and trouble to focus on school work while I was in class because it comes into mind like, “do they really trust me or something when it comes to this?”. I don’t know.”

Gloria experiences of needing to prove herself to her parents left her feeling discouraged and disconnected from her parents. In not feeling supported by her parents, Gloria needs to navigate a tight rope of her needs and her parents' perceptions of what she is actually doing.

Students provide family support

In addition to participants highlighting the ways in which parents may or may not support them, students also identified how they assist their families. A majority of participants felt a strong connection to their parents and siblings, which enabled a “family first” orientation to the support they offered. In addition to feeling a strong connection, participants who described providing support lived geographically close to their families. Participants described assisting in household chores, childcare, and when possible, providing financial assistance. In addition to navigating college systems, participants felt a strong responsibility for the welfare of their families. This involved dedicating significant amounts of time to assisting families, while also trying to excel in school. Esteban gave an estimate for how much time he dedicates to helping their family. He stated, “I guess [I help] maybe like 12 hours a week. Actually, even more possibly because I know I do chores for like 2 hours in the morning. Or around 2 hours and then I help out in the afternoon.” For Esteban, it was difficult to quantify just how much time he

dedicates to helping out family and admitted he is likely underestimating that time. Similarly, Skyler expressed that she assists her parents roughly 72 hours “but across a span of a week.” This suggests that participants set aside significant amounts of time to support their families, up to the equivalent of a full-time job. As a result, participants navigate a delicate balance between school and home life.

Participants discussed different strategies to try and balance family and school responsibilities. Some Participants indicated wanting to excel at school, but would not do so at the expense of helping their families. Vanessa shared her way of trying to divide her time without compromising:

[I help] any time after five, that is usually when my classes end. So as soon as I get home, that's when I, everything's set up to be family first type of thing. I try to do my work at school, that way when I'm at home I don't have as much schoolwork.

As a commuter student who is living with her family, Vanessa attempts to create space between her school life and her home life in a way where schoolwork will not impede her family time and her responsibilities at home. In wanting to minimize schoolwork as a distraction, Vanessa highlights the notion of “family first” and her prioritizing be as present as possible when she is at home, in order to assist in their needs.

Participants who offered support to their families described feeling a moral obligation and a strong desire to minimize familial hardships wherever they could. This meant participants never discussed assisting their families as a burden. As the eldest of four within a Latinx home, Gloria expressed, “it's like the oldest person always has to be the person who sort of takes care of the others.” For Gloria, not only did she assist in childcare and finances, but she also viewed being the first in her family to attend college as a means of assistance. She shared, “I have to

experience everything for the first time, and I have to teach [her parents] or I have to teach my siblings so [they] will have it easier.” In learning how to navigate the college system, Gloria is entering uncharted waters in order to reduce novelty and pave the way for when her siblings decide they want to attend college. By completing many “firsts” for her family, she is learning how to facilitate the process for her siblings and is therefore “taking care of others.”

Change over time

Results highlight meaningful differences between participants who completed their first-year of college during the 2018-2019 academic year, versus those who completed their first-year during the 2019-20 academic year. Participants in the latter group, experienced disruptions in their first year of college due to the shelter in place order, related to the COVID-19 pandemic, that was issued in March 2020. Unlike cohort one participants, cohort two participants needed to navigate the transition to remote learning during their first-year. This changed how participants in cohort two discussed parental support. For this reason, participants experiences will be discussed according to the year in which they completed their first-year (.i.e. cohort).

Cohort 1

A third ($n = 3$) of participants were in cohort one and did not experience the impact of COVID-19 during their first-year of college. These participants discussed parental support consistently across all three timepoints. Participants perceived parent support did not change throughout their first-year. Students in this cohort continued to highlight how parents encouraged them to make school a priority whilst nurturing their individuality.

For participants in cohort one, the support received during their first-year did not change because parents were relatively consistent in what they could or could not provide. Both parents and participants recognized the limitations to support prior to the beginning of college. Thus,

participants in this cohort discuss support based on what they had previously experienced from parents throughout K-12. Skyler's first-year experience highlights how their parents did not waiver in encouraging Skyler to pursue high education. Although Skyler's parents relied on her financially, her parents continuously reminded Skyler that "school comes first." Skyler said,

Even if I do work, they're like "make sure, don't put your job ahead of school, school is still your number one; even if you have to leave your job, it'll be okay as long as you get through school we can work through it.

For Skyler's family need for them to help financially did not change throughout the year and neither did Skyler's parents encouragement that Skyler prioritize education.

Cohort 2

At the onset of the shelter in place order that took effect in March 2020, students' needs changed. The shelter in place order took effect during the second quarter of participants' first-year in college. Students were required to physically vacate DePaul and transition to remote learning for the remainder of the year. This presented unique challenges. A majority of participants in cohort two (4/6) discussed issues related to the online learning environment and how it affected family dynamics. Specifically, participants highlighted how they themselves in addition to their parents and families, had a difficult time adjusting to remote learning. Participants needed to spend an extended period of time in their bedrooms for classes and meetings. While participants indicated that their parents meant well, they discussed how remote learning required negotiating physical space with family members. Pablo discussed his experience regarding the transition to online learning:

Sometimes [his parents] don't understand, sometimes I feel like they don't understand when I'm in class or not, but they know that it's been difficult for me to adjust to online

school So I don't think I'm adjusted to it actually. But they try to understand whenever I'm in classes not to interrupt me, but again I say try because there are some times where they actually interrupt me while I'm speaking in class, but they really try their best, and I really appreciate that.

Pablo's response highlights how participants and parents struggled with the reality of remote learning and specific student needs during this time. Although parents did not always provide participants with privacy, participants forgave intrusion of personal space and appreciated the effort parents made.

Regardless of whether they lived at home prior to the pandemic, participants reported having explicit conversations with family around the need for space and quiet in order to complete online learning. Participants made active attempts to avoid conflict between home life and school responsibilities while sharing space with others. Jorge discussed requests he made to his mother while engaged in remote learning at home. He said, "So I'll be like 'hey I'm in a meeting, don't barge in my room please', or don't be screaming, when she hears me, or not turn on the blender, not do like super loud things." All participants requested that their families respect class time by minimizing intrusions and distractions during this time. Prior to COVID-19 and the shelter in place order, cohort two participants did not discuss the need for quiet and privacy regardless of whether they lived on campus or at home.

Some participants' parents struggled or did not understand the reality of online learning. While parents made attempts to be respectful of the space and quiet student needed, they were not always successful. Gloria highlighted how unsupported she felt by her family in the later half of her first year.

Every time they see me inside of [her bedroom] they always sort of say “oh, well why are you always cooped up in your room, and why are you there, you’re always, you always say that you’re doing homework but what if you’re not doing homework? What if you’re just watching things or like not help, instead of doing that you should come out here and help out or come with us we’re going somewhere” and stuff like that. I guess it’s sort of hard for them to understand how I’m learning again, like, to them.

In her [second] interview, Gloria discussed feeling like she needed to demonstrate to her parents the amount of time and work involved in college level classes. Her parents’ disbelief about the necessary time commitment involved in coursework presented a problem for Gloria. This disbelief persisted once the COVID-19 pandemic struck, although the contours of caregivers skepticism changed. Once Gloria transitioned to remote learned, her parents had the expectation that Gloria could help in the household whenever needed. They struggled to contend with Gloria’s need to be online at specific times for school. Since college course scheduling often differs from the general 9 am – 3 pm structure of high school, parents may have had a difficult time understanding students’ online course schedules, which does not factor in study time. For Gloria’s and other participant’s parents, remote learning highlighted their unfamiliarity with the system at a time when participants were also attempting to adjust.

Discussion

Latinx FGCS face several challenges that can impact their persistence through college. The role of parental and/or familial support within this context is underexplored. This study aimed to identify how Latinx FGCS conceptualize the types of support receive from their parents. It also explored whether descriptions of parental support changed over time. Analysis of Latinx FGCS narratives revealed several themes associated with various forms of support

received from parents. Latinx FGCS described parents as providing several forms of support, while simultaneously acknowledging forms of support parents cannot provide. Within the first year of college, parents provided students with emotional and instrumental support that facilitated student's ability to prioritize their schooling. The Optimal Matching Model was moderately effective in explaining the experiences of Latinx FGCS. Participants did seek and/or hoped to receive different types of support depending on the type of stress they articulated having at a particular moment in time. Within the "uncontrollable" nature of the FGCS identity, participants were able to note what supports they needed.

Participants were candid about the ways their parents could not or were not supportive throughout their first year. Lack of support was rooted in lack of understanding specific needs requested by Latinx FGCS. Participants did not seek out academic support from their parents because of parents' lack of first-hand experiences with the demands of college. This sometimes led to conflict between Latinx FGCS and parents. Interestingly, there was variation in which forms of support participants endorsed receiving and not receiving. Some participants endorsed both receiving some forms of emotional support, but not receiving other types of emotional support in the same interview. This highlights the way in which endorsement of a broad category of support may obscure the multiple facets through which it does or does not occur. This may result from the longitudinal nature of the study and the fact that at each interview time point participants were reflecting on the prior three-to-four-month period. Thus, some kinds of support remained consistent (i.e. taking out parent loans) and others fluctuated throughout the year (i.e. encouragement and understanding).

An unforeseen event like the COVID-19 pandemic had implications for participants' experiences and the study analysis. In addition to the natural developmental processes that occur

within the first year of college, COVID-19 disrupted social networks and resulted in all participants needing to learn from home. This created new conditions to understand how parental support was offered during difficult times. Participants' highlighted the challenges of e-learning and the simultaneous process of parents and participants needing to adjust and take on different roles within their families.

The findings from this study support previous literature that describes family as being a complex factor to academic persistence for Latinx FGCS (Kouyoumdiajn et al., 2017). Participants emphasized that support or lack of support from parents is not dichotomous, but rather a dynamic process. This process is influenced by parents' willingness, understanding and their ability to provide support in addition to participants' willingness to ask for receive it. Latinx cultures strongly emphasize the importance of family and it is often embedded in youth's perception of self (Saenz et al., 2018). Familial obligation or sense of duty to one's family when juxtaposed by the individualistic nature of higher education can pose conflict for Latinx FGCS (Gloria and Castellanos, 2012). This conflict can result in Latinx FGCS feeling disconnected or othered by their families. This phenomenon has been defined as family achievement guilt (Covarrubias, 2021; Moreno, 2021). Participant's discussion of lack of support from parents as a function of their inability to understand their experience in higher education, may be a part of this process. Reluctance from the part of the participants could stem from the acknowledgement that their parents and families are unaware of the intricacies of higher education. Additionally, participants desire to reconcile the discrepancy between family obligation and academic responsibilities was often not possible, wherein parents were critical about participants prioritizing school.

An alternative and robust paradigm that may be useful in understanding the experiences of Latinx FGCS is Yosso's (2005) framework of community cultural wealth (CCW). CCW draws upon critical race theory and argues culture as an asset in the academic persistence of people of color. CCW is defined as an array of knowledge, skills, and contacts possessed and used by communities of color within educational structures/systems. CCW outlines six forms of capital that people of color use in educational settings: aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant. In repositioning culture as a strength, rather than something that is a deficit higher education, it becomes easier to contextualize the experiences of Latinx FGCS in relation to supports they receive from their parents. CCW's posits that these forms of capital are dynamic and build upon one another, similar to participants' endorsement of parental support. Regardless of parents' lack of knowledge of higher education, to some considerable degree participants felt supported. By having familial capital (cultural knowledge nurtured by family), participants commitment to community well-being (e.g. bettering the lives of their family and "paying it forward") is a motivational factor for pursuing a degree. For Latinx FGCS, parents can be resources that help to navigate college. This is consistent with previous literature that suggests students who feel connected to their parents, feel a higher degree of optimism about college success (Liou et al., 2021; Rome et al., 2020).

Limitations

One of the most notable unexpected limitations to this analysis was participant ethnicity. Participants were all of Mexican and/or Central American descent, thus not representative of the wide breadth of ethnic groups and/or nationalities that are categorized under the term Latinx. The study sample included majority commuter students and while this is common for Latinx FGCS (Sorensen, 2020) it does not provide insight on the role of parental support for Latinx FGCS who

live on college campuses. It is possible that because the sample had more exposure and interactions with their parents and families, they were able to describe parental support in a specific way. The study sample was skewed toward male participants and female Latinx students may have unique experiences with parental support. Latinx households are gendered, and different expectations are placed upon daughters and sons, with daughters often being expected to provide their families with more support (Gutierrez et al., 2022).

Another limitation of this study is the variability in interviewer style. Although each participant was interviewed by one team member across all time points, there were several research team members conducting interviews. Interviewers sometimes strayed from the language provided in protocols and instead paraphrased questions. This likely led to participants being prompted differently and perhaps interpreting questions in unintended ways. Similarly, the interviewers had various identities that could have impacted participant's willingness to share their experiences.

The Optimal Matching Model also presented limitations to the analysis of findings. The chosen framework was not entirely adaptable to the experiences of Latinx FGCS. This was most notable within the reciprocal support theme as it was not able to provide explanation for why participants engage in providing parents with support while experiencing various forms of stress.

Recommendations

As critiqued by others (Yosso, 2005; Yosso et al., 2009), the current structure of higher education puts greater value on the experiences of the white middle- and upper-class students. This results in deficit-based approaches to understanding the academic and social outcomes of students of color. Institutions of higher education have historically worked from the assumption that for students of color, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status leave them "lacking"

compared to white counterparts. It is imperative that institutions learn to acknowledge and incorporate the multiple strengths that communities of color hold and carry into higher education settings. In doing so, colleges and universities can begin to implement useful policy changes that draw on cultural wealth, rather than expecting students of color to adjust their values to fit into systems not created for them.

Ensuring that Latinx FGCS and their parents can establish similar expectations for higher education is one critical step to promoting positive parental support. One recommendation is for high schools to host workshops throughout the college application process for students and their parents to attend. These workshops could address for students and parents alike, the differences they might encounter between high school and college and/or university. Additionally, college and universities can facilitate ongoing orientations for parents of FGCS. The intent such orientations would be to provide caregivers with institution specific information, as well as foster informal support groups among caregivers of FGCS. Emphasizing community could bridge the gap for caregivers who may not know how to best support their children as they navigate college.

Research on Latinx FGCS should continue to investigate the role of parents and family in degree attainment. This study's participants were all FGCS themselves, however it may be fruitful to assess the experiences of parents of Latinx FGCS and how they define the ways they are able to provide support. Future studies should also consider the role of parental support for Latinx FGCS who pursue graduate level degrees. Research on graduate level students is scarce, particularly for Latinx FGCS.

Conclusion

Latinx FGCS encounter barriers to degree attainment that are nuanced due to the interplay of these two identities. Given the collectivistic nature of Latinx groups, it is critical to

conceptualize the role parental support may play in degree attainment for Latinx FGCS. Our findings emphasize that the role of parental support is dynamic and complex. Latinx FGCS generally felt supported in a variety of ways by their parents, that allowed them to be able to prioritize their academics. Parents and students alike were cognizant and honest about the limitations to the kinds of support they could offer. Findings also highlighted the ways in which Latinx FGCS make attempts to balance their duties to their families and academics. Although the study findings describe Latinx FGCS being supported by their parents, it is imperative that institutions of learning do the same. These institutions must begin to embrace different forms of capital and offer services to students and families that can facilitate degree attainment.

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Appendix A. Participants Demographics

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Sexual Identity</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Generational Status</i>	<i>SES</i>	<i>Living Situation</i>
Esteban	Male	Heterosexual	Chicano/Mexican American	1.5	\$32,480 - \$40,840	Living with Relative/Partner
Isabel	Female	Heterosexual	Biracial (White and Mexican)	2.5	\$74,280 - \$82,640	Living with Relative/Partner
Skyler	Non-binary	Queer	Chicano/Mexican American	3	\$32,480 - \$40,840	Living with Relative/Partner
Vanessa	Female	Bisexual	Chicano/Mexican American	2.5	\$57,560 - \$65,920	Living with Relative/Partner
Gloria	Female	Heterosexual	Guatemalan	2	\$24,120 - \$32,480	Living with Parents
Marco	Male	Heterosexual	Biracial (White and Mexican)	2.5	>\$100,000	Campus Housing
Jorge	Male	Heterosexual	Chicano/Mexican American	1	< \$24,120	Off Campus Rented Housing
Pablo	Male	Heterosexual	Chicano/Mexican American	2	\$65,920 – \$74,280	Off Campus Rented Housing
Gabriel	Male	Heterosexual	Biracial (White and Mexican)	4	\$40,840 - \$49,200	Campus Housing

Note. Pseudonyms are used to protect participant identities. Generational status is defined as family immigration history. 1 indicates the participant was not born in the U.S and is a recent immigrant; 1.5 indicates participants was not born in the U.S. but immigrated before the age of 13; 2 indicates that both parents were born outside the U.S.; 2.5 indicate one parent was not born in the U.S.; 3 indicates no grandparents were born in the U.S.; 3.5 indicates two grandparents were born in the U.S; 4 indicates all grandparents were born in the U.S.

Appendix B. Baseline Interview Guide

Before we begin, I want to remind you that this conversation will be recorded for research purposes. Please let me know if you do not agree to be recorded, or would like me to stop recording any time after we begin the interview. I am going to turn on the audio recorder now.

We are talking to first-generation college students like yourself to understand your preparation for college, how you plan to solve problems at school and what support systems you think you can rely on to help get you through tough times in college.

PERSONAL TIMELINE

1. To start, I would like to know just a bit about you as a person. Can you tell me a little about who you are, about your academic journey and how you got to the point where you are an incoming student at a good university coming from your background, given that your primary caregiver(s) did not go to college?

2. Before we get into the thick of the questions, can you talk about how you made the decision to apply to college?

ACADEMIC PREPARATION & EXPECTATIONS FOR COLLEGE

Many people begin college with ideas about what school will be like, how challenging or easy coursework will be, and what relationships with professors and classmates will look like. I would like to get a sense of what you are hoping college will be like.

1. Let's start by talking about your hopes and expectations today. Can you talk a little bit about what you think your experience at [college/university] is going to be like over the next few years?

PROBE:

- What has led you to think that you will have [repeat stated expectations/hopes] at school?
 - Do you expect college to be like your high school experience?
[IF YES] In what ways?
[IF NO] Why not?
 - What are some challenges or obstacles that might get in the way of achieving [repeat expectations/hopes stated]?
2. What are some of the resources or opportunities that you think will help you achieve [repeat stated expectations]?

 3. I would like to hear about how prepared you feel for college level work at [name college/university]?

PROBE:

- [repeat stated sense of preparedness] Why do you think your preparation for college work is at this level?
- Did high school prepare you for academics at [name college/university]?

[IF YES] In what way?

[IF NO] Why not?

- Did you participate in any programs in high school that were specifically designed to get you ready academically for college (A.P. classes, Gear Up, Upward Bound)?
- Did teachers or other people at your high school talk about academic expectations in college?

[IF YES] What advice, if any, advice, or strategies have they provided to help prepare you for college level work?

4. Are there areas of concern or ways in which you do not feel prepared for college level academic work?

[IF YES] Do you think you would feel more prepared for college if you knew more about academics at [college/university]?

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT COLLEGE EXPECTATIONS & NORMS

There are some things about college that are similar to high school, like having to take tests, do projects, and balance multiple responsibilities. Other things can be new and different, for example, professors' office hours, or not having the same classmates across classes. I want to talk a little bit about your preparation and knowledge about the rules, expectations and academic culture that exist at [name college/university] and what it is like to deal with them.

1. What are some things that you expect to be the same at [name college/university] as they were in high school?
2. What types of things do you think will be different from high school?
3. When you envision life at [college/university] how do you think other students might be the same or different from you?

PROBE:

- Do you think culture and diversity of the student body at [college/university] will influence your experience?
 - How so?
- 4. Do you think your economic background will be different from most students at [college/university]?

PROBE:

- Do you think this will impact your experience at [college/university]?
- Do you think college and high school will be different in terms sense of community (e.g. level of connection/closeness between students or students and professors)?

5. How did you develop this vision of college life? [repeat main points stated in Q. 1-3]

PROBE:

- What has led you to perceive the college experience the way you described? (media / TV, social relationships, etc.)

ACADEMIC/NON-ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

Now, I would like to talk about where you go to get help in school.

1. Can you talk about any areas where you think you will need support academically in order to succeed at [name college/university]?

PROBE:

- Why do you think these are areas of concern for doing well in college?
2. Have you done research, or talked to anyone to find resources to help you improve in these areas?
[IF YES] What resources have you used or know of?
[IF NO] What might prevent you from getting help?
 3. Who do you think you would go to, or who you think you would talk to if you were struggling in a class?

[IF Person/Resource Identified] PROBE:

- Why do you think you would go to [name stated support person]?
- What kind of support would you seek them out for (someone to listen, or for material/instrumental help with problem)?

[IF No Person/Resource Identified] PROBE:

- Why don't you think you would reach out to someone like a teacher, counselor, or even a family member?
4. Do you have any siblings, cousins or other family you are close to who have attended or are attending college/university?
[IF YES] Do you think they would be a good person to talk with if you were struggling in college?
 5. [IF NOT PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED] Would you go to a classmate, friend, or other family member for support if you were struggling in a class(es)?

PROBE:

- Who?
- Why do you think you would go to [name first identified person]?
- Has this person attended college?
- What kind of support would you seek them out for (someone to listen, or for material help with problem)?

[REPEAT FOR EACH IDENTIFIED PERSON]

6. Is there anyone else who you would go to for support?
[IF NO] Why not?
7. What do you know about any other support services that are available to students like yourself at [name of college/university]?

PROBE:

- Do you think you will take advantage of those services? Why/why not?

8. Who do you think you would go to for help if you were experiencing non-academic challenges? Some examples of non-academic challenges might be financial issues like having enough money to pay for transportation, food or housing, or having a problem with a roommate.

PROBE:

- Are there any campus resources, offices, or people at [name college/university] that you think might be able to help you in this type of a situation?
- [If family not cited] Would you go to family for support with non-academic challenges?
 - Why or Why not?

Sometimes people struggle emotionally in college. A person might feel anxiety, sadness, or become depressed and that can get in the way of succeeding in school.

9. If you noticed that your mood was impacting your ability to concentrate, follow through with school commitments, or even impacting relationships with friends, family, or romantic partners, are there any resources or people who you think you could go to for help at [name school/college]?

[IF YES] PROBE:

- Can you think of any barriers to seeking help from [RESTATE NAMED PERSON/OFFICE]?
- What would have to happen for you to feel comfortable going to and opening up to [RESTATE NAMED PERSON/OFFICE]?

[IF NO] PROBE:

- Can you talk about why you would not go to anyone at [name of college/university]?
- What would need to be different in order for you to feel like you could seek help on campus?

SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS/RELATIONSHIPS

Now I would like to spend a little bit of time talking about your social expectations and relationships in college. Going off to college can be a big transition. Often times, college students have to make new friends and also have to figure out how to interact with professors, academic advisors and other people they encounter at school. This can be both exciting and challenging.

1. What do you think it will be like connecting with or making friends at [college/university]?
2. What might get in the way or make it hard to connect and make friends with other students on campus?

PROBE:

- Why do you think you might experience [restate any challenges mentioned]?
- How do you think you might handle or try to address [restate any challenges mentioned]?

Everyone has an identity or a set of identities that are really important to how they see themselves, relate to the world and how other people relate to them. This might be your gender, religion, ethnicity, race, class, dis(Ability) status, political worldview, or something entirely different. Many times, people have multiple identities that are important to them. For some people it is important to connect with other people that have similar backgrounds and experiences.

3. Can you tell me about the identities that are most important to who you are?
4. Do you think it will be important for you to connect with other students that also identify as [restate student identity(ies)] once you get to [name of college/university]?

PROBE:

- Why
- Why not?

[IF YES]

- How do you plan to connect with students who identify as [list previously stated identities] once you start at [name college/university]?

Sometimes students find support through activities or social networks on campus like, religious groups, Greek organizations, sports, clubs, service organizations, or cultural houses.

5. Can you talk about any places or spaces where you think you could connect with people who either share your identity/identities, or where you think you would be understood and respected?

I'm also curious on your thoughts about making connections and establishing relationships with people on campus who you consider to come from background(s) different from your own.

6. Are you interested in hanging out with, or trying to establish friendships with students from other backgrounds at [name college/university]?

[IF NO] Why not?

[IF YES] Why is it important for you to make connections to people at [name college/university] who identify differently than you do?

7. In general, where do you think you developed the ideas you have about what friendships and social life in college will look like? [probe for media, friends, siblings]

FAMILY SUPPORT

Family can be an important support for students in college/university. Families can provide a range of supports in college students lives, or none at all. For example, sometimes family members can help financially, but do not know how to support a student when they run into academic difficulties. Family members can sometimes also place pressure on students. In some cases, pressure is helpful, but in others, it might not be.

1. Can you tell me a little about any family support that has helped you in getting to where you are today: graduating from high school, accepted and planning to attend college?

PROBE:

- Which family members do you count on most for support?
 - Do those family members live near or far from [name of college/university]?
 -
2. Can you talk about your family's expectations for college?

PROBES:

- Do all of your family members consider college a valuable choice?
 - How do you think your family members see their role in your college experience? (social, financial, logistical?)
 - What expectations, if any, has your family expressed for your performance in college?
3. Are there ways in which you think [name family members listed before] are not able to support you in your educational pursuits?
 4. Are there members of your family you would go to for help with things like figuring out college norms, navigating social environments, or other issues you encounter in your college life?

[IF YES]

- Who?
- Why do you think you would go to [name of family member]?
- What kind of support would you seek them out for (someone to listen, or for material/instrumental help with problem)?

[IF NO] Why not?

I would like to talk about the ways in which you currently help your family and think you will continue to help your family once you begin college. Some students have to/want to help their families in different ways. For example, some students have to work to contribute to their family's household economy, sometimes students babysit or provide childcare for younger siblings, or help care for a sick or elder family member.

5. Do you currently help out your family?

[IF HELP ENDORSED] Continue to #6

[IF HELP NOT ENDORSED] Skip to Neighborhood & Safety

6. How much time per week do you dedicate to [repeat stated forms of help]?
7. Do you think you will continue to provide the same level of support/help to your family once you begin college?

[IF YES]

- What kind of impact, if any, do you think [restate forms of help & time commitment] will have on your college experience?

[IF NO] Why not?

Neighborhood & Safety

Now I would like to talk a little bit about how your neighborhood, commute and community safety might impact your college experience.

1. Are there any issues related to your neighborhood, or safety that might impact your experience at [name college/university]?

PROBE:

- Does neighborhood safety impact when you can travel in and out of your community?
- What neighborhood are you coming from?
- How do you think this will impact things like scheduling classes/activities?
- Have events in your neighborhood, or safety issues ever had an impact on your education? (concentration, interest, motivation)

2. Do you think that housing issues might have an impact on your experience at [college/university]?

PROBE:

- Do you have any concerns about having a consistent place to sleep/call home during the upcoming school year?
- Are there times when your home doesn't have basic necessities (e.g. working plumbing, heat, enough food)?
- Do you anticipate roommate issues might impact your college experience?

FINANCIAL SUPPORT/OBLIGATIONS

Finances are a big part of college. Some students have all of their expenses, tuition, room, board, books, covered through scholarships, financial aid, or family contributions. Other students have to work full time, take out loans and sometimes support family while in school. Every situation is different. I would like to talk a little bit about what your financial support and financial obligations will look like at [name college/university].

1. Did financial considerations in any way influence where you applied to college?

[For each form of aid probe about what approximate percent of tuition, room, board are covered]

2. Can you share the different types of aid that are supporting your college education?

PROBE:

- Scholarships (money that is not paid back, but that is contingent to maintaining either a GPA, athletic participation, etc.)
- Federal Grants: PELL, MAP, Direct Subsidized/unsubsidized, Perkins (Federal grants

- Federal Loans: Perkins, Direct Subsidized (Stafford), Direct Unsubsidized (administered by the federal government, interest rate lower than private loan, interest often deferred while in college).
- Private Loans: Loans that are taken out from a private lender (e.g. Bank of America, Wells Fargo, interest bearing while in school)
- Work study
- Employment other than work study
 - Taking a GAP year to save up money?
- Family financial support (probe about which family members are contributing)
- Financial support from non-family members (family friends, mentors, teachers, etc.)

3. Do you have to work to support anyone other than yourself currently?

[IF YES:]

- Who are you helping to support financially?
- How long have you been providing support?
- Can you talk about whether you think this commitment or obligation will impact your college experience? If yes, how?

PROBE:

- Do you think there will be social or academic costs, or both?
- Do you think there might be a situation where you could end up using financial aid in ways not intended (e.g. to help support family) that could have later impact?

[IF NO]

- Do you think that you might need to help provide financial support for someone else over the next academic year?
- Who?
- Why?

Apart from having enough money for tuition, books and transportation there are other important needs that can get in the way of someone being about to focus on school, like not consistently knowing where you are going to sleep at night, or not having enough food.

4. Do you currently feel secure about having a safe and consistent place to live over the upcoming school year?

[IF NO]

- Can you tell me about your concerns and anything you feel comfortable about sharing regarding your housing situation?

PROBE:

- Do you think your housing situation might affect your school experience next year?

5. What about food security? In the past few months have there been times when you didn't have enough food to eat?

[IF YES]

- Are you concerned that not having enough food will continue to be a problem once you start [name of university]?

PROBE:

- Do you know about any places you can go on campus to get help if you are struggling with not having enough to eat?
- How do you think not consistently having enough to eat will affect your school experience next year?

6. How might finances influence your integration into your new school?

CHALLENGES

Now I would like to learn about any concerns or worries you have about classes and academics at [name college/university]. It is the beginning of the year so any concerns may not be based on experiences you have had in the classroom, but you might have some concerns based on anticipated challenges

[if student discussed potential challenges in other parts of interview summarize and ask if there are any other concerns]

1. To start let's talk about anticipated challenges? What are some of the challenges you think you might confront this year?

PROBE:

- How would you handle those?
 - What about difficulty with material in a class, or struggling to get along with a professor?
2. Now I would like you to think about your expectations with professors at [college/university]. What do you imagine your relationships with professors will be like?

PROBE:

- If you needed to talk to your professor how do you think you will get in touch with them?
- Have you heard about office hours?
[IF NO] Office hours are dedicated times when college professors are available to speak with students. You typically do not have to have an appointment to go to office hours.
- Do you think you will go to office hours? When?

OTHER BARRIERS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Are there any other challenges or issues that might impact your success at [college/university] that we have not discussed?

DECISION MAKING ABOUT CHOSEN INSTITUTION

We are almost at the end of our interview. Now that we know more about you, we would like to ask some more questions around factors that could have impacted your initial choice to attend this university.

1. Why were you interested in [name of college/university]?

PROBE:

- Prestige, Specific majors, the school's reputation, location, sports teams?
 - Who provided you with counseling or guidance about how to make decisions about schools that would be a good fit?
2. When did you start to receive counseling or guidance around the process and steps involved in applying to college?

PROBE:

- Did the expense of on-campus living vs commuting, or the expense of living independently vs living with your parents, impact your decision?
3. How did your options for paying for school at [college/university] compared to other institutions impact your decision?

PROBE:

- Who provided you with counseling or guidance about the ways you might pay for college?
- Were there any schools that you didn't apply to specifically because of other concerns?

[IF YES]

- If [concern they mentioned] was not an issue, is there another school that you were accepted to that you would have preferred to attend?
- Which school would you have preferred to attend? Why?

[IF NO]

- Why is [name of college/university] your first choice?

4. Why did you ultimately decide to attend [name of college/university]?
5. Did the location of [name of college/university] play any role in your decision to attend?

[IF YES]

- How so?
 - Was the physical distance from family a factor in your decision?
6. What [other, if yes to a previous family probe] role[s] if any did your family play in you making the decision to attend [name college/university]

STRENGTHS

We are almost finished with our interview. Before we conclude, I wanted to ask some questions around your strengths as you perceive them.

1. What are your strengths in your own words?

PROBE:

- What have others said about your strengths? Like teachers, family members, or your friends?
2. What do you think it is about you as an individual that helped you get to college?
 3. Are there any wisdoms specific to being the first in your family to go to college that you think will help you succeed? What and Why?

Is there anything else we have not discussed that you think is important to understanding your experience thus far as a first-generation college student?

Appendix C. Follow-up 1 Interview Guide

Before we begin I want to remind you that this conversation will be recorded for research purposes. Please let me know if you do not agree to be recorded, or would like me to stop recording any time after we begin the interview. I am going to turn on the audio recorder now.

Again, we are talking to first-generation college students like yourself to understand your preparation for college, how you plan to solve problems at school and what support systems you think you can rely on to help get you through tough times in college.

A. Getting Caught Up

1. How are things going at [college/university]?

B. ACADEMIC PREPARATION & EXPECTATIONS FOR COLLEGE

In your first interview, before you started classes, we asked about your expectations of college course work and what you thought your relationships would be like with classmates and professors. You mentioned [summarize main points from baseline interview]. I want to spend a little bit of time discussing how those expectations compared to your actual experience at [college/university] so far.

1. Can you talk a little bit about how your time so far at [college/university] either met or didn't meet those expectations?

Probe:

- Where there any challenges or obstacles that got in the way of achieving [repeat expectations/hopes stated]?
- Did you use any university resources in order to achieve your goals at [college/university]?
- Did the expectations you had for college change/evolve over your time at [college/university]? How?

C. CHALLENGES

Last time we spoke, we talked about concerns or worries you had about classes and academics at [name college/university].

[if student discussed potential challenges in other parts of interview summarize and ask if there are any other concerns]

1. In our previous interview, you mentioned concerns regarding [remind participant of their concerns at baseline]. Have you experienced any challenges thus far?

Probe:

- How did you handle those?

D. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT COLLEGE EXPECTATIONS & NORMS

We now want to follow-up and compare experiences you've had in college with your experiences in high school.

1. Last time we spoke, you said that you expected [repeat similarities stated at baseline]. How did your experience this quarter/semester compare to these expectations?

Probe:

- What was most surprising?
 - Why?
2. Now let's talk about differences. Last time we spoke, you said that you expected [repeat differences stated at baseline] between high school and college. How did your experience this quarter/semester compare to these expectations?

Probe:

- What was most surprising?
 - Why?
3. Have any of the similarities or differences from your expectations that you've encountered impacted your academic behaviors, or decisions? [if respondent needs examples: dropping classes, choices in participating in social groups and campus activities, spending more or less time with roommates].

E. ACADEMIC/NON-ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

Now, I would like to talk about where you have gone for help in school since we last spoke.

1. During our last interview you mentioned that you might need academic help in [insert area from baseline] in order to succeed at [college/university]? Have you needed help in these areas?

Probe:

- Why do you think you have, or have not needed help in this area(s)?
- Have you done research, or talked to anyone to find resources to help you improve these areas?

[IF YES] What resources did you use, who did you talk to, or were you able to find information on the area? Were these resources helpful?

[IF NO] What prevented you from getting help?

2. Who do you think you would go to, or who did you think you could talk to if you were struggling in a class?

[IF Person/Resource Identified] Probe:

- Why did you think you could go to [name stated support person]?
- Did you end up seeking support from them?
 - [If YES] What kind of support did you seek from _____?
 - [If NO] Why not?

[IF No Person/Resource Identified] Probe:

- Why didn't you feel like you could reach out to someone like a teacher, counselor, or even a family member?
3. What has your relationships with professors been like overall in the past quarter/semester?

Probe:

- Do you feel like any of your professors could be a potential support and safe person to go to with a problem?
- If you needed to talk to your professor - how did you get in touch with them?
- Were you able to attend office hours?
 - [IF NO] When? Why/why not?

[SKIP #4 if no family members identified as having attended/attending college]

4. Last time you mentioned that you have [restate siblings, cousins or other family they mentioned] that you are close to who [have attended/are attending college/university]. Have you talked with them at all about the academic side of college since starting classes at [college/university]?

Probe:

- What advice did they give you?
 - What responses did they have to your experiences or academic challenges?
5. Did you experience any non-academic challenges? (Examples of non-academic challenges: financial issues like having enough money to pay for transportation, food or housing, or having a problem with a roommate).

[IF YES] Who did you go to for help if when experiencing non-academic challenges?

Probe:

- Looking back, is there anyone else you think you could have gone to for help with this issue(s)?

Sometimes people struggle emotionally in college. A person might experience anxiety, sadness, or even depression, which can get in the way of succeeding in school.

6. Since starting at [college/university] have you ever noticed that your mood was impacting your ability to concentrate, follow through with school commitments, or even your relationships with friends, family, or romantic partners?

[IF YES] Did you seek support?

Probe:

- From whom or what services?
- Were there any barriers to you seeking help from [RESTATE NAMED PERSON/OFFICE]?

[IF NO] Can you talk about why you did not go to anyone at [name of college/university]?

Probe: What would have to happen for you to feel comfortable going to and opening up to someone at [college/university]?

F. SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS/RELATIONSHIPS

Next I would like to spend a little bit of time talking about your social expectations and relationships in college.

1. Last time we spoke, we talked about whether you thought students at [college/university] would be similar or different from you: [summarize from baseline interview]. How has your experience with students at [college/university] compared to the expectations you had?

Probe:

- How has the culture and diversity at [college/university] influenced your experience?
- Did you notice any differences or similarities based on economic background?

2. What has it been like connecting with or making friends at [college/university]?

Probe:

- Have you experienced any challenges making friends at [college/university]?
- [IF YES]: How are you handling, or trying to address [restate any challenges mentioned]?
- What spaces have you made friends in? Were these spaces easier or more challenging than others?

3. In the last interview you stated that [Insert previous identities] were/is important identity(ies) to you. Are/Is this/these identity(ies) still very important to you?

- Has it been important for you to connect with people with these same or similar identity(ies)?
- Can you talk about connecting with students who share similar identity(ies) to you at [college/university]?

4. Have you found places or spaces where you feel you have connected with people who either share your identity/identities, or where you think you are understood and respected?

I'm also curious on your thoughts about making connections and establishing relationships with people on campus who you consider to come from background(s) different from your own.

5. Have you found yourself hanging out with or having established friendships with students from different backgrounds at [name college/university]?

[IF NO] Why not? Is this something no longer important to you (if it was important)?

[IF YES] Has their friendship been something important for you here at [name college/university]?

G. FAMILY SUPPORT

Last time we talked about the role of family in getting through college. I asked about some of the ways you thought family might be helpful and whether there were ways that family might create challenges with school.

1. When we last spoke you mentioned that your family had supported you in getting to college by [remind participant what they said in baseline]. Now that you're in college, does your family continue to provide you with similar support?

[IF YES] In what ways?

[IF NO] Why not?

2. In our first interview you also mentioned that your parents had [state parental expectations for baseline] for your college performance. Now that you have been at [college/university] for a while, do you think these expectations are realistic?

Probe:

- Why, or why not?
 - Do you think that your family's expectations influence your priorities at [college/university]?
3. Are there types of support that you are not getting from family that might be helpful in getting through college?
 4. Can you talk about any support or help that you provided to your family during the previous academic term at [college/university]?

Probe:

- How many hours per week were you dedicating to [repeat stated forms of help]?

- Do you think [repeat stated forms of help has impacted your academic success at college/university]
5. Have there been any major family events impacting your ability and/or desire to stay at [college/university]? (e.g. death, illness, deportation of a family member).

Probe:

- Did [the event] impact your ability to concentrate on your studies?
- Did [the event] impact your motivation to attend college?
- Who have you talked to for support about [this event]?

H. Neighborhood & Safety

Now I would like to talk a little bit about how your neighborhood, commute and community safety might impact your college experience.

1. Are there any issues related to your neighborhood, or safety that have impacted your experience at [name college/university]?

Probe:

- What neighborhood are you coming from?
 - How, if at all, have events in your neighborhood, or safety issues had an impact on your education? (concentration, interest, motivation)
2. Have housing issues had an impact on your experience at [college/university]?

Probe:

- Are there times when your home doesn't have basic necessities (e.g. working plumbing, heat, enough food)?
 - Have roommate issues might impact your college experience?
3. What about food security? In the past few months have there been times when you didn't have enough food to eat?

[IF YES]

- Did not having enough food have an academic or social impact this past quarter?

Probe:

- Have you gone half a day, or a day or more without a meal in the last 30 days?
- Do you receive SNAP or other assistance for food?
- Do you know about any places you can go on campus to get help if you are struggling with not having enough to eat?

I. FINANCIAL SUPPORT/OBLIGATIONS

Finances are a big part of college. Some students have all of their expenses, tuition, room, board, books, covered through scholarships, financial aid, or family contributions. Other students have to work full time, take out loans and sometimes support family while in school. Every situation is different. You mentioned [restate previous discussion in regards to your own financial situation.].

1. Did different types of aid that you expected to support your college education change since the beginning of the quarter?

[IF YES]

- Which type of aid changed?
- How?

[IF NO go to #2]

2. Do you currently work?

[IF NO]

- Did you work before enrolling in [college/university], or during the past quarter at all?
- Were you planning on working when you entered college?
- Do you plan to work in the future while attending [college/university]?

[IF YES]

- Where do you currently work
- Did your work schedule influence the classes you chose to enroll in?
- Did your class schedule cause conflict with your employer?
- If you worked prior to school starting, have you increased or decreased your work hours?
- When do you usually work? (e.g. morning shifts, graveyards, etc)?
- Have your work responsibilities taken away from time or energy you have to study? If so, how?
- Between your studies or your employment, which takes priority in your day-to-day decision making?
- Did your status as a student factor into where you applied to work with (work-study vs. off-campus)?

3. Do you have to work to support anyone other than yourself currently?

[IF YES]

- Who are you helping to support financially?
- How long have you been providing support?
- Can you talk about whether this commitment or obligation has impacted your college experience? If yes, how?
- Was this always the plan, or is this a new expectation?

Probe:

- Has having to work to support others impacted your social life?
- Has there been or do you think there might be a situation where you could end up using financial aid in ways not intended (e.g. to help support family) that could have later impact?

[IF NO]

- Do you think that you might need to help provide financial support for someone else over the next academic year?
- Who?
- Why?

4. How has your financial situation influenced your integration into your new school?

Probe:

- Has there been an academic impact?
- Has there been a social impact?

J. OTHER BARRIERS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Are there any other challenges or issues that impacted your success at [college/university] that we have not discussed?

Probe:

- Any illness, medical needs, or problems with physical health?
- Changes in eating habits?

K. DECISION MAKING ABOUT CHOSEN INSTITUTION

1. In the first interview, you said that you chose [college/university] because [restate reasons]. What do you think about the ways in which [college/university] has or has not lived up to those expectations in the past quarter/semester?

Probe:

- Would you describe [college/university] in the same way as when you decided to accept admission?

[IF YES] Why?

[IF NO] What's changed?

L. STRENGTHS

We are almost finished with our interview. Before we conclude, I wanted to ask some questions around your strengths as you perceive them.

1. In the first interview, you stated your strengths were [Restate from baseline interview]. Have you found new strengths, or increased old ones in the past quarter/semester?

2. What do you think it is about you as an individual that helped you get through the first quarter/semester?

Is there anything else we have not discussed that you think is important to understanding your experience thus far as a first-generation college student?

Appendix D. Follow-Up 2 interview Cohort 1

Before we begin I want to remind you that this conversation will be recorded for research purposes. Please let me know if you do not agree to be recorded, or would like me to stop recording any time after we begin the interview. I am going to turn on the audio recorder now.

Again, we are talking to first-generation college students like yourself to understand your preparation for college, how you plan to solve problems at school and what support systems you think you can rely on to help get you through tough times in college.

A. Getting Caught Up

1. How are things going at [college/university]?

B. ACADEMIC PREPARATION & EXPECTATIONS FOR COLLEGE

Previously, we asked about your expectations for college coursework and what you thought your relationships would be like with classmates and professors. You mentioned [summarize main points from baseline & T2 interviews]. I want to spend a little bit of time discussing how those expectations compared to your actual experience at [college/university] so far.

1. Can you talk a little bit about how your time so far at [college/university] either met or didn't meet those expectations?

Probe:

- Were there any challenges or obstacles that got in the way of achieving [repeat expectations/hopes stated]?
2. Did you use any university resources in order to achieve your goals at [college/university]?
 3. Did the expectations you had for college change/evolve over your time at [college/university]? How?

C. CHALLENGES

Last time we spoke, we talked about concerns or worries you had about classes and academics at [name college/university].

[if student discussed potential challenges in other parts of interview summarize and ask if there are any other concerns]

1. In our previous interview, you mentioned concerns regarding [remind participant of their concerns at baseline]. Have you experienced any challenges thus far?

Probe: How did you handle those?

D. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT COLLEGE EXPECTATIONS & NORMS

1. Now that you've been at college for a year can you tell me what you think the academic expectations are?
2. Has your understanding of what's expected of you in college evolved at all over the past year?

Probe:

- What was most surprising?
- Why?

E. ACADEMIC/NON-ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

Now, I would like to talk about where you have gone for help in school since we last spoke.

1. You previously mentioned that you might need academic help in [insert area from baseline] in order to succeed at [college/university]? Have you needed help in these areas?

[IF YES] What resources were you able to find? Were these resources helpful?

[IF NO] What prevented you from getting help?

2. Have you sought out academic support from anyone over the past year? Why or why not?
3. Who do you think you would go and talk to if you were struggling in a class?

[IF Person/Resource Identified] Probe:

- Why did you think you could go to [name stated support person]?
- Did you end up seeking support from them?
 - [If YES] What kind of support did you seek from _____?
 - [If NO] Why not?

[IF No Person/Resource Identified] Probe:

- Why didn't you feel like you could reach out to someone like a teacher, counselor, or even a family member?
- 4. What has your relationships with professors been like overall in the past year?

Probe:

- Do you feel like any of your professors could be a potential support and safe person to go to with a problem?
- If you needed to talk to your professor - how did you get in touch with them?
- 5. Did you experience any non-academic challenges? (Examples of non-academic challenges: financial issues like having enough money to pay for transportation, food or housing, or having a problem with a roommate).

[IF YES] Who did you go to for help if when experiencing non-academic challenges?

Probe:

- Looking back, is there anyone else you think you could have gone to for help with this issue(s)?

Sometimes people struggle emotionally in college. A person might experience anxiety, sadness, or even depression, which can get in the way of succeeding in school.

6. Since starting at [college/university] have you ever noticed that your mood was impacting your ability to concentrate, your follow through with school commitments, or even your relationships with friends, family, or romantic partners?

[IF YES] Did you seek support?

Probe:

- From whom or what services?
- Were there any barriers to you seeking help from [RESTATE NAMED PERSON/OFFICE]?

[IF NO] Can you talk about why you did not go to anyone at [name of college/university]?

Probe:

- What would have to happen for you to feel comfortable going to and opening up to someone at [college/university]?

F. SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS/RELATIONSHIPS

Next I would like to spend a little bit of time talking about your social expectations and relationships in college.

1. Last time we spoke, we talked about whether you thought students at [college/university] would be similar or different from you: [summarize from T2 interview]. How has your experience with students at [college/university] compared to the expectations you had?

Probe:

- How has the degree of culture and diversity at [college/university] influenced your experience?
- Did you notice any differences or similarities based on economic background?
- Have you noticed any social norms that you think are specific to college life?

2. What has it been like connecting with or making friends at [college/university]?

Probe:

- Have your friend group changed at all in the last year?
- [IF YES]: How are you handling, or trying to address [restate any challenges mentioned]?
- What spaces have you made friends in? Were these spaces easier or more challenging than others?

3. In the last interview you stated that [Insert previous identities] were important identities to you. Is this identity still very important to you?

- Has it been important for you to connect with people with these same or similar identities?
- Can you talk about connecting with students who share similar identities to you at [college/university]?
- 4. Have you found places or spaces where you feel you have connected with people who either share your identity/identities, or where you think you are understood and respected?

I'm also curious on your thoughts about making connections and establishing relationships with people on campus who you consider to come from background(s) different from your own.

- 5. Have you found yourself hanging out with or having established friendships with students from different backgrounds at [name college/university]? Friends might have different ethnic, racial, religious, sexual identities, or economic background from yourself.

[IF NO] Why not? Is this something no longer important to you (if it was important)?

[IF YES] Has their friendship been something important for you here at [name college/university]?

G. FAMILY SUPPORT

Last time we talked about the role of family in getting through college. I asked about some of the ways you thought family might be helpful and whether there were ways that family might create challenges with school.

- 1. When we last spoke you mentioned that your family had supported you in getting to college by [remind participant what they said in baseline]. Now that you're in college, does your family continue to provide you with similar support?

[IF YES] In what ways?

[IF NO] Why not?

- 2. In our first interview you also mentioned that your parents had [state parental expectations for baseline] for your college performance. Now that you have been at [college/university] for a while, do you think these expectations are realistic?

Probe:

- Why, or why not?
- Do you think that your family's expectations influence your priorities at [college/university]?
- 3. Are there types of support that you are not getting from family that might be helpful in getting through college?

4. Can you talk about any support or help that you provided to your family during the previous academic term at [college/university]?

Probe:

- How many hours per week were you dedicating to [repeat stated forms of help]?
 - Do you think [repeat stated forms of help has impacted your academic success at college/university]
5. Have there been any major family events impacting your ability and/or desire to stay at [college/university]? (e.g. death, illness, deportation of a family member).

Probe:

- Did [the event] impact your ability to concentrate on your studies?
- Did [the event] impact your motivation to attend college?
- Who have you talked to for support about [this event]?

H. Neighborhood & Safety

Now I would like to talk a little bit about how your neighborhood, commute and community safety might impact your college experience.

1. Are there any issues related to your neighborhood, or safety that have impacted your experience at [name college/university]?

Probe:

- What neighborhood are you coming from?
 - How, if at all, have events in your neighborhood, or safety issues had an impact on your education? (concentration, interest, motivation)
2. Have housing issues had an impact on your experience at [college/university]?

Probe:

- Are there times when your home doesn't have basic necessities (e.g. working plumbing, heat, enough food)?
 - Have roommate issues might impact your college experience?
3. What about food security? In the past few months have there been times when you didn't have enough food to eat?

[IF YES]

- Did not having enough food have an academic or social impact this past quarter?

Probe:

- Have you gone half a day, or a day or more without a meal in the last 30 days?
- Do you receive SNAP or other assistance for food?
- Do you know about any places you can go on campus to get help if you are struggling with not having enough to eat?

I. FINANCIAL SUPPORT/OBLIGATIONS

Finances are a big part of college. Some students have all of their expenses, tuition, room, board, books, covered through scholarships, financial aid, or family contributions. Other students have to work full time, take out loans and sometimes support family while in school. Every situation is different. You mentioned [restate previous discussion in regards to your own financial situation.].

1. Did different types of aid that you expected to support your college education change since the beginning of the quarter?

[IF YES]

- Which type of aid changed?
- How?

[IF NO go to #2]

2. Do you currently work?

[IF NO]

- Did you work before enrolling in [college/university], or during the past quarter at all?
- Were you planning on working when you entered college?
- Do you plan to work in the future while attending [college/university]?

[IF YES]

- Where do you currently work
- Did your work schedule influence the classes you chose to enroll in?
- Did your class schedule cause conflict with your employer?
- If you worked prior to school starting, have you increased or decreased your work hours?
- When do you usually work? (e.g. morning shifts, graveyards, etc)?
- Have your work responsibilities taken away from time or energy you have to study? If so, how?
- Between your studies or your employment, which takes priority in your day-to-day decision making?
- Did your status as a student factor into where you applied to work with (work-study vs. off-campus)?

3. Do you have to work to support anyone other than yourself currently?

[IF YES]

- Who are you helping to support financially?
- How long have you been providing support?
- Can you talk about whether this commitment or obligation has impacted your college experience? If yes, how?
- Was this always the plan, or is this a new expectation?

Probe:

- Has having to work to support others impacted your social life?

- Has there been or do you think there might be a situation where you could end up using financial aid in ways not intended (e.g. to help support family) that could have later impact?

[IF NO]

- Do you think that you might need to help provide financial support for someone else over the next academic year?
 - Who?
 - Why?
4. How has your financial situation influenced your integration into your new school?

Probe:

- Has there been an academic impact?
- Has there been a social impact?

J. OTHER BARRIERS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Are there any other challenges or issues that impacted your success at [college/university] that we have not discussed?

Probe:

- Any illness, medical needs, or problems with physical health?
- Changes in eating habits?

K. DECISION MAKING ABOUT CHOSEN INSTITUTION

1. In the first interview, you said that you chose [college/university] because [restate reasons]. What do you think about the ways in which [college/university] has or has not lived up to those expectations in the past quarter/semester?

Probe:

- Would you describe [college/university] in the same way as when you decided to accept admission?

[IF YES] Why?

[IF NO] What's changed?

L. STRENGTHS

We are almost finished with our interview. Before we conclude, I wanted to ask some questions around your strengths as you perceive them.

1. How do you think you have grown during your first year at [college/university]?

Is there anything else we have not discussed that you think is important to understanding your experience thus far as a first-generation college student?

Thank you so much for your participation and time!

Appendix E. Follow-Up Interview 2 Cohort 2

Before we begin I want to remind you that this conversation will be recorded for research purposes. Please let me know if you do not agree to be recorded, or would like me to stop recording any time after we begin the interview. I am going to turn on the audio recorder now.

Again, we are talking to first-generation college students like yourself to understand your preparation for college, how you plan to solve problems at school and what support systems you think you can rely on to help get you through tough times in college.

A. Getting Caught Up

1. How are things going at [college/university]?
2. A lot has changed since the last time we spoke. How have you been coping with changes that have taken place in school and life since we last spoke and the COVID-19 pandemic began?

B. ACADEMIC PREPARATION & EXPECTATIONS FOR COLLEGE

Previously, we asked about your expectations for college coursework and what you thought your relationships would be like with classmates and professors. You mentioned [summarize main points from baseline & T2 interviews]. I want to spend a little bit of time discussing how those expectations compared to your actual experience at [college/university] so far.

1. Can you talk a little bit about how your time so far at [college/university] either met or didn't meet those expectations?
2. Did you use any university resources in order to achieve your goals at [college/university]?
3. Did the expectations you had for college change/evolve over your time at [college/university]? How?

C. CHALLENGES

Last time we spoke, we talked about concerns or worries you had about classes and academics at [name college/university].

[if student discussed potential challenges in other parts of interview summarize and ask if there are any other concerns]

1. In our first interview, you mentioned concerns regarding [remind participant of their concerns at baseline]. Have you experienced any challenges thus far?

Probe: How did you handle those?

Probe:

- Were there any challenges or obstacles that got in the way of achieving [repeat expectations/hopes stated]?

- Probe: Are these challenges related to changes that have occurred as a result of COVID-19?

D. KNOWLEDGE ABOUT COLLEGE EXPECTATIONS & NORMS

1. Now that you've been at college for a year can you tell me what you think the academic expectations are?
2. Has your understanding of what's expected of you in college evolved at all over the past year?

Probe:

- What was most surprising?
- Why?
- How do you think that the pandemic has changed your academic expectations?
- How do you think it has changed your professors expectations of you as a student?

E. ACADEMIC/NON-ACADEMIC SUPPORTS

Now, I would like to talk about where you have gone for help in school since we last spoke.

1. You previously mentioned that you might need academic help in [insert area from baseline] in order to succeed at [college/university]? Have you needed help in these areas?
2. Have you sought out academic support from anyone over the past year? Why or why not?

[IF YES] What resources were you able to find? Were these resources helpful?

[IF NO] What prevented you from getting help?

3. Who do you think you would go and talk to if you were struggling in a class?

[IF Person/Resource Identified] Probe:

- Why do you think you could go to [name stated support person]?

[IF No Person/Resource Identified] Probe:

- Why don't you feel like you could reach out to someone like a teacher, counselor, or even a family member?
4. How would you seek academic support while classes are remote?
 5. What has your relationships with professors been like overall in the past year?

Probe:

- Do you feel like any of your professors could be a potential support and safe person to go to with a problem?
- If you needed to talk to your professor - how did you get in touch with them?
- Have relationships with professors changed at all since classes have gone online?
 - [IF YES] How so?
 - [IF NO] Why not?
- 6. Did you experience any non-academic challenges? (Examples of non-academic challenges: financial issues like having enough money to pay for transportation, food or housing, or having a problem with a roommate).

[IF YES] Who did you go to for help when experiencing non-academic challenges?

Probe:

- Were any of these challenges triggered by the pandemic?
- Looking back, is there anyone else you think you could have gone to for help with this issue(s)?

Sometimes people struggle emotionally in college. A person might experience anxiety, sadness, or even depression, which can get in the way of succeeding in school.

7. Since starting at [college/university] have you ever noticed that your mood was impacting your ability to concentrate, following through with school commitments, or even your relationships with friends, family, or romantic partners?

[IF YES] Did you seek support?

Probe:

- From whom or what services?
- Were there any barriers to you seeking help from [RESTATE NAMED PERSON/OFFICE]?

[IF NO] Can you talk about why you did not go to anyone at [name of college/university]?

Probe:

- What would have to happen for you to feel comfortable going to and opening up to someone at [college/university]?

F. SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS/RELATIONSHIPS

Next I would like to spend a little bit of time talking about your social expectations and relationships in college.

1. Have your relationships at [college university] changed since school has moved to an online format?

[IF YES] How?

[IF NO] Why do you think they haven't changed?

2. Last time we spoke, we talked about whether you thought students at [college/university] were similar or different from you: [summarize from T2 interview]. How has your experience with students at [college/university] compared to the expectations you had?

Probe:

- How has the degree of culture and diversity at [college/university] influenced your experience?
- Did you notice any differences or similarities based on economic background?
- Have you noticed any social norms that you think are specific to college life?

3. What has it been like connecting with or making friends at [college/university]?

Probe:

- Has your friend group changed at all in the last year?

- [IF YES]: How are you handling, or trying to address [restate any challenges mentioned]?
 - What spaces have you made friends in? Were these spaces easier or more challenging than others?
4. In the previous interviews you stated that [Insert previous identities] were important identities to you. Is/Are this/these identity/identities still very important to you?
 - Has it been important for you to connect with people with these same or similar identities?
 - Can you talk about connecting with students who share similar identities to you at [college/university]?
 5. Have you found places or spaces where you feel you have connected with people who either share your identity/identities, or where you think you are understood and respected?

Probe: Have these spaces/places changed at all in the wake of COVID-19?

I'm also curious on your thoughts about making connections and establishing relationships with people on campus who you consider to come from background(s) different from your own.

6. Have you found yourself hanging out with or having established friendships with students from different backgrounds at [name college/university]? Friends might have different ethnic, racial, religious, sexual identities, or economic background from yourself.

[IF NO] Why not? Is this something no longer important to you (if it was important)?

[IF YES] Has their friendship been something important for you here at [name college/university]?

G. FAMILY SUPPORT

Last time we talked about the role of family in getting through college. I asked about some of the ways you thought family might be helpful and whether there were ways that family might create challenges with school.

1. Previously you mentioned that your family had supported you in getting to college by [remind participant what they said in baseline]. Now that you're in college, does your family continue to provide you with similar support?

[IF YES] In what ways?

[IF NO] Why not?

2. In our first interview you also mentioned that your parents had [state parental expectations for baseline] for your college performance. Now that you have been at [college/university] for a while, do you think these expectations are realistic?

Probe:

- Why, or why not?
 - Do you think that your family's expectations influence your priorities at [college/university]?
3. Are there types of support that you are not getting from family that might be helpful in getting through college?
 4. Are they being supportive about school-related work during the pandemic?
 5. Sometimes students help family out (e.g. caring for younger siblings, contributing financially to the household). Can you talk about any support or help that you provided to your family during the previous academic term at [college/university]?

Probe:

- Has the level of support you are providing family changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - How many hours per week were you dedicating to [repeat stated forms of help]?
 - Do you think [repeat stated forms of help] has impacted your academic success at college/university?
6. Have there been any major family events impacting your ability and/or desire to stay at [college/university]? (e.g. death, illness, deportation of a family member).

Probe:

- Did [the event] impact your ability to concentrate on your studies?
- Did [the event] impact your motivation to attend college?
- Who have you talked to for support about [this event]?

H. Neighborhood & Safety

Now I would like to talk a little bit about how your neighborhood, commute and community safety might impact your college experience.

1. Are there any issues related to your neighborhood, or safety that have impacted your experience at [name college/university]?

Probe:

- What neighborhood are you coming from?
 - How, if at all, have events in your neighborhood, or safety issues had an impact on your education? (concentration, interest, motivation)
2. Have housing issues had an impact on your experience at [college/university]?

Probe:

- Are there times when your home doesn't have basic necessities (e.g. working plumbing, heat, enough food)?
- Have roommate issues impacted your college experience?

3. What about food security? In the past few months have there been times when you didn't have enough food to eat?

[IF YES]

- Did not having enough food have an academic or social impact this past quarter?

Probe:

- Have you gone half a day, or a day or more without a meal in the last 30 days?
 - Do you receive SNAP or other assistance for food?
 - Do you know about any places you can go on campus to get help if you are struggling with not having enough to eat?
4. What about having the sufficient resources to complete your schoolwork? Since all classes went remote, have you had everything you needed to complete your schoolwork (e.g., Wi-Fi, computer, a space where you can focus, ect)?

I. FINANCIAL SUPPORT/OBLIGATIONS

Finances are a big part of college. Some students have all of their expenses, tuition, room, board, books, covered through scholarships, financial aid, or family contributions. Other students have to work full time, take out loans and sometimes support family while in school. Every situation is different. Previously, you mentioned [restate previous discussion in regards to your own financial situation.].

1. Did different types of aid that you expected to support your college education change since the beginning of the quarter?

[IF YES]

- Which type of aid changed?
- How?

[IF NO go to #2]

2. Do you currently work?

[IF NO]

- Did you work before enrolling in [college/university], or during the past quarter at all?
- Were you planning on working when you entered college?
- Do you plan to work in the future while attending [college/university]?

[IF YES]

- Where do you currently work?
- Did your work schedule influence the classes you chose to enroll in?
- Did your class schedule cause conflict with your employer?
- Has your work status changed or been impacted by COVID-19? How?
- If you worked prior to school starting, have you increased or decreased your work hours?
- When do you usually work? (e.g. morning shifts, graveyards, etc)?
- Have your work responsibilities taken away from time or energy you have to study? If so, how?

- Between your studies or your employment, which takes priority in your day-to-day decision making?
 - Did your status as a student factor into where you applied to work with (work-study vs. off-campus)?
3. Do you have to work to support anyone other than yourself currently?

[IF YES]

- Who are you helping to support financially?
- How long have you been providing support?
- Can you talk about whether this commitment or obligation has impacted your college experience? If yes, how?
- Was this always the plan, or is this a new expectation?

Probe:

- Has having to work to support others impacted your social life?
- Has there been or do you think there might be a situation where you could end up using financial aid in ways not intended (e.g. to help support family) that could have later impact?

[IF NO]

- Do you think that you might need to help provide financial support for someone else over the next academic year?
 - Who?
 - Why?
4. How has your financial situation influenced your integration into your new school?

Probe:

- Has there been an academic impact?
- Has there been a social impact?

J. OTHER BARRIERS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Are there any other challenges or issues that impacted your success at [college/university] that we have not discussed?

Probe:

- Any illness, medical needs, or problems with physical health?
- Changes in eating habits?

K. DECISION MAKING ABOUT CHOSEN INSTITUTION

1. In the first interview, you said that you chose [college/university] because [restate reasons]. What do you think about the ways in which [college/university] has or has not lived up to those expectations in the year?

Probe:

- Would you describe [college/university] in the same way as when you decided to accept admission?

[IF YES] Why?

[IF NO] What's changed?

L. STRENGTHS

We are almost finished with our interview. Before we conclude, I wanted to ask some questions around your strengths as you perceive them.

1. How do you think you have grown during your first year at [college/university]?
2. Has your desire/motivation to continue in school changed at all in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Is there anything else we have not discussed that you think is important to understanding your experience thus far as a first-generation college student?

Thank you so much for your participation and time!