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### Publication Date

2020

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara

A Critical Race Analysis: Examining the Black College Experience at a Selective  
Public Minority-Serving Research Institution (MSRI)

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Education

by

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A Critical Race Analysis: Examining the Black College Experience at a Selective  
Public Minority-Serving Research Institution (MSRI)

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By

Jeremy Alexander Edwards

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am extremely grateful to be submitting this dissertation and must show my gratitude to those who assisted me to this point in my life. I am forever indebted to my family for providing the foundation for which I stand on today. I want to thank my parents, Aletha McDonald and Edward Maceo Edwards. I want to thank my aunts and uncles for always being available and supportive. I want to give a special thanks to my grandmother, Ella Mae McDonald. Thank you for your ancestral spirit and protecting me from above as I continue to navigate the world. I want to thank my friends and loved ones who have been integral in my journey. Your unwavering support gives me the strength to push through any and all obstacles encountered.

I would like to thank my study participants for volunteering their time and trusting me with their stories. Listening to your stories and learning from your experiences are some of the greatest joys I get from producing this work.

I would like to thank the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education for giving me the opportunity to learn and showcase my abilities. I want to give a special shout out to the Department of Black Studies and the Department of Linguistics for molding me into who I am becoming as a Black scholar. To my fellow colleagues, thank you for being present and providing such lasting memories.

I would like to thank my advisor Richard P. Durán, who supported my dissertation process from start to finish. Thank you for always challenging me and providing constructive criticism. I want to thank my committee members, Rebeca Mireles-Rios and Sharon Conley for their unwavering support throughout my graduate school journey. Words cannot express my appreciation for such a supportive committee.

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## ABSTRACT

### A Critical Race Analysis: Examining the Black College Experience at a Selective Minority-Serving Public Research Institution (MSI)

By

Jeremy Alexander Edwards

This research involved a qualitative case study (N=15) that identified several layers of concern centered around the Black college student experience using Critical Race Theory and Bridging Multiple Worlds Theory. Through two rounds of qualitative semi-structured interviews, the current study addressed the concerns of access for Black students at the UC level. This work explored the relationships between Black students and the UC system in thinking about levels of support and advocacy for Black students on recruitment, retention, and post-graduation career plans. This work also assessed the impact of diversity campaigning on student experiences. Dissertation data suggested that students felt an invested interest in the college they chose and strong belief that their school would prepare them for the future. Students relayed how they viewed their university, what they felt their university could offer them professionally, and provided suggestions for improvements on campus as it pertained to racial diversity and Black representation on campus. Interviews revealed a connection between students' early educational and career goals and their college pursuits to attaining these goals. This work provided a continuum and breadth of knowledge that allowed for a deeper understanding about Black student access to career-driven opportunity through education. This study provided Black students with a chance to be heard and reflect upon their academic and career journeys thus far. This work could lead to further application of policy and practice changes within 4-year universities across the nation as it pertains to Black enrollment and retention efforts.

*Keywords:* college decision making, student development models, academic and career pathways, student support networks, education policy, critical race theory, college access

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

According to the Fall 2017 enrollment breakdown on the University of California (UC) website, out of 216,747 UC undergraduate students enrolled, only 8,710 (~4%) of them were reported as African-American. While the number of undergraduate students differs per UC campus, most of the UCs average about a 3-4% Black student population, while UC Merced and UC Riverside are the highest at 6.5% and 6% respectively. According to the State of Higher Education for Black Californians report, the state of California is the 5<sup>th</sup> largest Black population in the United States, accounting for 2.16 million Black residents with 6% being between the traditional college ages of 18-24 (Bates & Siqueiros, 2019, p. 7). A recent article highlights that two-thirds of Black California residents between the ages of 25-64 will have attended some college, whether they complete their studies for a conferred degree or not (Gordon, 2019). These numbers are important for understanding the major impact of anti-affirmative action policies (particularly the ban of race considerations in admissions with Proposition 209) on college admissions and campus climate with the lack of Black representation. Based on the Regents Policy 4400, the UC Diversity Statement acknowledges the importance of diverse perspectives being reflected in the student body across their campuses (Regents of the University of California, 2010). Regents Policy 4400 also engages in a discussion about representation and serves the interest of the state of California in its mission to achieve diversity through equitable means (Regents of the University of California, 2010). While diversity and inclusion are championed, we must truly address what this really means given the low enrollment numbers of Black students. The



current study sought to gain additional perspective on the impact of race-neutral policies on Black student success at selective, yet diversity-seeking campuses (Fall enrollment at a glance, 2017).

According to the 2017 report on Status and Trends in Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups, the percentage of Black students entering college in 2008 to earn a Bachelor's degree within 6 years was 41%, one of the lowest amongst racial ethnic groups in the nation. Additionally, it reported that, in 2014, the median annual earnings of college-educated Black people with at least a BA degree was lower than the median annual earnings of similarly-educated people from all other racial and ethnic groups at \$46,800 (Musu-Gillette, de Brey, McFarland, Hussar, & Sonnenberg, 2017). Notably, the median annual earnings statistic is based on workers from 25 to 34 years of age. These reports also indicate that Black students are less likely to enroll in a 4-year public or nonprofit university today than 10 years ago. The instant reaction to such information might be the following: What might be discouraging Black people from entering 4-year institutions? Is it a fear of not feeling comfortable or welcomed on campus? Is it not being guaranteed employment after college? Is it the fear of accruing a large amount of loan debt? These questions delve into the discussion of campus climate and attainment, which has been explored by educators like Tyrone Howard, Shaun Harper, Walter Allen, Daniel Solorzano, and Sylvia Hurtado, to name a few, whose work will be included within the following conversation.

According to the State of Higher Education for Black Californians report, “over 16,000 (65 percent) Black high school graduates were ineligible for application to CSU and UC campuses” (Bates & Siqueiros, 2019, p. 8). This report indicated that “Black students are more likely to attend overcrowded, segregated high schools with less college preparation” (p.

9). In this context, getting admitted to a UC has evolved to be a high stakes game, such that the process heavily relies on quantitative measures such as GPA, test scores, AP courses, high school percentile rank, and school context (Contreras, 2005). The admissions process changed from accounting for race, to using comprehensive review as a way to help with the University of California (UC) admissions process, in particular. While the comprehensive review was utilized to mitigate the issue of not using race as a factor, the numbers of Black students enrolled in UCs were extremely low averaging 3% for several years following Proposition 209. Notably, the UC system did not record at least 4% of Black student enrollment until 2016-2017, an issue which must be addressed given the amount of diversity and inclusion promoted and mandated across campuses (Fall enrollment at a glance, 2017). In 2011, the holistic review was developed as a more robust system than the comprehensive review in a search for assisting with the discrepancies from prior admissions processes. The Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) program was also created to mitigate issues of low enrollment numbers for marginalized groups, such that each high school had 4% in 2001, then up to 9% in 2012, who would be guaranteed to get accepted into at least one UC campus (Contreras et al., 2016). Dual admission became another useful program geared towards rewarding promising scholars who opted to attend a community college before transferring to one of the UC campuses. This program was set to uphold the California Master Plan in affording universal access while also providing an alternate route to recruiting students without targeting race. These programs and initiatives included were implemented to compensate for race considerations in admissions, yet Black enrollment at selective colleges are still low and students are even choosing other colleges to attend given the reputation of these campuses. While these admissions and enrollment concerns have had become a

significant impact on student access, scholars have acknowledged the disconnect between changes in demographics and educational progress despite the California Master Plan and UC mission (Contreras, 2005; Contreras et al. 2016; Trent, Owens-Nicholson, Eatman, Burke, Daugherty, & Norman, 2003).

Given these developments, there must be a change in thinking about incoming college students—instead of how the student benefits from the university, we should redirect this to think what does the student bring to the university. Thus, implementing a more assets-based approach that embeds a community cultural wealth model to the admissions process might provide a level of sophistication needed to transform the current system (Yosso, 2005). Students bring capital and assets from their homes and family to other spaces, especially the university setting. Yosso (2005) argues that cultural knowledge and skills should be seen as values and assets, which is something the university should take notice of. There is a particular connection between students’ cultural knowledge and skills and students’ navigation across their world of higher education, such that an assets-based approach acknowledges the complexities of one’s identity and captures their interactions within institutional spaces (Flenbaugh, 2016; Hurtado et al., 2012; Yosso, 2005).

This study sought to develop a basis for discussing what Black student success looks like in a university setting as well as their experiences in these spaces. As these past special programs and race-conscious programs were understood to help Black enrollment and outcomes, examining the current experiences of Black students getting through college cannot be lost in the discussion. Experiences of Black college students have been documented before and after the ban of affirmative action in states like California, which help in addressing trends and building a portfolio that seeks to understand the various

systems and nuances at work during these experiences. Given this context, it was critical to understand the Black experience on various levels: (1.) understanding Black students in an institutional space, (2.) understanding how higher education institutions assist, involve and interact with Black students, and (3.) understanding how these spaces converge and what occurs during that process.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In search of exploring specified areas within higher education research, we must go back to 20<sup>th</sup> century literature. Allen's (1992) article on campus climate comparisons across university systems set groundbreaking work for research about campus climate and students' navigation through college. This study utilized quantitative methods to assess the differences in college experiences of Black students at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) versus a Historically Black College and University (HBCU). He pulled from a national study on Black colleges to assess key predictors on college outcomes amongst the two groups to expand examples of Black student college success (p. 32). While this study highlights the idea that Black student success can be improved through increased funding sources, academic preparation, and more bridge courses, this work also stresses the need to track and understand these complex relationships between students and institutions and the structural inequalities that exist. Allen (1992) suggested exploring other empirical work that accounts for the mechanisms that universities demonstrate in recruiting, retaining, and graduating Black students.

Similar to Allen's (1992) work on campus climate, Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) conducted a study that included multiple campuses, but looked specifically at the phenomenon known as racial microaggressions, to assess its occurrence, underlying racist

motives, and impact on different campuses. Again, this study was centered around the students' experiences with navigating their respective campuses, but particularly how they responded to racial slurs and racial insensitivities towards them. They utilized a qualitative study of 34 Black students, using focus groups to discuss racial campus climate across 3 campuses. This study revealed that microaggressions were happening on multiple campuses in different geographical regions. This also showed how students responded to such hostile environments and its negative impact on climate. For instance, Solorzano et al. (2000) mentioned how one of their Black female participants explained the negative impacts of stereotype threat made her feel "helpless" over time (p. 62). Another participant noted the feeling of intimidation being on a predominantly white campus, especially in classroom settings where there's only one Black person in the class (p. 69). These scholars (2000) assert that the very presence of racial microaggressions must include a discussion about the cumulative racial stereotype effects that play a huge role in the case of these participants for instance. In addition, these types of incidents make it hard for Black students to get involved or participate when they feel their speaking for the entire race or when they feel invisible (i.e., invisibility versus hyper-visibility). Low enrollment numbers can create these issues across campuses. Solorzano et al. (2000) proposed future questions that included a discussion about whether the playing field is level for Black students as they navigate through the college system and prompted a discussion about considering students' success and persistence in the face of racial discrimination as a factor in the undergraduate, professional school, and graduate admission processes (p. 72).

More recent studies have tried to make sense of the past 30 years of higher education research as it pertains to climate and assessment of campuses. This can be seen in Harper and

Hurtado's (2007) article in grappling with prior climate findings from other studies and capturing contemporary themes within climate that impacts campuses across regions. They were able to synthesize 15 years of climate literature while also assessing climate through their own interview process on campuses. They conducted a qualitative study that surveyed multiple selective public campuses to find trends that exist around climate. They utilized perspectives that involved both transparency and organizational change to guide their discussion for institutional transformation needed to assure Black student success (p. 8-9). They also utilized the results of racial conflict reflected in the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey, which was a national longitudinal study of college students in the 1980s (Hurtado, 1992). Prior work from Hurtado (1992) that looked at models for assessing campus climate revealed glaring racial conflict at large public universities, which aligned with the survey data recorded in CIRP. Given this background literature, they employed a qualitative research methods design that included 5 PWI campuses in 3 different geographical regions in the country, two campuses in rural towns and three in urban areas. This study was conducted to assess students' experiences with racial campus climate to determine whether their findings were consistent with prior work and to relay emergent themes not captured before. Multiple focus groups were administered on 278 students and an additional focus group was given to 41 staff members across the 5 campuses under study (p.15). Several themes found in their study carried over into the proposed Diverse Learning Environment model (DLE) from Hurtado, Alvarez, Guillermo-Wann, Cuellar and Arellano's work (2012). Some of these themes included institutional negligence, reputational legacies of racism, the pervasiveness of whiteness in space, curricula, and activities, and unexplored qualitative realities of race in institutional assessment. These themes confirm the need to

improve the relationships between individuals and the institutions (as well as acknowledge the various dimensions of influence that impact students' development and overall experience). Harper and Hurtado (2007) assert that these racial realities have not been addressed in a way that ignites change in access and opportunity and allows for institutions to understand the complexity of experiences amongst their Black representation. As campus climate literature grows, scholars are finding more students report themes of exclusion, institutional rhetoric rather than action, and marginality (p. 21). While these climate surveys and assessments should help guide conversation about race on campuses, there's an additional need to understand 1.) how the structural inequalities that manifest on these historically white campuses continue to persist and 2.) how to better understand these systems and find ways to transform these institutional structures.

Given this context of delving deeper into climate needs and adjustments, Hurtado et al. (2012) worked on building a new climate model that accounts for diversity dynamics within university settings. They acknowledged that prior work in developing this climate model was incomplete, lacking depth in elements that influence the climate for racial/ethnic diversity modeling. Furthermore, there was an immediate need to find a link between micro and macro level contexts that include larger sociohistorical forces, especially since less of this perspective is included in institutional level contexts where diversity shows up. In developing climate models and research, Hurtado et al. (2012) and other scholars have utilized work from legal court proceedings and decisions that support affirmative action policies and programs known as the educational benefits of diversity research. During these legal proceedings, they argued that desired educational outcomes were linked to a diverse student body. Building on evidence regarding the critical need to invest in supporting the

value of diversity (or representation on campuses) in higher education, especially for assessing institutional impact on students' experiences Hurtado et al. (2012) created a new model called the multicontextual model for diverse learning environments (DLE). They emphasized that the new model included “convergence of scholarship that emphasizes the pervasiveness of the climate, the contextual nature of the positionality of institutions (macro), the individual-level dynamics within institutions (meso), and outcomes for individuals and society (micro and macro levels)” (p. 47).

The DLE model is being utilized for further, new research supporting institutional change that explores student experiences on large public campuses not only to assess student diversity, but also to capture the relationships between individuals and institutional components that impact students' worlds and navigation across them (i.e., how climate shapes these spheres). In pursuit of examining these relationships, UC faculty members partook in a UC-wide survey collection that included 558 participants, and 74 interviews to speak about their experiences with UC admissions (Contreras, Chapman, Comeaux, Rodriguez, Martinez, & Hutson, 2016). Surveys focused on demographic profiles and college-going processes. These interviewees decided to attend school elsewhere despite getting into a UC (though not their top choice). There were five themes to arise in result to this large-scale study, which consisted of access, diversity & climate, affordability, outreach, and high school context (p. 8). Recommendations were included as well (i.e., creating funding pools, Black research collective comprised of scholars across campuses, more tenured Black faculty and senior level administrator positions, new vice chancellor role of diversity at each UC, repeal Proposition 209) to further push the conversation about access to



higher education efforts and challenge these race-neutral policies and practices that influence some of these decision-making issues.

In continuation, Contreras et al. (2016) informed the public about the increased need for a more diverse student body. Their study results indicated that a lack of Black students in the UC system limits the academic opportunities and critical connections between students and faculty across racial and cultural groups. They also stressed that Black California residents end up going to universities out of state and even choose to work elsewhere as well. They argued that, while UCs should be a primary access point into top public universities, the racial insensitivities and legacies of institutional racism are prevalent enough to prevent students from attending if admitted.

Many of these challenges are being faced currently. For instance, in 2017, the UC Santa Barbara Black Resource Committee within the Department of Student Affairs collected 364 surveys by UCSB undergraduate and graduate students who identify as Black or African-American to get a better understanding of the struggles, resource utilization, and academic experiences of the Black student community on campus. Three main themes emerged as a result to this study, in regards to what's still needed on campus. Black students reported 1.) a need for more Black representation amongst students, faculty, and staff, 2.) a need for more understanding, empathy, and recognition of the struggles and unique experiences of being Black at UCSB, and 3.) a need to address institutional racism that occurs through campus events, departments, police, and rhetoric used in classrooms and media outlets. This survey was one of the very few surveys directed towards Black students at UCSB. Other surveys that include campus-wide participation such as CIRP surveys do not focus on race considerations in students' experiences (University of California

Undergraduate Experience Survey, 2018). Even with participation in these large-scale campus-based surveys, there is still a need to delve into these student experiences on the ground level. These large-scale surveys do not capture in-depth experiences that may occur nor do they provide substantive knowledge about how things are going down in real time. This limitation to quantitative methods gives us an aggregated, abbreviated version of what might be actually taking place, which is a significant reason why interviewing Black students will provide a clearer scope of what is taking place within their experiences. This calls for more directed involvement with Black UC students, particularly UCSB.

Recent work published in the Chronicle of Higher Education, spearheaded by Shaun Harper, involves grading public universities based on their Black representation of students and faculty members (Field, 2018). These grading calculators account for enrollment, graduation rates, Black student to faculty ratios, and gender comparisons. There has been more attention towards students using climate ratings as another factor in their decision-making process to apply to and enroll to certain schools. This has become a larger issue of late. As constant challenges to admissions persist (i.e., talks to remove the SAT altogether), the movement to repeal Proposition 209 and other affirmative action bans in other states, and the lack of representation amongst students, faculty, and staff on these large selective public universities have created a significant strain on the production and capacity for universities to support students equitably (Contreras, et al., 2016). Addressing these core issues and developing healthier relationships are key. Furthermore, there is a need to humanize and/or personalize students' college experience versus allowing a disconnected non-welcoming, business-like learning environment that can be restrictive to overall student outcomes.

## **Application of Critical Race Theory**

This study utilized prior work to inform research questions about admissions practices, campus climate, and college choice that must be explored. There are considerable reasons for conducting such a study. Deriving from Yosso's (2005) and Solorzano et al.'s (2000) discussion of Critical Race Theory (CRT) frameworks, this study applied the following critical tenets for examining these issues:

- Centrality of race and racism and their intersectionality with other forms of subordination
  - Race and racism are deeply embedded within the longstanding traditional structures of American society as well as a central piece within its every day functionality. There is a level of racial permanence within the U.S. that must be accounted for in discussions about peoples' experience on American soil, especially people of color.
- Challenge to dominant ideology
  - CRT allows for resistance to white privilege and other oppressive forces that reinforce dominant group power. There is an assertive stance to rectify or challenge the positioning of objectivity, meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity, particularly in educational spheres. CRT asserts that these positions, that are seen as "forward thinking and progressive," represent a form of performance that masks the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in the U.S.
- Commitment to social justice

- CRT utilizes social justice as a way to seek transformation and liberation from oppressive forces. CRT seeks to move past levels of interest convergence (or doing things that suits someone's own self-interest or reinforce their power) and eliminate forms of discrimination and injustices against marginalized groups.
- Centrality of experiential knowledge
  - CRT allows for real-life experiences and histories of marginalized peoples to be heard and understood through methods like storytelling, family histories and biographies. These critical components help to better understand racial subordination.
- Transdisciplinary perspective
  - CRT is designed to be interdisciplinary in nature, reaching across various academic disciplines within the humanities, social sciences and other fields to critically analyze race and racism in nuanced ways.

I applied a CRT lens because race is endemic and embedded within the socio-historical fabric and identity of America. Students of color endure racialized experiences on a daily basis, especially at these historically white college campuses. Discussions of race and racism should not be avoided due to its lasting impact on student experiences and identity formation as a result. In addition, I utilized CRT in education because intersectional identities and complexities across students' converging worlds must be accounted for as scholars continue to find new ways of assessing campus climate and enrollment impacts. CRT is further being employed because we must challenge the dominant narratives and race-

neutral/colorblind rhetoric that permeates across college campuses. There is a continuous need to provide spaces for marginalized groups to voice their histories and experiences, promote student agency and transform the scope of possibilities and/or opportunities for them through liberation efforts. These matters call for contesting the social norms and realities that are based on symbolism, fabrication and conventional modes of understanding alien and unwelcoming to Black communities. These components are necessary for the advancement and transformation of the institution as we continue to highlight and address the structural inequalities that exist within accessibility and usability (and value) of higher education for people of color.

Past literature about campus climate have utilized CRT for analysis and interpretation of student experiences on PWI campuses. One recent study by Vue, Haserig, and Allen (2017) looked at both students' perspectives of race and how they deal with race in real time on their campuses. This article attempted to disrupt the existing campus racial climate amongst students that applied a colorblind ideology towards their experiences and challenge colorblind discourses to favor a more critical race approach. There was also a discussion about Black students finding a balance between confrontation and being heard. Furthermore, their main research objectives were to find out how Black students navigated talks about race and challenged dominant and/or colorblind narratives about race. The overall purpose here was to stress the importance of race-sensitive policies and promote racial literacy amongst students, faculty, and staff within higher education to help transform the university. Black populations on college campuses are becoming increasingly tired when it comes to the discussion of diversity.

The question of diversity fatigue is something that has come up, which CRT can apply to as well. The Chronicle of Higher Education posted a recent article from UC Riverside professor Mariam Lam (2018) addressing the pursuits of upholding diversity efforts on UC campuses while also expressing feeling tired of diversity campaigns being used mainly for branding purposes. Lam asserted that 1.) these diversity campaigns impact people who are most committed to diversity work, 2.) diversity has become the new multiculturalism—diluted, co-opted, 3.) diversity certification programs are mandated at 7 of the 10 UC campuses, but these efforts only are not enough, 4.) underrepresented faculty and staff are burdened with institutional pressures, and 5.) interest convergence is a critical issue when it comes to diversity work—usually made a priority for promotion, branding, or in crisis; also seen by some as philanthropic, additional service, not primary and less valued. While these assertions are made by one UC faculty member, these statements are being said by a member of one of the most racially diverse research universities, which speaks towards some of the pressing issues with diversity concerns across UC campuses in particular. Even within this context of a racial diverse environment, performance of diversity and structural inequalities are still prevalent and critical to address with the use of CRT.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

I utilized policies and practices related to college admissions to bring attention to their impact on access for Black students who seek admission into large predominantly white public institutions (PWIs). This section discusses these issues of college admissions and campus climate to provide understanding about access and key factors that students use to prepare for and “do” college. Furthermore, it presents a historical context that outlines what Black people have endured to secure an education and what they currently face. This provides a continuum and breadth of knowledge that allows for a deeper understanding about Black education.

This study explored education as a viable tool to combat the unjust nature of society and the constraints placed upon those disenfranchised. This work sought education as a way out of systematic turmoil, as well as a way of reimagining the self and sharpening one’s tools to be equipped for more opportunities. While there are many other solutions to consider, education is one that has a long-standing history of liberation for oppressed people (Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009).

This section examines discussions about the racial (and socio-economic) plight of Black people in America (from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century leading to the 21<sup>st</sup> century) while adding discussion of education as a part of this plight. Each topic provides a different discussion around the accessibility (or lack thereof) of education through policy and practices negotiated that impact race and the ability to affirm a Black cultural identity within academia. These topic areas are designed to provide additional perspective around the conversation about access in higher education. Notably, examination of these areas is not

designed to disentangle legal practices or fully delve into that body of literature, but rather create dialogue about the uses of language in both policies and practices that directly or indirectly involve race and impact student access and overall success.

### **Examining the impact of anti-affirmative action policies on Black student access and college admissions at highly selective campuses**

Though we may be able to attribute parts of the reconstruction era to the beginnings of affirmative action, in regards to an assertive effort to aid the Black population in their desire to be full participants in society, discussions about affirmative action policies in the U.S. started in the 1960s, at the point in which “affirmative steps” became a talking point for both President John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. Whether these concerns raised were earnest in nature or merely raised due to the positioning of the country at the time, we may never know. While these concerns resulted in a series of progressive laws, I would argue that the Black masses and civil rights movement were integral to these changes. This was also a time when the civil rights movement that featured grass roots organizations, sit-ins, numerous protests, and boycotts continued to put pressure on the U.S. government to acknowledge the racial injustices and inequality faced by Black people. The 1960s spawned a series of progressive laws and policies that culminated in what became known as affirmative action policies.

The historical foundation of affirmative action led with governmental actions that included the efforts of former President John F. Kennedy to create an infrastructure for historically marginalized groups in the U.S. that was sustainable, create more opportunity, and attempt to mend race relations in America through various policies and initiatives— notably, these actions came after the racial injustices, police brutality, and lack of regard for Black citizenship, humanity, and progress. A series of groundbreaking laws built the



foundation for special federal programs to be set up for historically marginalized groups (based on race and gender primarily). These laws included Executive Orders 10925 and 11246, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Higher Education Act of 1965. Former President John F. Kennedy was seeking to change the landscape in America, to truly bring democracy to the nation. His executive order involved a newly formed president's committee specifically designed for ensuring equal employment opportunity. This order introduced the emphatic idea that all citizens shall be afforded equal employment opportunities and not have to deal with any form of discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin, which directly conflicts with the constitutional principles. This order was also implemented "to scrutinize and study employment practices of the Government of the United States, and to consider and recommend additional affirmative steps" (Exec. Order 10925, 1961, Section 201). Kennedy made a verbal commitment and established this new committee for the sake of the people and those who've been disenfranchised such that hiring practices were to become free of racial bias of the federal government and governmental agencies.

Though it did not fully start until after Kennedy's death, his executive order led to the Equal Employment Opportunity segment carried out by Lyndon B. Johnson. Kennedy's address given to America on the TV airwaves (after the Alabama shooting) become integral in the changes made against discrimination such that civil rights leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. took notice. No one had spoken so direct and forthcoming as a president about racial and social issues – unfortunately, he would be assassinated 5 months later. Given the Civil Rights movement and Lyndon B. Johnson trying to live up to Kennedy's promises, the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964 and designed to protect citizens against discrimination in public facilities and education, as well as prevent discriminatory acts in

accordance to federally-assisted programs and establish equal opportunity employment as Kennedy imagined. This law not only transformed public domains, but also allowed for all citizens to participate—or at least that was the design (Civil Rights Act, 1964).

While many discussions around employment and racial equality were discussed, higher education became a stepping stone for Black people to overcome injustices and challenge the system even more. These affirmative steps Kennedy and Johnson spoke of began to infiltrate into education, as it did the employment sector. On June 4, 1965, Johnson gave a speech at Howard University about equal opportunity in education, which led to his executive order 11246 that allowed schools to account for race as a basis during admissions (Exec. Order 11246, 1965). The Higher Education Act was soon passed on November 8, 1965, as a part of Johnson’s “great society” domestic agenda (to eliminate poverty and racial injustice). This law focused on boosting education resources within colleges across the nation, as well as financial assistance. It allowed for federal money to help with student enrollment, scholarship programs, low-interest loans, and teacher corps to help with student recruitment initiate special programs (Hegji, 2014).

From Kennedy to Johnson, there arose a constant rhetoric of affirmative action towards equality and justice. I believe the sentiments and concerns raised by these two presidents were impactful (even if Black people had been voicing these frustrations for numerous years prior). What did this mean specifically for the Black populace for two white males in the highest power of the nation to advocate for “affirmative steps” needed at this particular moment in time? Opportunity through employment and education became integral parts of transforming the participation of Black people in America. While the initial affirmative appeal was targeted towards equal opportunity to employment, it became just as

important, as designated by Johnson and others, that these same actions should be targeted to education and other public and/or federal spheres. These laws became the foundation for affirmative action on a national level. On a state level, as it pertains specifically to the State of California, before the national Higher Education Act was implemented, the California legislature approved a higher education policy known as the Donahoe Higher Education Act of 1960. These decisions were also helped by the Regents and State Board of Education. The 1960 Higher Education Act included provisions known as the California Master Plan, in efforts to ensure universal access and choice (amongst other things like type of school, funding, etc.). These laws not only changed the opportunity landscapes for numerous minoritized Americans, it also made an assertive stance on the importance of race in this country (UC Educational Relations Department, 2007).

### **Early Years – Effects of Affirmative Action Policy in Education**

The beginning of affirmative action within colleges and universities ultimately helped in giving rise to a Black middle class by the 1990s. The infrastructure created for Black student enrollment at selective universities provided sustainability, opportunity, and equipped Black students with the ability to showcase their potential (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009). As a result of these early affirmative action policies, college enrollment for Black students increased, particularly at PWI campuses. Specifically, the number of Black graduates increased, Black students entering professional schools and law schools increased, and the number of Black people employed in higher level positions (as well as congress) increased. Opportunities were increasing for Black populations, which called for further progression into integrating Black people within society, whether it was through the workforce or education.

There was a low percentage of Black college students in the 1960s relative to their proportional size in the population at large. According to Bowen and Bok (1998), “in 1965, only 4.8 percent of all U.S. college students were African-American” (p. 4). Enrollment at Ivy League universities increased from 2.3% in 1967 to 6.3% in 1976 (4 percentage points); other prestigious universities increased their Black enrollment from 1.7% to 4.8% (3 percentage points); Black enrollment in medical school improved from ~2% in 1965 to 6.3% in 1975; Black enrollment in law improved from ~1% in 1965 to 4.5% in 1975 across the U.S. This growth in Black enrollment numbers, also, in part, led to the growth in number of Black professionals and Black representation in government positions (Bowen & Bok, 1998, p 7-10).

By the year of 1996, Black males accounted for 8.6% of men professionals and Black females accounted for 13.1% of women professionals, which was a significant increase from 3.8% and 6% percent in 1960, respectively (Bowen & Bok, 1998, p. 10). Black male workers accounted for 8.3% of male executives, managers, and admin and Black female workers accounted for 9.6% of females within the same positions, which was an increase from 3% and 1.8% in 1960, respectively (p. 10). From 1960 to 1990, representation in physicians, attorneys and engineers doubled and tripled. Additionally, Black representation in Congress increased from 4 to 41 members from 1965 to 1996 (Bowen & Bok, 1998, p. 10).

Affirmative action policies provided increased opportunity for Black people to gain access in spaces not seen prior. This shows the power of the government and institutions and how they can indeed mediate some of these systemic and historical issues within America centered around race. This time was not only important for establishing a Black middle class and maximizing Black opportunity, but it also sent the message that Black people can thrive

and prosper if given the chance. After these affirmative action policies were passed in the 1960s, the expectation amongst colleges and professional schools became ensuring the education of minoritized students (Bowen & Bok, 1998, p. 6). Programs were enacted into law that provided special programs to recruit minority applicants, considered race in the admissions process, and accepted qualified Black students irrespective of test scores. By the early 1970s, federal officials incorporated reports on student enrollment into the affirmative action plans they required of universities, thus seeming to not make race-conscious admissions just permissible but mandatory (Bowen & Bok, 1998, p. 8).

### **Changes in Affirmative Action Sentiment – Challenges to College Admissions**

The change in political, governmental leadership from the 1960s to the 1980s led to changes in feelings about affirmative action policies (i.e., colorblind, post-racial ideologies that fueled anti-affirmative action sentiments) such that a series of cases took place that sparked the disbanding of affirmative action policies across the nation. At the point of a growing Black middle class and successful affirmative action programs in higher education, the Supreme Court decision of California Proposition 209 sent the message that race is no longer a factor in America, merit is all that matters, and affirmative action policies does nothing but waste unnecessary dollars. Furthermore, what message does this send about an infrastructure for Black students that is designed and intended for Black student success?

Affirmative action was established, in large part, due to the high prevalence of discrimination against historically marginalized groups, yet became a sight for scrutiny with terms like “reverse” discrimination and unfair treatment to white students (Contreras, 2005; Harper et al., 2009; Trent, Owens-Nicholson, Eatman, Burke, Daugherty, & Norman, 2003). As marginalized groups began to gain access and opportunity in areas not previously seen, a

series of court cases would occur that challenged affirmative action as unfair, destructive, unjust, and breaking the equal protection clause in the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. These court cases not only showcase the disbanding of affirmative action, but also the level of difficulty of race and how difficult it is for people to grapple with the idea that race plays a huge stake in opportunity and access. These cases shed light on the uncertainty and subjectivity of race and race-related issues. There are many contradictions that tend to repeat itself in American history around race and who is afforded opportunity. Affirmative action was designed largely to support those who had been systematically oppressed, yet these court cases would jeopardize these equitable possibilities in higher education. People in opposition to such special programs were in favor of a merit-based system – the idea that just working hard will eventually lead to earning what one deserves.

In the midst of these advances in Black employment and college graduates, a series of court cases would begin to dispute the validity of special programs and race as a factor in the college admissions process as well as claim reverse discrimination and violation of equal protection rights. Therefore, these advances in enrollment, graduation, and professional careers would be undermined by these challenges against Black progress in search of finding answers as to why white applicants were being rejected. The first major court case to challenge affirmative action was *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978), which involved Allan Bakke who filed a lawsuit after a second rejection letter from the UC Davis medical school despite having better test scores than most other students. The supreme court ruled that affirmative action was still constitutional but admissions could no longer use racial quotas (Harper et al., 2009; Trent et al., 2003). Although college admissions were still able to utilize affirmative action, *Hopwood v. Texas* (1996) began to further question why

race should be considered at all during admissions. *Hopwood v. Texas* (1996) involved Cheryl Hopwood and three additional white applicants to the University of Texas law school who all got rejected admission to the program despite their high LSAT scores and GPA. Given the situation, these applicants challenged the law school admissions policies on the grounds of equal protection and the Fifth Circuit court ruling thereby ended all consideration of race in admissions to the law school (*Hopwood v. Texas*, 1996). This court decision created even more conflict as subsequent challenges to affirmative action would further disrupt the sole reason for affirmative action policies to begin with.

Years later, during *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), the supreme court overturned *Hopwood* and ruled in favor of maintaining the affirmative action policy in the Michigan law school as the court justices declared that diversity within the law program served as beneficial to the overall nature of the program. The court also stated that race did not interfere with the admissions decision since other factors were heavily weighted and no quota system was in place. Similar to *Hopwood v. Texas* (1996), Barbara Grutter, a white applicant with a high LSAT score and GPA, got rejected from the Michigan law school after being on the waitlist. As seen by prior cases, these applicants were not only challenging affirmative action policies, but also standing firm that they had earned the right to occupy one of the seats for admission (Harper et al., 2009). Again, this feeding into the idea of meritocracy has become a major issue in regards to upholding the affirmative steps approach initiated in the 1960s. While *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003) upheld affirmative action policies at the Michigan law school, the discussion about the need of affirmative action continued to persist.

Around the same time as *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), another court case, *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003), would arise that challenged the admissions process of the University of

Michigan College of Literature, Science, and Art. Two white applicants, Jennifer Gratz and Patrick Hammacher, were denied admission to the college and they challenged their rejection on the ground of equal protection in the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Given the prior court cases around affirmative action, the supreme court ruled that applicants could not be awarded points solely based on race, but race could be used as a plus factor or for individualized evaluation of an applicant (Harper et al., 2009, p. 402).

One of the more recent court cases centered around affirmative action was *Fisher v. University of Texas* (2013), which involved Abigail Fisher and Rachel Michelewicz, two white applicants who felt strongly that they were denied admission to UT-Austin due to the university's consideration of race as part of its holistic-review process, which disadvantaged her and other white students in violation of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment equal protection clause. The Fifth Circuit court ruled that the race-conscious admission program was seen as lawful and the policy was in place to benefit university diversity standards while race-neutrality would not provide the same benefit (*Fisher v. University of Texas*, 2013). In 2016, this case was challenged for a second time and reached the Supreme court where they upheld the ruling of the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit that the undergraduate admission program was lawful and constitutional (*Fisher v. University of Texas*, 2016). These changes in law and changes in court opinion on race had effects on its impact to admissions practices in its recruitment of Black students and how schools were able to enroll and support students. Many of these changes in laws culminated with the passing of Proposition 209 in 1996, the ban of Affirmative Action in the state of California. This law transformed the admissions process a great deal given that the policy thereby prohibited "state, local governments, districts, public universities, colleges, and schools, and other governmental instrumentalities



from discriminating against or giving preferential treatment to any individual or group in public employment, public education, or public contracting on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin” (Proposition 209, 1996, Section 31).

### **Strategies Moving Forward – Effects of Proposition 209**

These cases eventually led to a series of affirmative action bans, as mentioned prior, which changed the landscape for admitting and supporting Black students under this ruling (Hurtado, & Alvarado, 2015). These anti-affirmative action laws forced the institution to change how they recruit and outreach to Black prospective students. The admissions process changed from accounting for race, to using comprehensive review as a way to help with the UC admissions process, in particular. While the comprehensive review was utilized to mitigate the issue of not using race as a factor, the numbers of Black students enrolled in UCs were extremely low averaging 3% for several years following Proposition 209. Notably, the UC system did not record at least 4% of Black student enrollment until 2016-2017, which must be addressed given the amount of diversity and inclusion promoted and mandated across campuses (Fall enrollment at a glance, 2017). In 2011, the holistic review was developed as a more robust system than the comprehensive review in search for assisting with the discrepancies from prior admissions processes. The Eligibility in the Local Context (ELC) program was also created to mitigate issues of low enrollment numbers for marginalized groups, such that each high school had 4% in 2001 then up to 9% in 2012 would be guaranteed to get accepted into at least one UC campus (Contreras et al., 2016). Dual admission became another useful program geared towards rewarding promising scholars who opted to attend a community college before transferring to one of the UC campuses. This program was set to uphold the California Master Plan in affording universal

access while also providing an alternate route to recruiting students without targeting race. These programs and initiatives included were implemented to compensate for these bans, yet Black enrollment at selective colleges are still low and students are even choosing other colleges to attend given the reputation of these campuses. As the next topic explores campus climate and student experiences on these selective campuses, we must continue to address the issues surrounding Proposition 209 effects on admissions and climate.

### **Assessing key factors in Black student success at selective campuses in a race-neutral era**

According to 2010 U.S. Census Data, there are over 42 million Blacks in the United States, double the number of Black people from the 1960s, one of the most critical times in this country on the lines of race relations and socio-economic opportunity. This was especially true in the realm of education as educators, activists, and some policymakers tried to increase the number of Black people represented at PWIs and resources geared towards students of color enrolled on these campuses (Rooks, 2006; Stewart, 2015). While this critical time in the 1960s had approximately 22 million Black people, now with a doubling of the Black population, these issues still persist today, particularly when it comes to increasing representation at PWIs and providing an opportunity for Black students to enter college through preparation and additional resources.

These issues did not start overnight. A series of policies and empty promises have strung together to create these sets of issues. From the beginning of American slavery to the mistreatment and subjugation of Black bodies during enslavement to the gruesome Jim Crow era to the mass incarceration epidemic, the racial plight of Black people in the United States has been well documented. While issues centered around race continue to persist, the role of race in public policy and educational practices has become drastically diminished. Cases

such as *Hopwood vs. University of Texas* (1996), *Bakke vs. Regents of the University of California* (1978), constitutional provisions of Proposition 209 in CA (1996) inform the public that discussion of race within the realm of educational opportunities should not coincide, but rather one's merit (or hard work) should be prioritized (Trent et al., 2003). This line of thinking, of course, disregards and threatens to override the assistance of groups historically denied access and opportunities on the basis of race. This race-neutral mindset downplays the accumulation of racial and legal discriminatory acts particularly against Black people, which hinders the gradual change in education post-Brown decision. This puts more of a strain on the college outreach programs, many created during the 1960s and 1970s that utilized race and socio-economic status as a basis for participants, because the pressure is on them to prepare students as much as possible for college while also keeping in mind they may experience resistance with admissions due to the racial exclusion at these historically white institutions (Trent et al., 2003). Instances of this can be seen in conversation between admissions officers and outreach coordinators in regards to campus support for incoming students and lack of Black representation seen in faculty, staff, and students which could prevent students' interest in attending these highly selective colleges.

### **Locating Black Student Success on Selective Campuses**

Campus climate concerns for Black students at PWI campuses have been a widely-discussed topic within the last few decades, in efforts to build a sustainable infrastructure that allows for continued Black student success in the face of anti-affirmative action practices and policies (Allen, 1992; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Contreras, 2005; Contreras et al., 2016; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Solorzano & Villalpando, 1998).

This dissertation is concerned with highly selective PWI campuses with a very strict admissions criterion, primarily based upon academic index). Notably, there is a low percentage of applicants that actually get accepted to select campuses, and usually even lower numbers of Black students that get accepted (Bowen & Bok, 1998). Also, as a basis, I utilized the Association of American Universities (AAU) criterion for selective research institutions as a way to indicate selective campuses, UC Santa Barbara (UCSB) being one of them amongst other UC campuses and campuses across the nation (The Association of American University, 1900). Student success will be discussed quite often in this dissertation. For the sake of this work, student success is defined as students who are attending a 4-year university to better their futures and life chances through increased opportunity, increased level of income to provide for themselves and their family, and optimized potential. By this definition, student success is also attached to students with strong future aspirations and goals as well as being equipped with the navigational skills to obtain such goals (Hurtado et al. 2012; Perna, 2015).

While there are a number of ways to examine climate issues, we are concerned with racial campus climate, which involves the surveying of racial environment on campus. As mentioned by Solorzano et al.'s (2000) work on Black students experiencing microaggressions, racial campus climate becomes a crucial component of assessing factors such as "college access, persistence, graduation, and transfer to and through graduate and professional school" (p. 62). In Solorzano et al.'s (2000) work, they discussed four key elements to a positive racial campus climate, which includes the inclusion of the Black student body on campus (staff and faculty included), culturally-relevant curriculum embedded within the academic disciplines on campus to acknowledge the historical and

current experiences of folks of color, programs that assist students of color in recruitment, retention, graduation efforts, and a university mission that emphasize their commitment to racial diversity (p. 62). In addition to these four elements, there must be cohesion amongst the institution and individuals to create and maintain these structures for Black students in particular. As I continue with the discussion about campus climate and student experiences, these terms will be utilized in addressing issues, looking at different models, and finding solutions or potential ways to look at adjustments within university settings.

### **Black Students' College Experiences & Socio-Academic Positioning on PWI Campuses**

Even before the affirmative action ban in the state of California (and subsequent bans in other states), Black student integration into these historically white institutional spaces have been of concern (Contreras, 2005; Harper et al 2009; Trent et al, 2003). It has been well documented that the Black experience on PWI campuses have been difficult to overcome. Reflecting back to the 1960s climate at UCSB, for instance, Black students were excluded in many ways from curriculum, campus resources, activities, and much more. This occurred during a time when integration was promoted and newly implemented, but little was changed about the campus culture. Black students were merely implanted into a homogenous white education system that preached universal access under the written expectations of the California Master Plan provisions, yet the racial realities of Black students were clearly contradictory to the campus promotion of universal access. Murad Rahman, UCSB Black student activist in 1968, mentioned how Black students had to deal with issues of racism on and off campus, as well as come to an understanding about Black cultural identity as a whole with questions like, “who were we? How were we? How were we going to identity

ourselves?” (Pigeon, Rahman, George, & Cotton, 2015, p. 26). In 1968, in the events leading up to the UCSB North Hall Takeover protest, given the racial insensitivity, ignorance, lack of respect and regard for Black students as well as a lack of representation amongst students, faculty, and Black curriculum, there was a push for developing a critical consciousness that would seek to challenge and correct the problems faced on campus. This was a direct attack to the white male-dominated identity of the campus that demanded a change of campus culture and transformed the reality scripted for Black students in favor of justice and equal opportunity. The expression of Blackness was not in the scope or purview of PWI campuses, which prompted students to take action and force those in power to actively listen to these Black student needs. This opened access in a way that had not been seen before (i.e., these 1968 protests birthed the Black Studies Department). Through direct action, the Black student voice provided a language that even those who “didn’t speak it” were forced to listen and understand, which directly challenged the power structure in place. In looking ahead, there must be a mechanism created that holds the institution accountable for incidents on campus, for ensuring cultural competencies on campuses, and for upholding the policies implemented to ensure equitable treatment.

This discussion of experience is paralleled with new policies and practices that promote universal access and integration, especially in the 1960s. As affirmative action policies became integrated into some of the major schools around the country (for a limited time), it is important to highlight Black student experiences within this timeline of new policies, especially challenges with affirmative action (Harper et al., 2009). This notion that Black students can be implanted into an educational system whose culture is Eurocentric, male-dominated with little room for growth and everything works out is a terrible model and

a very naïve approach to higher education. Accounting for student experiences is important not only to hear their voices in what adjustment(s) must be made, but also to better understand the impact of campus climate on their experiences. I think also there is a need to highlight access to higher education at selective campuses, but also to establish and maintain support systems on these campuses once enrolled. Notably, these experiences look very different depending on school demographic. For instance, schools with a majority Black population are faced with different issues than majority white campuses.

It is important to note the difference in experiences for Black students at different types of colleges and universities to best understand what exactly needs to be addressed about institutional culture and/or climate and its relational components. Black student experiences at a PWI campus versus a Historically Black college/university (HBCU) campus, for instance, looks very different in terms of the support embedded, and the social/academic expectations that feed into one's psyche, revealing a particular interplay between the individual and the institutional setting (Allen, 1992). While Walter Allen's (1992) study was conducted in the late 1980s with participants at Michigan universities and participants at HBCUs and the study was quantitative in nature consisting of questionnaires rather than interviewing, this study began to lay the ground work for discussions around campus climate and its impact on Black students depending on the type of institution. Now, these discussions of Black students have been complicated even more with the increase in non-Black students enrolling into HBCUs (Jones, 2018). There is a constant need to reset and readjust how support looks like for students, especially with ever-changing demographics.

Past researchers have looked at Black student achievement in different college settings, finding that Black students attending Black colleges tend to have positive self-

images of themselves and a strong sense of racial pride, which suggests a more positive psychosocial adjustment than Black students attending PWI campuses (Allen, 1992). A climate study by Harper & Hurtado (2007) indicated that at the five PWIs understudy, Black students expressed the highest degree of dissatisfaction with their social environment in comparison to Latino, Asian, and white student groups (p. 17). Some Black students who attend PWI campuses have already accepted that they will encounter instances of racism during their college experience, even before stepping foot on the campus due to these “reputational legacies for racism” that are known and talked about amongst students. These types of reputations can have serious impact on Black students’ sense of racial pride in comparison to predominantly Black colleges.

This adjustment at PWI campuses can also become key for Black students in mediating any academic difficulties. If not, these difficulties (or lack of support) can become much more burdensome given the absence of tutorial programs and a limited interaction and overall support from faculty and peers (Allen, 1992). Allen’s (1992) study noted that for those Black students that eventually do well at PWIs, they end up making the necessary adjustments whether it calls for them to establish social relationships with white students and faculty, adjust to the differences in Black and white cultural competencies, and deal with the heightened college academic rigor and expectations (p. 29).

While students across groups experience issues with adjustment, Black students experience this in unique ways given the social, academic, and economic strain (i.e., Black students feeling a need to create their own socio-cultural networks as a coping mechanism to counter or act against feelings of exclusion from the larger Eurocentric-based university community). Furthermore, these experiences with adjustment highlight a larger set of issues



centered on isolation, alienation, and lack of support that are experienced by Black students (Perry, Steele, & Hilliard, 2003).

In addition, Allen (1992) emphasized that there are both social (i.e., extensive network of friends, numerous social outlets, supportive relationships) and psychological aspects (i.e., boost in confidence and self-esteem, feelings of comfort and belonging, sense of empowerment and ownership) paramount for optimal social-psychological adjustment and ultimately maximizing the chance of Black student success on any campus (p. 40). While these results stemmed from research conducted in the 1980s and 1990s, more current studies have continued to build upon prior work in an effort to expand the discourses around campus climate concerns, which include work on the realities of race on PWI campuses, discussions of persistence and adjustment with incoming Black college students, and conversations centered around this ‘culture of poverty’ that highlights the structural and institutional barriers that impact Black student success (Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Harper, Smith, & Davis, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2017). As we continue to move forward in these discussions, there must also be acknowledgement of how societal and political events can have serious impact on climate and student experience and their adjustment as well.

In looking at these campus climate discussions from past to present, scholars have argued that the fit for Black students are not as favorable on these PWI campuses given the climate and expectations set forth that collides with psychological adjustments, academics gains, and cultural awareness and commitment. This can be echoed in conversations that intersect with race, gender, and class as the discussion of ‘fit’ must be addressed. Furthermore, the interest convergence of campus officials and mandated policies that champion diversity, inclusion, and integration yet have concerns about whether Black

students 'fit' must be addressed as well (Allen, 1992; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Contreras et al., 2016).

### **Addressing 'Fit' Concerns: Assessing Campus Climate**

#### **Pre-Affirmative Action Ban**

As we keep in mind the earlier years of assessing campus climate, there is a need to acknowledge the influential factors that play into immediate surrounding social contexts. One could assert that the lack of Black student representation on these selective campuses is in result to affirmative action bans and other restrictions on the access to programs catered towards Black students and their success. These restrictions could play a significant factor in how Black students interact and engage with their surrounding social context at school. Additionally, in order to better understand climate and influential components embedded within campus cultural climate, there needs to be a sustainable infrastructure across campuses that create and promote a bridge between "individual predispositions" and "institutional setting or context" (Allen, 1992, p. 39). These points that Allen (1992) brought up are crucial because "actors or agents in a certain setting can either facilitate or frustrate the academic achievement of Black students" (p. 40). This has become the issue in many circumstances. At any given time, an individual experience can occur that is unwanted or "bad" and no one is there to help, support, or resolve the situation in a way that is culturally understanding or practical. One must tackle a system of hurdles just to get their voice heard, and by that point, the individual does not want to relive that experience. Consequently, the individual tends to dismiss it, which can become mentally damaging for a period of time during their college experience, and possibly beyond college. These real experiences warrant

real solutions and real change. Working under rigid systems to deal with real problems simply does not mix.

Given these campus climate concerns even prior to the ban of affirmative action in the state of California, we must critically explore the world of a historically white institutional (HWI) space and the world of Black students, who enter these historically white educational spaces, in understanding how these converging worlds are being negotiated. Common themes have appeared around campus climate issues that have become quite prevalent over the past 30 years, which gives cause to pause and really take a moment to look at what is transpiring (Allen, 1992; Contreras et al., 2016; Cooper, Cooper, Azmitia, Chavira, & Gullat, 2002; Harper & Hurtado, 2007; Solorzano et al., 2000).

### **More than Just a Critique: Assessing Campus Climate**

#### **Post-Affirmative Action Ban**

As we look more into current concerns about campus climate and look for ways to provide practical and real-life solutions, scholars have recently looked into students' understanding of race and experiences with race conscious policy and anti-affirmative action discourses as a way to assess what effects the students may feel as a result to these policies and its rhetoric (Vue, Haslerig, & Allen, 2017). In looking at these experiences, conversations have included faculty and staff in their connection and/or interaction with students to make sense of these experiences that take place on campus.

Faculty have reflected about their interactions with Black students relaying how they felt on selective PWI campuses. In McGill's (2015) article from *The Atlantic*, in response to a question on Black representation and campus racial climate and schools being very selective in their app process, Dr. Howard stated, "When you already have an issue around inclusion...these incidents of late heighten that perception and confirm that perception. It

gives some students of color some pause—do I really want to go to a place that, at least from the optics, suggest they're not inclusive?" Again, this issue of fit comes up here as students do not feel comfortable academically and socially at these selective campuses. Students have been verbal in their disappointment in admission practices, their feelings of not being well supported, and even enrolling in another college in some cases (Contreras et al., 2016). In a recent report from the University of California Office of the President (UCOP), a student said, "The UC System needs to make Black students feel like they are genuinely wanted...They should feel like the UCs want them to apply" (Contreras et al., 2016, p. 5). Another student from the same UCOP report said, "In my opinion, the primary reason Black students don't go to UCs is due to the perceived lack of diversity" (p. 6). This happened before any affirmative action bans going back to the 1960s, and it is continuing to happen now as these reports indicate.

Scholars have developed a list of themes that have been expressed by students (and staff) at PWI campuses across the nation. Several stand out in particular, regarding the constant struggle and/or disconnect between institutional support and student needs, which posits what Harper & Hurtado (2007) termed as "common racial realities" across PWIs. In addition to these common racial realities, these scholars have utilized the concept of institutional negligence that occurs in the higher educational processes to highlight the instances of students feeling invisible or not supported in a way that is sustainable (p. 16). They found that one of the major themes highlighted across selective campuses (and verbalized by both students and staff) was the idea that race was deliberately unacknowledged, which points to this estranged racial relationship happening between individuals and institutions that reflect larger societal negligence. As a result of such racial

realities, some students decide to go elsewhere. Even when students get admitted to some of these colleges, they end up going elsewhere due to the perception of exclusivity and alienation. Students want to attend where they feel most supported (Contreras et al., 2016). At this rate, the issue becomes a matter of entering a college on false pretenses or false notions of support. There must be a more direct discussion about how there is a concerted effort to promote inclusion and diversity, yet the climate that exist reinforces a history of exclusion at the institutional level. Additional student info from the UCOP report mentioned, “I want to go somewhere where I’m gonna be happy, where I know I fit ‘cause then I can perform and I’d be more impassioned about what I do while I’m on campus” (p. 8). And lastly, a student said, “Don’t ask me to tell you what I can offer [a UC]. Give me the opportunity to show you” (p. 7). It is imperative to utilize the information provided by students as an additional basis for understanding how to best serve the entire student population.

Another key element to highlight from the recent climate study from Harper & Hurtado (2007) is the common theme of there being an “isolation of ethnic cultures to a single center, office, or academic major,” (p. 18) a student says. Outside of multicultural centers, students found it difficult to locate other spaces on campus that allowed them to feel a sense of shared cultural ownership (Harper & Hurtado, 2007, p. 18). These higher education scholars (2007) articulated this notion that the pervasiveness of whiteness in space, curriculum, and activities are highly prevalent at these historically white institutions such that spaces on campus are grossly segregated. This creates even more feelings of discomfort outside of these “cultural hubs.” As we continue the discussion about fit, we must assess how

Black students are being supported within these higher education systems, particularly at highly selective PWI campuses.

### **Searching for a Resolution: Current Climate Discussions and Suggestions of What Need to Happen**

We must adjust the transparency in regards to racial realities in learning environments at PWIs such that there is room for institutional transformation, which must be explicitly articulated (Harper & Hurtado, 2007, p. 19-20). Essentially, the key here is to conduct studies that address concerns at the institutional levels where diversity dynamics play out (Hurtado et al., 2012). Additionally, the emphasis of study on individuals within institutions of higher education are important to understand because they are often “shaped by broader social contexts and have social agency to affect change” (Hurtado et al., 2012, p. 41). We must continue to examine how students’ worlds play a role in the understanding of this relationship between the institution and the individual. Delving into the subsequent section, we must assess whether it is a matter of prioritizing space for students to be individuals or to maintain a level of objectivity and colorblindness despite individual differences and circumstances. These college experiences are not as linear as we may think, so how does the institution provide that level of support consistently, sustainably, and equitably to each student, especially Black students who already experience issues of isolation and invisibility given their limited enrollment numbers at these selective campuses (Redford & Hoyer, 2017).

### **Using BMW and CRT frameworks to assess the impact of anti-affirmative action policies and colorblind rhetoric on college admissions and campus climate efforts**

This section utilized both Bridging Multiple Worlds (BMW) Theory and Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Education as a fundamental basis for discussion of worlds that affect Black student experiences both directly and indirectly within the university space. This section addressed the impact of anti-affirmative action policies on admission policies and its effects on campus climate at highly selective institutions. I examined the relationships between the university as an institution and Black college students as the individuals in efforts to capture the complexities within these entities and interactions (i.e., use of rhetoric and language), and how students are able to successfully navigate the world of a historically white institution with the use of their own cultural knowledge and experiences.

Many education researchers find the continued struggle for racial and social equity to be quite alarming, especially given the attention directed to policies that seek to prevent large structural inequalities embedded within higher education (Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009). In W. E. B. Du Bois's (1903) *The Souls of Black Folk*, he mentioned being asked on occasion by white counterparts, "how does it feel to be a problem?" (p. 1). As he reflected on being Black in America at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he went on to speak about how Black people are "born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, –a world which yields [them] no true self-consciousness, but only lets [them] see [them]selves through the revelation of the other world" (p. 2). Given this context, one's Black cultural identity is then forcibly rooted within an African-less world that blames Black people for their conditions and discredits the Black masses for wanting to have a voice and speak their truths. The proponents of CRT contest this very notion of invisibility and showcase how Black college students have been able to push back and counter these problematic institutional systems and spaces. Frameworks such as CRT and community cultural wealth models, for instance,

challenge these deficit mindsets in search of real understanding of issues and an application of assets-based approaches. As it pertains to rhetoric performed in these spheres, language used by Black people has been criticized while language used against Black people has been championed and prioritized. Society has consistently maintained the masking of racial problems through language, which is another form of access and power.

In a piece from Baldwin (1979), he said, “people evolve a language in order to describe and thus control their circumstances, and in order not to be submerged by a reality that they cannot articulate” (para. 2). Thus, if Black people constantly exist within a reality out of their control (i.e., socially, politically, economically), this complicates the discussion of race, access, and education. Baldwin (1979) articulated how language is used as a “political instrument and proof of power” and is the “most vivid and crucial key to identity” (para. 4). How, then, is language used to maintain power and control while making it seem like everyone is afforded the same privileges and rights? How does this apply to decision making at highly selective colleges, for instance? One could argue that Kennedy and Johnson initiated the affirmative action policies and civil rights laws to maintain power and control—to show contrition/empathy but also meet their bottom line as a dominant public figure in society. This also feeds into the concept of interest-convergence, which CRT captures as well (Harper et al., 2009). Language is used as a critical key to identify the nation, which presents considerable complications in “who” gets afforded “what” opportunities. We must be critical of the rhetoric and social dynamics at play and what’s being used as Baldwin articulated above.

Remnants of this 20<sup>th</sup> century discussion about racialized identities and the impact of Jim Crow segregation on the psyche of Black people across the country still looms today.



There is a constant attack on the legitimacy of Black experiences and Black lives in the United States as seen through the numerous cases of police brutality, housing and job discrimination, health care injustices, and food insecurity. Particularly, as it pertains to education, the marginalization of schooling practices has permeated American life and has also created a sense of permanent subordination and disenfranchisement for numerous poorly resourced, underserved Black communities across the nation (Ladson-Billings, 2006; Ladson-Billing & Tate, 1995). We must re-invent and re-create these false portrayals through the use of asset-based approaches, such that we get the experiences faced in different contexts as well as how Black students are able to navigate these spaces using their own cultural knowledge and tools to then succeed. How does this allow us to expand the discourse on self-concept and identity as it shifts across worlds? We must then acknowledge both the past experiences and current, in efforts to build a continuum as Angela Davis mentioned in her 1970s lectures on liberation (Davis, 2010).

In Angela Davis's lecture on liberation in the early 1970s, she asserted that there is a need to "establish a continuum from the past to the present, to discover the genesis of problems that continue to exist today, to discover how [our] ancestors dealt with them" (Davis, 2010, p. 65). It is important to highlight and record the histories and experiences of Black Americans as a way to recreate and reimagine what identities are being forged and how education can play an important role in shaping these identities. Even further, the pursuit of a postsecondary education for Black people holds significant value, as it allows them to create many pathways for themselves, build a wealth of knowledge and social networks, and achieve a level of social and economic mobility that every American ought to be afforded (i.e., opportunities for better jobs, housing, healthcare etc.). I argue that it has become critical

to challenge the discourse about the perception of Black bodies as inadequate, unintelligible, disposable, and inherently violent in efforts to dismantle the ongoing racialization of Black people and present a more complex, embodied understanding of Black people and their experiences, void of essentialism and simplification. Within challenging this discourse, there is room to improve how these areas are discussed within a higher education context as well. For instance, for Black students entering the higher education world, transforming the discourse of Black participation in these institutional spaces would strengthen their experiences, influence their feelings about campus climate, and present a more welcoming learning environment (Hurtado et al., 2012).

In further challenging the discourse of the racialization of Black people in U. S. institutional spaces, Black linguist Arthur Spears (1999) articulated in his article on race and ideology about the endemic nature of racism and its constituents. He argued that the social hierarchies and power structures that exist maintain dominance through systemic instances of racism couched in a language suitable for those in power. He emphasized the need to study language as a way to capture how these structures are set, what verbiage is used, and how these exclusionary practices exist through use of language. He suggested three main areas to study about language that seek out an understanding about the conditions set for Black people. The study of language is placated on 1.) the political and economic factors involved, 2.) how language attitudes are representative of attitudes about people, and 3.) the understanding that language is not just a tool but a resource (p. 44). Thus, Spears (1999) stressed the study of language to discover the discourses to which they are linked, and amplify those discourses that can be used in search of liberation.

Black culture is rich and should not be co-opted by white colonial structures or those who ascribe to the notion that everything white is pure and everything Black is deficient (Morgan, 2002). As Arthur Spears (1999) noted in his work on race and ideology, we must resign from whiteness in order to join the rest of humanity. Thus, transforming the centuries-old systems we have come to know as truth is critical for transformation in education and society as a whole. The empowerment of voice, as noted by Orlando Taylor (2014) in his discussion on Black rhetoric, relates to discussions of student access and agency as they attempt to navigate across their worlds, particular the world of higher education.

### **The Application of BMW and CRT in Education Towards Understanding Racialized Experiences on Highly Selective Campuses**

The Bridging Multiple Worlds (BMW) theory has been commonly used to capture students' navigation across various contexts, especially for assessing the academic pipeline (Cooper et al., 2002). Initially proposed by educational anthropologists Phelan, Davidson, and Yu (1991), and now adapted to address the lives and needs of students from diverse backgrounds, this research has addressed students' worlds in terms of culture, language, and other identity constructions based on the social worlds of students and community members. BMW research has evolved to include college outreach programs as a key world to investigate as its interaction with other worlds in supporting students' access to college and persistence in college. This theory looks at how youth forge identities for themselves that coordinates their worlds—and established relationships—and emphasizes how institutions can enhance or impede developmental pathways. This theory becomes integral to examining the issues of access for Black students, and is a useful way to see how they are able to navigate across worlds while also providing commentary for college eligibility, enrollment, and retention efforts. This also sets the groundwork for a discussion on how students support

themselves through this navigation process, while incorporating cultural elements that affirm their Black identity. Previous work that utilized a BMW model has looked at the experience of African American youth in regards to resources provided and challenges faced in their worlds of college preparation (Cooper et al., 2002; Cooper & Jackson, 2014; Cooper, 1999).

In addition to BMW, proponents of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in education becomes integral in foregrounding and understanding the racialized experiences of young Black students. In particular, this work highly explores two of the five tenets of CRT; including 2.) challenging these historically white male-dominated spaces and debunking educational institutions that claim to practice (and advocate for) “objectivity, meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality and equal opportunity” and 4.) providing a basis of understanding that the experiences of populations of color are humanizing; and legitimizing the knowledge and experiences of populations of color are critical in understanding their racialized histories (Yosso, 2005, p. 73). An additional tenet of CRT captured by Harper et al. (2009) refers to interest-convergence, which is the idea that Black people are able to advance only when white interests are soothed, to reinforce the white power structure—racial advances are encouraged and promoted (i.e., civil rights policy, affirmative action cases, etc.). Scholars have argued that white people have benefitted from civil rights legislation more than any other group, even though these laws were said to improve the lives and participation of Black populations, and other marginalized groups (Harper et al., 2009; Lynn, Yosso, Solórzano, & Parker, 2002).

In looking at the racial and systemic issues since the 1960s, as more Black students began entering predominantly white college campuses across the nation, to now, we must account for the institutional racism embedded within society that reinvents itself every few

years. As scholar James Anderson (1993) stated in his discussion on race, meritocracy, and the American academy, institutional racism has changed forms from overt discrimination against ethnic minorities on a level of race, color, or religion, to more subtle forms of discrimination that are associated with interpretation of level of merit, privilege, class, and include other forms of discriminatory practices and prejudice that may mask racism. These subtle forms of discrimination embed this post-racial ideology that diminishes race through the use of language (i.e., straddling the fence; saying something offensive but saying “oh I didn’t mean it like that”) (Bonilla-Silva, 2002). While utilizing multicultural paradigms as a framework for understanding higher education access may be a popular (or tempting) choice, there are drawbacks. In and of themselves these frameworks do not offer radical change, and indeed at worst they may permit and maintain the hegemonic rule of the oppressor while still trying to keep a commitment to justice. As Gloria Ladson-Billings and William Tate (1995) rightfully articulated, we must “reject a paradigm that attempts to be everything to everyone and consequently become nothing for anyone, allowing the status quo to prevail” (p. 62). Given the salient nature of race, CRT in Education develops three propositions: 1.) Race continues to be significant in the U.S. 2.) U.S. society is based on property rights rather than human rights and 3.) The intersection of race and property creates an analytical tool for understanding inequity. Thus, CRT in Education provides a comprehensive analysis that complements how students navigate across their worlds and forge these identities for themselves (Solórzano, & Yosso, 2002; Solórzano, & Yosso, 2001).

This interaction and merging of worlds between individuals and institutions must be explained through tenets of Critical Race Theory. In the name of transformative education, CRT must be employed to undo the shackles, to interpret and critique these racial realities

experienced at historically white institutional spaces, especially in this racial-neutral era. In order to build an infrastructure within the institution that caters and supports Black students, there must be a conversation about what is wrong, what can be changed, what needs to be changed, and what steps must be made to transform the institutional culture as suggested by earlier discussions centered around admissions access and campus climate (whether it's 5% or 1%, students need to be supported on multiple levels. Everyone is not the same; it is not one rubric for all). There needs to be a further discussion about the allure and mask of “diversity” and preaching of inclusion, when students feel otherwise. We must get rid of the performance piece and actually practice what is being preached. And, not just some quick change, but really getting into deep pervasive changes (Taylor, Gillborn, & Ladson-Billings, 2009).

As we discuss institutional changes, we must acknowledge past ideologies that are forward and direct: As Kwame Ture and Charles Hamilton (1967) articulate in *Black Power*, there is a call to action for Blacks in the U.S. to “unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community” such that Blacks can determine and define their own goals, and lead their own organizations, while rejecting the racist institutions and values within society (p. 44). That is paramount to creating successful preparation. To say, “Yes you can do it! You are capable of anything!” and not use white people as the standard for intellectual capacity nor use them as markers for what do provides a level of empowerment that is infectious and critical for education transformation. White as the standard fits within a deficit framework that depends on the white colonial power structure for Blacks to thrive, which is a disservice to the Black populace striving for change (Morgan, 2002).

This discussion ultimately contributes to devising a strategy for dealing with institutions and individuals, such that institutions are maintained yet individuals are still humanized and able to function within a system without getting burned out or excluded. There needs to be more discussion in this particular area, especially as we continue to see changes in demographics nationally and locally in schools.

### **Policy Effects on Admissions and Campus Climate**

While this dissertation has engaged in conversations about policy effects on admissions broadly, there has been considerable need to examine the admissions process for the University of California (UC) system especially with the changing profiles in admitted students. The UC system champions diversity and equity, yet admissions practices have been solely based on an academic index, mainly comprised of past high school performance, GPA, and test scores. Prior studies have explored these admission practices using quantitative and qualitative methods, most frequently using logistic regression to assess likelihood of admission (Contreras, 2005; Bowen & Bok, 1998). A large proponent of admissions historically is this concept of merit. If a student performs exceptionally in school, has a high GPA, and scores exceptionally high on entrance exams, then there is a level of entitlement or insurance that they will get accepted. This created significant issues as 1.) the academic index does not capture the entire applicant and 2.) applicants begin to think “someone took their spot and didn’t deserve or earn it” and hold a vendetta against the school which results in court cases (as seen with the numerous affirmative action cases discussed in the second paper). As Contreras (2005) mentioned, the “social construction of merit within UC system is largely defined by the Master Plan for higher education and UC board of regents” (p. 373). Affirmative action became one of the first avenues to even the playing field and to prioritize

more than just academic index. One of the rationales here is that Black students can have the highest scores and still not get accepted on levels higher than their white counterparts, so academic index simply is not enough. Affirmative action was a way to mitigate some of the disparities in educational opportunity.

### **If not Affirmative Action, Then What?**

A huge argument within affirmative action is drawing this distinction between searching for an equality of results orientation versus of opportunity orientation. Striving for a results orientation pertains to those in favor of remedying past discrimination and looking for a method of reparations essentially. Striving for an opportunity orientation pertains to those in favor of achieving parity—to say that everyone should have an equal opportunity to get accepted to a UC and achieve success (Trent et al., 2003). While an opportunity orientation has its benefits, it does not account for marginalized groups who have been historically discriminated against. But, rather, it allows everyone to be on an equal playing field even though each individual comes from a different context or different set of circumstances. Critics that argue against affirmative action tend to have this opportunity orientation, which also include a merit-based system by which students expect to and/or are entitled to admission to a top university of their choice given their hard work.

Additionally, the opportunity orientation opens the gate to a colorblind mindset, generally mentioned by those opposed to affirmative action. Scholars have even noted how these critics ironically quote Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s saying that people should be judged by the “content of their character, not the color of their skin” (Trent et al., 2003, p. 2). Using a quote from Dr. King who is emphatically protesting against the racial discrimination and injustice in the U.S. in order to promote this idea that the U.S. is past race or no longer



sees color is completely misguided and uninformed. The absence of race-based policy in higher education, thereby, disrupts the opportunity landscapes, such that all are included but only some benefit. Affirmative action critics have popularized the idea of “victimization hypothesis” to argue that race is no longer a major factor and is only used to pretend that there are scarce resources and opportunities. These critics have stated that poverty and class now shape inequality (Trent et al., 2003).

Given the context of BMW and CRT model application, the following issues must be addressed to build a sustainability infrastructure for Black students and other historically minoritized groups:

1. Capital-based modeling that employs the use of interest-convergence has proven to be detrimental to the progression of the Black populace. One could argue that former presidents Kennedy and Johnson hijacked affirmative action efforts and civil liberties for the sake of the country, not for Black interests. Further, if the promotion of universal access, diversity, and inclusion lies within this interest-convergence frame, then there must be some form of recourse to assess these inconsistencies between rhetoric and action and create a system that debunks these modes of surface level, dehumanized support in favor of authentic, humanized support independent of one’s own stock or personal gain.
2. Admissions practices are simply moving targets given the increased in competitiveness and the minimum criteria for eligibility. While adjustments to the UC admissions, for instance, have been implemented with changes like Eligibility of Local Context (ELC) program, comprehensive review, and holistic review, the system continues to lack parity in the production of newly admitted UC students. This

can be in large part due to the emphasis on the academic index and limited concern for context, but there's still room for improvement. Scholars have suggested the increase in the ELC program to 12.5% as well as including an equity indicator within admissions, which would be a tremendous change to the current system (Contreras et al., 2016).

3. There must be a change in thinking about incoming college students—instead of how the student benefits from the university, we should redirect this to think what does the student bring to the university. Thus, implementing a more assets-based approach that embeds a community cultural wealth model to the admissions process might provide a level of sophistication needed to transform the current system (Yosso, 2005).

Students bring capital and assets from their homes and family to other spaces, especially the university setting. Yosso (2005) argues that cultural knowledge and skills should be seen as values and assets, which is something the university should take notice of. There is a particular connection between students' cultural knowledge and skills and students' navigation across their world of higher education, such that it acknowledges the complexities of one's identity and captures their interactions within institutional spaces (Yosso, 2005; Flenbaugh, 2016; Hurtado et al., 2012).

## **Chapter 3**

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

#### **Overview**

This study stemmed from furthering the investigation from past studies that center Black student experiences. This study sought to find more information about the Black undergraduate student experience in large public research universities, particularly those in the UC system. This investigation aimed to highlight and critique the levels of support and advocacy for Black students regarding recruitment, retention and post-graduation career plans. It aimed to assess the relationships between Black students and the university space. Learning about these different contexts provided grounds for better understanding students' career development, identity, cultural background, and socio-spatial relations on and off campus that could support Black higher education success.

#### **Purpose of Study**

As it pertains to campus relations, this study brought forth a much-needed conversation about the importance of campus impacts on student development and opportunity. The work called forth a discussion about how the university integrates Black students into campus spaces and what Black students bring to the university. The work supported critical, constructive conversations about how the university could be held accountable for situations that might create or incite a hostile environment for Black students and propose tangible solutions. As a result, this study also sought to understand more about Black student experiences at Minority-Serving Institutions (MSI), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI), and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISI). This study helped think about the importance of education for

future career goals and endeavors. Education is impactful in forging identities, reimagining ones' possibilities, and empowering student voices to become what they want. The pursuit of higher education holds value for Black students in ways that 1.) allows them to create pathways through individual and collective action, 2.) build wealth of knowledge supporting social networks, and 3.) achieving a level of social and economic mobility that every American/human ought to be afforded (i.e., opportunities for better jobs, housing, healthcare, etc.).

The question became, “what is the university preparing students for exactly and how do students perceive this preparation with their aspiration goals in mind?” This study allowed a further examination of student experiences and the complexities that exist within them to better understand these relationships and how students are navigating college despite challenges. As the literature above suggested, we explored the racial realities (and overall quality of life) of Black students' experiences along their academic pathways to success. This study could lead to further application of policy and practice changes.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship between Black students and UCSB? How do Black students perceive their support on campus? What impact does this support have on their overall development along their academic and career pathways?
2. What are Black student views about the promotion and sustainability of diversity and inclusion at UCSB? What impacts do these views have on their own experiences?
3. How do Black students utilize their own cultural practices and tools within their experiences as a form of self-support and agency?

### **Research Questions Explained**

Research question 1 stemmed from past climate literature that involved racial and social impacts to students' college navigation and levels of engagement and adjustment to

campus life. This question was derived from scholars like Walter Allen, Shaun Harper, Daniel Solorzano, Frances Contreras, and Tara Yosso.

Research question 2 stemmed from discussions of MSI and HSI-designated universities and exploring the recent literature and conversations around diversity and inclusion in higher education (Marin, 2019). This question sought to get a better understanding about how students viewed these diversity and inclusion efforts and whether they saw any changes in campus support as a result. This came from past and current literature on climate, diversity, access, and equity conversations.

Research question 3 stemmed from discussions of empowering student voice and providing students a sense of agency that allows them to embed their own practices to support their goals. This question came out of conversations about transformative education through scholars like Tara Yosso, Sylvia Hurtado, and Angela Davis. Identity was a significant piece of students' experiences as they worked through their different life stages in college. This question was centered around understanding how students display agency, understand themselves, amplify voice, and embed their own culture and tools to achieve their goals.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Methodology**

#### **Methods Overview**

This study was developed using a qualitative ethnographic case study model to explore critical questions about Black student experiences at a 4-year public research university. A semi-structured, open-ended interviewing style was employed to give students freedom to speak on their college journeys. Both in-person and phone interviews were conducted. Students were asked to complete a brief questionnaire with demographic information and school background. The researcher was in contact with participants for several months as they were involved in two rounds of interviews. Almost all participants remained in the second round of interviews.

In July 2019, the researcher contacted departments, programs, and organizations (and individual members) on campus to disseminate information about the study. A majority of participants received notification from a staff member from a major cultural center on campus, where they had a list of Black-identifying students enrolled on their roster. As the study flyer indicated, students contacted the researcher directly via email to express their interest in participating in the study. After an initial screening process, selected students were invited for an interview in a research lab on campus. Notably, interviews were initiated in the summer of 2019, so some participants were not in the general area (the research conducted a phone interview in this case). All interviews were audio-recorded. The researcher took brief notes during each interview as major themes or concepts emerged. The first round of interviews lasted for about 1 hour, while the second round of interviews lasted for about 20 minutes on average. Second round of interviews were aimed at confirming observations with

the first round of interviews as a form of triangulation and member checking. All interviews were transcribed and coded. A thematic content analysis was employed to explore core consistencies and major findings across groups. Each student case was individually introduced with a general synopsis interpreted from the data. This initial case analysis was followed up with exploring themes across case groups for each interview. Further details about the methods are explained below.

### **Positionality Statement**

As a Black-identifying person who grew up in southern California, attended a UC for both undergraduate and graduate school, participated in organizations and programs, and developed a campus network that supported my own academic and career journey throughout school, I understood the challenges that Black students might face within the UC system in terms of access, support and opportunity. However, being removed from the UC undergraduate experience and acknowledging the changes in experience that might occur over the years in terms of support and need, I wanted to seek out the understanding of current Black undergraduate students in the UC system. I understood that situations arise in college that might derail or alter ones' experiences whether it be changing majors, connecting with faculty and staff, joining organizations or programs, and being involved on campus. This study allowed me to understand the perspective of Black undergraduate students and consider how their campus experiences could inform transformative change for future students. My position also acknowledged that although I am a Black-identifying person who grew up in southern California and attended a UC for undergraduate and graduate school, Black college experiences are complex and non-monolithic with a variety of circumstances.

## **Study Design**

A qualitative case study was conducted that identified several layers of concern centered around the Black college student experience. In particular, this case study addressed the concerns of access and retention among Black students at UC Santa Barbara, a top public research university and member of the Association of American Universities (AAU) which is comprised of a selective group of leading research-based institutions. UCSB was utilized in this study as a form of convenience sampling based on geographic proximity and for reason being that the campus is considered a Minority Serving Institution (MSI) which consists of both Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution (AANAPISI) designations. As recent as Fall 2019, UCSB received 93,442 completed applications, admitting 27,719 undergraduate students at a rate of 29.7% for UCSB admissions (Regents of the University of California, 2019). In Fall 2019, enrollment for incoming undergraduate students was 7,062 with 268 of them being Black-identifying students. According to University of California Office of the President (UCOP), UCSB had 966 total Black undergraduate students to enter the 2019-2020 academic school year (Fall enrollment at a glance, 2019). Given the selective nature of UCSB and their championing of diversity, the researcher utilized this UC campus as the major institution that participants encountered in their college experiences. Study participants represented each case. The unit of analysis was the individual case and involved analysis of participants' experiences within their college navigation and the capturing of these experiences. Each case (or individual) was bounded by their experiences within the amount of years enrolled at UCSB (notably, these experiences included both on and off campus contexts depending on questions and responses). Again, each case was situated within the years of enrollment at the



school as the context (Arthur, Warning, Coe & Hedges, 2012). This design was applied to address the ‘how’ and ‘why’ research questions and explain the nuances of the Black college experience (Yin, 2003). A case study design helped to analyze data and observe what was happening from a series of different schemes whether it entailed longitudinal data from the UCOP website or qualitative interviews to achieve in-depth understandings of cases. The use of multiple methods and sources (or pulling from multiple sources) helped to triangulate the data and confirm any emergent results and helped with further insights and future research steps (Arthur et al., 2012). Though there were limitations in generalizing this case study to larger populations, the data represented and understood within a particular context of the Black college experience in a specific university setting still revealed invaluable results.

### Study Population and Sampling

Table 1

*Participants in the Study*

Name	Gender	Age	Year (Rising)	Major	Hometown	Expected Graduation Date	Data Collected
Tara	Female	20	Junior - 3rd year	Art	Los Angeles	June 2021	questionnaire, two in-person interviews
Kalin	Male	21	Senior - 4th year	Communication	Vallejo	September 2020	questionnaire, two in-person interviews
Larry	Male	21	Senior - 4th year	Communication / Professional Writing Minor	Lancaster	June 2020	questionnaire, in-person interview
Lanita	Female	21	Senior - 4th year	Language, Culture, Society	Spring Valley	June 2020	questionnaire, two in-person interviews
Lauren	Female	19	Sophomore - 2nd year	Biology	Elk Grove	June 2022	questionnaire, phone interview, in-person interview
Briana	Female	19	Junior - 3rd year	Sociology	San Diego	June 2021	questionnaire, two in-person interviews

Connor	Male	21	Senior - 4th year	Political Science	Venice	June 2020	questionnaire, two in-person interviews
Jordan	Male	21	Senior - 4th year	Economics, Technical Management Program	Long Beach	June 2020	questionnaire, two in-person interviews
Carly	Female	18	Sophomore - 2nd year	Economics and Accounting	Fontana	2022	questionnaire, two in-person interviews
Sam	Male	21	Senior - 4th year	History	Lynwood	June 2020	questionnaire, two in-person interviews
Alicia	Female	19	Sophomore - 2nd year	Political Science	Fontana	June 2022	questionnaire, phone interview, in-person interview
Zion	Male	19	Junior - 3rd year	Sociology, Spanish	Northridge	June 2021	questionnaire, two in-person interviews
Dana	Female	20	Junior - 3rd year	Environmental Studies	Los Angeles	June 2021	questionnaire, two in-person interviews
Elizabeth	Female	19	Junior - 3rd year	Psychological Brain Sciences and Sociology	Los Angeles	June 2021	questionnaire, two in-person interviews
Antonio	Male	19	Sophomore - 2nd year	Economics	Carson	June 2022	questionnaire, two in-person interviews

Participants consisted of fifteen Black-identifying undergraduate students at UCSB who grew up and attended schools in California and decided to attend a four-year institution straight from high school. The study accounted for gender and year in school. The study consisted of 8 female and 7 male participants for a total of 15 altogether. The study included 4 sophomores, 5 juniors, and 6 seniors. Notably, participants started this study as rising sophomores, rising juniors, and rising seniors. Participation ended during the first two months of their sophomore, junior, and senior year. Participants were from various parts of California, both northern and southern regions. The initial screening selection was based on Black students who completed at least 1 full year (3 quarters) and no more than 3 full years (9 quarters). The year level was based on amount of quarters fulfilled, not credits. Students who were just finishing up their third full year were still eligible to participate. Participants' experiences provided a breadth of knowledge that captured real-life on-the-ground experiences that Black students encounter through their journey.

## **Data Collection Methods and Instrumentation**

This study employed purposive sampling given the nature of a case study design and the pursuits of in-depth analysis on the complexity of Black student experiences (Gray, 2014). Qualitative semi-structured, open-ended, interviews were administered to 15 study participants given the differences in perspectives that may occur during interviews to allow for asking follow-up questions if needed (Brenner, 2006). The first round of interviews consisted of all 15 participants. Each first round of interviews lasted for 56.58 minutes on average, with a minimum interview of 42.14 minutes and a maximum interview of 75.21 minutes. First round of interviews accounted for a total of 14 hours 24.34 minutes of audio data. After the first round of interviews were completed, participants were invited to a second interview to confirm the summary of analysis (member checking) and triangulate the data. Notably, one participant from the first round of interviews did not participate in the second round of interviews. Therefore, the second round of interviews consisted of 14 participants. Each second round of interview lasted for 15.17 minutes on average, with a minimum interview of 7.11 minutes and a maximum interview of 25.34 minutes. Second round of interviews accounted for a total of 3 hours 33.58 minutes of audio data. In total, the researcher collected 17 hours 48.32 minutes of interview data from this study. Both round of interviews took place in a secured environment with audio recording. Purposive sampling, by way of mass emailing to campus departments and flyering, was used to recruit participants to this study given the need to select Black-identifying students on campus. This method was useful for the sake of time and maximizing the ways of finding participants for the study.

Participants were asked to read and sign the informed consent form to confirm participation in the study and confirm their understanding of their involvement. Prior to

interviews, students were asked to complete a questionnaire that involved demographics information and school-related content. More specifically, participants were asked to include their name, email, year, major, hometown, high school, and their expected graduation date (see Appendix A). The researcher based the location of where they grew up upon the high school attended. Participants were asked whether they switched majors or desired to switch majors in the future as well.

The protocol for the first round of interviews focused on students' connection to school and their decision-making process that led them to pursue a college degree. The first protocol was broken up into 4 sections: early schooling and educational aspirations, college-decision making and journey to UCSB, campus experiences once enrolled and arrived to UCSB, and student perspective on diversity and inclusion efforts on campus. The purpose of the first interview was to explore the relationships between Black students and UCSB in thinking about levels of support and advocacy for Black students on recruitment (i.e., why students wanted to attend UCSB), retention (i.e., quality of life at UCSB, climate issues, academic demands), and post-graduation career plans (i.e., preliminary thoughts about where students are going). This interview was also assessed the impact of diversity campaigning on student experiences. The first interview had 42 questions with the possibly of clarifying questions asked throughout as well (see Appendix B). The protocol for the second round of interviews checked on responses given during the first interview and expanded further on these responses, while focusing more on the academic component and those impacts on experience. A total of 13 questions were asked during the second interview, with possible follow-up or clarifying questions asked, with an open-ended approach (see Appendix C).

The researcher applied Cooper, Mena, Chavira, Mikolyski, Syed, and Cooper's (2006) Bridging Multiple Worlds (BMW) Toolkit to develop the protocol for the first round of interviews (see Appendix D). The two major components addressed within the interview protocol were themed around youth identity pathways to college and careers and cultural brokers involved with bridging resources and challenges across worlds. According to these two components, youth identity pathways to college and careers will included questions about 1.) students' aspirations and expectations for their education and careers and 2.) students' career identity exploration and commitment; while cultural brokers involved with bridging resources and challenges across worlds included questions about 1.) what students' worlds are and how they are connected, 2.) expectations in each world, and 3.) challenges and resources for students' educational and career goals (p. 2). The first interview protocol also took into account Hurtado et al.'s (2012) multicontextual model for diverse learning environment to best represent students' experiences in contact with institutional forces, socio-historical contexts, and organizational structures. The second interview protocol called upon results from the first interview to develop questions and ask further questions to assist in answering the proposed research questions and triangulation methods (connecting the data).

### **Data Analysis Methods**

For interview transcription and coding, the researcher utilized Microsoft Word and qualitative software programming for interview transcription and coding. The audio-recognition software called Otter was used to listen back and transcribe both rounds of interviews. This software allowed for a more robust transcribing experience and the ability to create text files and time stamp them for coding. Transcriptions were analyzed and coded

using pre-codes (a priori) and emergent codes that led to a thematic analysis about participants' experiences. Thematic content analysis was used to sift through data and capture possibly core consistencies and meaningful pieces of information that might serve well in answering the proposed research questions (Patton, 2002). A codebook was used for each interview coding process for a total of two. The codebook for the first interview had 17 pre-codes with 130 emergent codes (see Appendix E). Each coding document kept note of how many codes were being utilized and its frequency for each segment of data. Pre-codes were developed based on the interview questions and each pre-code aligned with the interview questions. Some codes mapped several interview questions onto it, which is indicated in the coding and analysis documents. A codebook was also developed for the second interview with 7 pre-codes and 107 emergent codes, following the same protocol as with the first interview (see Appendix F).

Interview data and any other subsequent identifiable information was kept confidential and secured in a password-locked folder where only the principal investigator could access. This study had no unforeseen risks as participants were not asked any disturbing or highly sensitive questions. Participants benefitted from this study as they were able to identify different parts of their college journey as it pertained to their academic and career paths and school support systems. They were also able to locate their progress within college thus far and reflect upon how to attain their goals and think of their relationship with UCSB as an MSRI. Benefits to this study far outweighed any risks attached to the study. Additionally, participants received a \$25 Amazon electronic gift card as compensation for volunteering their time the first round and \$15 cash for the second round of interviews. Dissertation grant funds were utilized to pay study costs accrued.

This case study work, as Paris and Winn (2014) articulated, aligned with the retelling and re-presentation of stories and experiences in nonlinear ways. Utilizing qualitative open-ended interviews allowed the researcher and Black-identifying students (as community participants) to engage in dialogue that shifted the role of the researcher to become an active listener, learner, advocate, and participant (p. 22). As a result, there was a particular co-creation and co-authorship that took place grounded in dialogical conversation and critical listening.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Results**

#### **Overview**

This chapter responded to each research question. It laid out each individual participant case based upon their interviews to provide an overview about their background and perspective. These responses helped shape a greater understanding of Black student experiences and led to a larger discussion about different themes and key points from the study to expand upon. The chapter first provided a general narrative of each participant from their perspective (Part I), followed by a discussion about each subsection of the results (Part II), and ended with an analysis of thematic connections to frameworks and recommendations for the university to consider (Part III).

#### **Part I**

##### **Early Schooling and Educational Aspirations**

###### **Tara's Narrative**

Tara, a 20-year old rising sophomore, grew up in several different places in the greater Los Angeles area. She viewed the different areas lived as character shaping and even contradictory based on expectations in school versus at home. For instance, she expressed the following:

I would describe the environments as really character shaping and like also, like contradictory. So I felt like that was a lot of times pretty confusing, because I would grow up thinking certain things were normal, and then go to different schools and think that other things were like, also normal by the same time like that negated the, what I thought was normal before so it's interesting. (Tara, first in-person interview, 0:26, July 29, 2019)



She recalled some of her earlier schooling experiences as nurturing, particularly in elementary school with her 60+ year old white female teacher. She felt a special connection with her elementary teacher, distinct from other students. This was her first time feeling close to a teacher. This teacher allowed her to be seen and do whatever she wanted with her time which included art, writing, and more. As a child, her mom put her in extra-curricular activities for math and writing. Tara characterized herself as a 'lazy' student but was always ahead of other students due to Kuman. She often socialized with her peers during her early schooling years. She stopped Kuman once she arrived to high school and started sports, which then increased her competitiveness with peers. Since she did not see herself as one of the rich students at her high school, she felt she needed to be competitive through sports and academics. She did not see the point of college but did not want to be the person who went to a community college. In result, she took college preparation seriously to be happy at high school graduation.

Initially, she was not sure about college, but never felt that education ended at high school. Instead, she felt she needed to go to college to deal with the world. She thought about college even more when she lost her soccer scholarship due to a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). It became more about going to college for personal growth rather than going for her parents' check-off list. School became more serious as a high school freshman. She was no longer going through the motions. At that time, she thought about getting a Bachelor's of Fine Arts (BFA) and thus proceeded with taking Advanced Placement (AP) courses and getting more involved with school.

She had both parental and peer influences. Her family messaging was "go to college because you're going to need that in the future." Her stepdad would often say "college is

power and you can move through the world the way you want instead of waiting for system to give you something.” He would continue with saying “go to college to learn how they think, whoever controls the system, mainly white men.” Her friend, in particular, held shocking, disheartening viewpoints to where her friend felt stuck, and never had a choice but to stay on the same path. Her friend realized the privilege of being in college without really wanting to be there. Tara was mindful of her purpose, yet influenced by her childhood experiences with a lot of wealthy kids. Tara characterized herself as stubborn, ambivalent, and creative, which remained the same when on campus.

Tara’s thoughts on education were centered around it being academic inquiry and even sometimes indoctrinating someone and it being a chore. She defined education as power because you can choose to see the world through so many perspectives. It teaches you how to articulate yourself, and learn to appreciate speaking as a source of power. She expressed education providing her with a feeling of confidence to voice her own perspectives about the world and see the world the way she wants to see it. Education provided her with a network, particularly in the field of art. She relayed the importance of education, saying it matters to receive a college education to be best suited to face the world. She went on to explain the value of a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree arguing that the individual must be at a certain level to see it’s worth. Regarding a BFA, she held a discussion about visual language having little to no value and how writing is the center of a language-driven world in school. She mentioned how BA degrees in general are easier in making people feel validated. She expressed being happy for not attending an art school because she doubts she would have been challenged to push herself. In general, she did not like the lack of hands-on instruction in schools however.

## **Kalin's Narrative**

Kalin, a 21-year old rising senior, grew up in a major city within the Bay area. His mom kept him safe and made sure he stayed out of trouble. He even mentioned how “you see a lot of shit” in reference to living in his hometown. Some of his first school memories involved playing video games with other kids which would end in fighting. Despite these initial memories, he considered himself a good student growing up and tended to receive A's until around junior year in high school. His mom was a teacher which helped him stay involved with his schooling. As a result, he always “knew his stuff” in reference to completing school assignments and staying engaged. He also participated in athletics. Though he disliked school early on, he knew he needed that “piece of paper” to look good for future work. From 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade, he knew he had to take care of business. He was always good at school, and knew he wanted to attend college at an early age. This desire mainly stemmed from not wanting to worry about money. He noted the importance of going to college was to ensure financial stability. He would rather get an education than jeopardize his body doing manual labor.

In terms of parental influences, Kalin's mom was a big advocate for learning and education. She would help him with creating innovative projects and experiments with supplies around the house like Tupperware. In terms of peer influences, he had never met anyone who really enjoyed school. There was always an obstacle to reach academic goals. For him, the mentality was “you must do good because you have to be successful,” not because you enjoy it. In his earlier years, school was seen as a competitive endeavor, but now his focus was based on the desire to make money. Kalin characterized himself as hard

working, driving, and happy, which reflects his mentality currently as well. He constantly mentioned “taking care of business.”

Kalin defined education as the ability to know what is going on around you. He did not like school learning. He would tend to like school more when people told him why he should care or why something was what it was. For him, education is seen as power. It allows one to be able to do things later on. He mentioned it being great to have money, but one must know how to invest it and how to make it work for them. He stated that education is a tool to make sure people get to the next level. He also noted how education is key but “we do it wrong.” In response to what it means to attend college, he mentioned how attending college means you are somebody at the university and the institution gave you a piece of paper. He mentioned how you can learn things in school but not always remember the academic material. For him, college indicates that you are in school for a piece of paper to be able to go to an employer and say “I did your little things to get into your club.” He said that school does not matter though some colleges may look better to graduate from. But for him, as you get the piece of paper and set your goals, then that is what matters. This could also be depended upon field of study, but for him, he just wants to get a job.

### **Larry’s Narrative**

Larry, a 21-year old rising senior, grew up in the upper valley area of Los Angeles County. He characterized it as a white conservative area, small town with limited things to do. He remembered only a handful of K-12 schools in the area with one college prep-based high school and the rest being underfunded. Larry remembered doing speech classes as a kid, where he would be taken out of class for 30 minutes per day to attend speech therapy for a lisp which impacted how he learned. Growing up in school, he described himself as an

overachiever. Larry wanted to attend school at a young age. School wanted to skip him from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade but his mom did not feel he was emotionally mature to skip grades. As a kid, he picked up academics faster than others. He recalled being one of the only Black kids in AP classes. Larry started thinking of college during early middle school. As a seventh grader, he knew he did not want to stay in his hometown. As a low-income family, there were not many options to leave town other than military or school. College was a way out of his impoverished situation. By freshman year in high school, he wanted to attend Yale, after thinking about college possibilities for a while.

In terms of parental influences, Larry was thought of as potentially being the breadwinner of the family with being a first-generation college student. Sometimes, he would speak with cousins, uncle, and mom about what education would look like for him as a family. In terms of peer influences, he would engage in grading disputes with close high school friends about not being complacent with getting a B-. He wanted to push for a higher grade since he put a lot of effort forth contrary to friends. Larry characterized himself as ambitious, opportunistic, and amicable, which he expressed these same characteristics while being on campus.

Larry defined education as “what you make it.” He explained that education is everywhere, not just within school. There is a constant learning and constant education of oneself by engaging with others, doing research, and watching surroundings. For Larry, education acknowledged the existence of barriers within it. He mentioned how being in school, there was the notion that he knew something that others did not. Sometimes it was easy to forget this because students were always in an education bubble. He said there was a different communicative style after being in college and entering the outside world. There

was a dissonance between education as whole and having an education. Before college, he believed that obtaining a degree meant freedom. It meant a way out – a way to access a world that restricts entry for people like himself. After attending college, he thought less about the degree and more about the skills and experiences received during college. As spoken with alumni, he realized that often times there was no correlation between degree and career. He believed that a degree holds weight, but it has less weight for him as a person. In terms of type of schooling, he mentioned it being more about comfort and ability to thrive in school and not so much about school prestige.

### **Lanita's Narrative**

Lanita, a 21-year old rising senior, grew up in the east county area of San Diego for her formative school years. Her and her family's hometown is located in the Santa Barbara county area though she did not grow up there. She grew up and attended high school in a San Diego area that was considered a poor neighborhood. She lived in an area known for violence but she did not experience any of that personally. In terms of her first school memories, she recalled showing up to school in a dark hot pink shirt and thought she was a twin. Her grandma would walk Lanita and her sister to class but they would walk in two different directions. Then, she remembered seeing her grandma leaving the school. She was considered a smart kid involved with the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program and participated in honors and AP courses. Classes were straightforward to her. She expressed it as "you did the work, then you got the grade." She started thinking of college around the end of her junior year. After taking the SAT exams, she felt like college was happening for her. College was not always on the radar for her. No one was talking to her about college and her mom was focused on other things. Lanita was not sure about college

until later in school. For her, the college application process felt like trying to prove your intelligence to someone. Once the university orientation came around, then she felt like college was happening. Before that, college seemed like a word or some place that was around. She did not feel like she was in college until being on the actual campus officially.

In terms of parental influences, she took a campus tour before her senior year in high school with her mom, aunt and sister. Her aunt asked her about her college plans and what campuses she would like to see. Her aunt's daughter went to Humboldt State University which was one of the stops. In terms of additional influences, she received support from her high school counselor. Lanita had no idea how the application process worked. Initially, she thought she could only apply to a few colleges. She was not aware of the UC or CSU applications until her counselor brought it to her attention right before the deadline. Lanita characterized herself as empathetic, spontaneous, and rooted, which she said she felt that same way on campus.

Lanita defined education as privilege and access at its base. She described it as gatekept and super restrictive. For her, opportunity is attached to privilege. Education is such a huge advantage and huge socially with meeting new people and having different experiences through school. She said that not going to school can hold people back in society in terms of network or connections. For Lanita, education means opportunity, security, and being content. She sees education as a stepping stone. It can be a lot of pressure because you must get the degree, and not just "some college." She categorized it as "all or nothing." She asserted that "if you start college but do not finish, then people look at you differently." She mentioned how jobs will ask "did you complete the degree or not?" Lanita believes that the

college attended does matter. There was a perception about a UC versus CSU that was acknowledged when she would go back home.

### **Lauren's Narrative**

Lauren, a 19-year old rising sophomore, grew up in the Sacramento area. She categorized this area as being diverse with Asian, multi-racial, and with a limited white population. She said it felt good having multi-racial kids around, especially on the track team. She recalled having a “nice” middle school and high school. These schools were college-minded and the school district was considered good. She was surrounded by AP and honors students, mainly students who were focused on their education. She remembered some of her first school memories as being “nap time” in preschool. She recalled her teacher playing music to help them fall asleep. She noted that she missed those past school days. Lauren participated in AP classes during her schooling experiences. She noticed that some UCSB students could be categorized as smart in high school but “lazy smart,” which she considered herself. She mentioned this “laid-back” feeling that UCSB students demonstrate. She started thinking about college in middle school. During middle school, she remembered having a University of Oregon shirt on at Physical Education (PE) class. She also remembered thinking about college when her parents start saying “you’re going to college.”

In terms of parental influences, Lauren mentioned her dad reminding her that she would not like the University of Oregon due to college weather. In terms of peer influences, she would speak with her best friend about schools to choose. She encouraged her best friend to pursue UC Berkeley despite her parents not being supportive of it. She characterized herself as creative, determined, and confident. She did mention that she was not as confident



on a campus since she had not done as well academically as she did in high school, which hurt her self-esteem.

Lauren defined education as accumulating resources to be able to do better in the future. Education is an opportunity to get ahead and make more money in the future. For her, if you put in the work in education, then you get the best outcome in the end. She expressed how attending college and obtaining a degree adds value to yourself. She said the school does matter. Her parents went to UCLA and did so much for her. Given her parental influences, she would not feel happy at a state school or community college.

### **Briana's Narrative**

Briana, a 19-year old rising sophomore, grew up in southeast San Diego area, known as a poor neighborhood. School was good for her until attending high school where it was seen as “bad” and gang activity would occur around the school area. Her high school was in a fighting territory for gangs known as the “four corners of death.” She never did see any of the “bad stuff” and the school area was not threatening to her. Briana arrived to the states around 5 or 6 years old to find refuge from her home country. In some of her first memories of school, she recalled not being able to speak English, so she pronounced kids’ names “horribly.” Kids would laugh at her speech, which led her to not want to speak English again at that point. Briana considered herself a shy, quiet student who loved to sit in the back of the classroom. She was very observant and never raised her hand in class due to feeling embarrassed. She would even lower her voice if a teacher called upon her. During high school, she became more open. Since her high school was in southeast San Diego and people assumed it to be bad due to the gang activity, teachers were supportive to students like herself. She mentioned how these assumptions about her school was even reflected in her

African household. Her family even tried to restrict her from attending college outside of San Diego so she would be close to home. She made her assertions to family that it was her decision and it could not be changed. Briana started thinking about college during her sophomore year around Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) time. During this time, she started thinking about what she wanted to do in college and beyond. She realized college was in her future after graduating high school and getting an admission notice from UCSB. This became confirmation that she was attending college.

In terms of parental influences, Briana mentioned her grandparents being the most impactful, particularly her grandpa since she lived with him. Her grandpa told her that she had to study since she was the only one in the family going to a university in the United States. She was unable to go back to her home country so she held family close. She relayed how she was the only chance for her family to make it. Her dad was an activist, which conflicted with the politics of her home country. Their president had been in power for a long time and the United Nations eventually intervened for her and her family to migrate to the U.S. Therefore, she felt obligated to get an education and help in whatever way she could. She characterized herself as reserved, serious at times, and funny around friends, which was the same feeling on campus. She felt like people saw her as reserved on campus.

Briana defined education as the biggest thing for her and her family. She wanted to start working to help her parents, but her father said go to college to be financially stable and successful to help their household. She thought of education as the more you have, the more power you have. Consequently, with more education, she felt that people cannot tell you what to do with your life. She said going through different school levels allow you to see the world for what it truly is. For her, education means achieving your goals. She continued by

saying education means working hard to achieve eligibility for work or certificates and do whatever field you choose. It means something to her to be able to walk on stage and get a degree from the chancellor. She said the school type does not matter. College can be for everybody. It depends on the program or field you seek. According to Briana, attending certain universities is merely for brand name. It is something you can show off. Based on her interpretation, you can start at a community college and transfer to a 4-year university.

### **Connor's Narrative**

Connor, a 21-year old rising senior, grew up on the coastal area of Los Angeles, similar to Santa Barbara in terms of beach environment. It was a great, happy place for him to grow up. He experienced great weather, had lots of friends, and it was an easy place to get involved with sports and academics. He could not ask to grow up anywhere better. Connor remembered his first homework assignment in school. Initially, he attended a charter school and they were against homework at an early age. Around second grade, he received his first homework assignment. He said it was really easy, but he still remembered the fear of the teacher saying “you’re gonna get homework this year.” That first week was his first memory of school. Growing up in school, things were academic-oriented. His mom received her PhD from UCSB. He worked hard on state tests growing up and his mom would give him more practice homework to prepare him. He went to an alternative learning school with a curriculum that was different than a traditional public school. They made sure students were able to speak confidently. That mandated students to perform in multiple plays every year. He had to even study mythology as a kid, which gave him more breadth of knowledge until the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. He attended a large high school with a 750-student graduating class. He attended a strictly public high school, which was a shock for him coming from a charter

school background. He was a dedicated, focused student. Academics was never a question for him since his parents always pushed him. He was highly motivated and maintained high expectations in school. He started thinking about college during 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade. He was terrified for any test he did not do well on. He even thought he would not get into college if he did not do well on these earlier state exams. His mom used tactics to make him study. College was something he was going to do. All of his mom's side of the family went to college so it was not even a thought on not attending. As a child, his mom was academic-focused while his dad was dedicated to getting him into the National Basketball Association. Connor knew he would attend college, but the reasoning changed over time. By sophomore year in high school, he knew he would attend college for academic purposes.

In terms of parental influences, Connor's grandmother was a big influence. Growing up in the 1940s, she managed to have an extensive education and always emphasized the values and need for education. He would visit her house and they would have lessons. Most conversations shared with his grandparents were academic and intellectual, which made it fun for him. In terms of peer influences, he felt distant from some of his Black teammates on the basketball team. He was considered an "Uncle Tom" or "white-washed" for taking AP courses and conducting himself differently than them. This impacted him because he wanted to be part of the sports community, but his pursuit of self-betterment education wise somehow made him "not Black." Connor characterized himself as stubborn, focused, and committed. He fights for those in his corner and he is stubborn in what he believes as right, but open to progress his thoughts. He felt this same way about himself on campus.

Connor defined education as a pursuit of social studies. Education teaches one to see the world in different perspectives and fit them into the framework that you already have in

your reality. He continued by saying education teaches you to see things differently and be able to place those new knowledges into your own framework which makes up your identity. Education is power. The more he would learn, the more powerful he felt in society. He felt that law school would provide that level of understanding about the world for him. Education explains the world around you and helps you sift through the “BS” that happens daily. His views on a college degree has changed a lot since being in college. According to his own research, only 25% of people in the United States have college degrees, which is low. He said that a degree is a piece of paper at this point. He views it as a great accomplishment getting through college, but feels the Bachelor’s degree does not have the same pull in society as it did in the past. He sees it as a stepping stone to progress through the next trajectory. He spoke about a Master’s degree being needed now. Each level of education cuts out a different group of people. In terms of school type, it matters the type of college you attend from a pride standpoint. His mom attended UCSB, which is a top university. He is proud to say he attends UCSB too. Even though it is a stepping stone, he thinks it is great to get a bachelor’s degree from a top university. Even if the degree does not benefit you, you at least “look good on paper” in terms of work ethic. However, overall the college does not matter in his opinion.

### **Jordan’s Narrative**

Jordan, a 21-year old rising senior, grew up in the Long Beach area of Los Angeles County. He considered it to be a melting pot of races and backgrounds, which he really liked about the area. He did not see differences in race much growing up. For him, it was more so everybody is different and comes from a different spot. In terms of first school memories, Jordan recalled meeting his first friend in kindergarten in some after school program.

Growing up in school, he always took accelerated classes from elementary to high school. He always had a rigorous course load, but always excelled. He maintained good grades, but also became good at talking to teachers, which led him to be well-liked by them. He was an outgoing student and not scared to raise his hand in class. He started thinking about college during late elementary or early middle school. His mom always said get an education and go to college, so this mentality was part of school. Being part of accelerated classes, he always heard about college. He knew it would be something to achieve in the long run. By freshman year in high school, he knew he would be attending college especially with his participation in the college preparation program called Program of Additional Curricular Experiences (PACE). He started taking AP courses in 10<sup>th</sup> grade while the entire PACE program was preparing him for college and helping with transitioning.

In terms of parental influence, Jordan's parents would ask what he wanted to major in since they already knew college was in his future. His parents wanted to push him into the medical field since his mom is a nurse and his dad is a medical doctor. Ever since middle school, he knew he was not interested in medicine. There was a sense of pressure initially when applying to college, but his parents were okay with him not pursuing medicine after a while. In terms of peer influences, college was a common topic amongst his peers. They would apply to the same schools. He was at UCSB currently with two other people he knew from his high school, and one from middle school which he considers close. Jordan characterized himself as analytical, friendly, and ambitious. He likes to make people feel welcomed and he stays motivated. Sometimes, on campus, he can be friendly depending on the day or context. Aside from that, he views himself the same on campus.

Jordan defined education as being open to learning how to learn and not being focused on practices like a trade. He continued with saying education teaches you how to think critically and to use information given to make conclusions that may not always be right. Education means learning from mistakes, learning from your experiences, and trying new things to see where that goes. For him, experience-based education is best. He sees value in theory and learning a way of thinking, but he is mainly focused on getting experience doing different things and learning from those processes. For Jordan, attending college and obtaining a degree is like proving yourself. He always thought attending college and getting a degree was necessary. He could not have done some things without being in college. It is a matter of proving yourself and knowing at least your name is on a degree. With a degree, you can get in the door, which is what his family echoed. College is a good way to get your name out there and prove yourself that you did the rigorous work. In terms of school type, the type of school does matter when you are going into the world trying to apply to a job. In a vacuum, he does not look at a certain kind of college compared to another one. The setting might be different, but it just depends on the person you are and your strengths. He mentioned that you can take advantage of any college, it just depends on who you are.

### **Carly's Narrative**

Carly, a 19-year old rising sophomore, grew up in the eastern valley area of Los Angeles County. She described the environment as “okay.” She said it is quite different from Santa Barbara, but it is okay. The weather is beautiful. She recalled not wanting to go to school. She cried every day in school initially. She emphasized not liking school much either. Growing up, school was a learning experience in terms of maturity. She distinguished education from growing up. She described schooling as decent and had its ups and downs.

She did not always get into trouble. She relayed that she was “not always a good kid, but was also a good kid.” Carly always wanted to attend college. Early on, she even aspired to attend college beyond a Bachelor’s degree. One day, she plans to obtain a doctorate degree. She said she is striving to be very educated. In terms of first thinking about college, she always knew she would attend college even as a kid. She said that it was just “part of the process after graduating from high school, you move onto college and beyond.”

In terms of parental influence, Carly’s inspiration for getting an education is from her mom. As a result, she “must” go to school. In terms of peer influence, she relayed that students motivated each other. Carly characterized herself as highly ambitious, hardworking, and principled. She felt the same way on campus. She emphasized the need to motivate yourself even more on campus. One must have a strong foundation and be who you are. She mentioned that with spending so much money on school, it is important to know why you are in school and grow as a person.

Carly defined education as more than just knowledge and core facts. She notes a self-motivation component to education, especially for people of color. Nothing is going to fall in someone’s lap. She said you must work for it, you must “know your shit.” She said it is expensive but it is worth it. Education is extremely important, especially for her life. She said she will even push her own kids to pursue at least a Bachelor’s degree. Education is part of who she is and where she wants to be in the future. Based on her ideals, attending college and obtaining a degree is very important if you do not want to work a menial job, unless it is not your calling. She acknowledged that people do drop out and do other things, similar to entertainers. She mentioned how someone could become rich and have money later. However, she emphasized that most people have to work for it, which is through education.



In terms of school type, she said that it does matter. Some colleges have high reputations for certain majors. She acknowledged a distinction based on school, but GPA matters also.

### **Sam's Narrative**

Sam, a 21-year old rising senior, grew up in a southern area of Los Angeles county. He had a very religious background, which was also his environment. He was sheltered from his hometown because his parents did not want him hanging out with anyone. His hometown was considered a “bad neighborhood,” but he did not understand why he could not go passed the block down the corner until he got older. He never thought of his hometown as any different from a Beverly Hills or somewhere like that. He recalled his parents really wanting to get him into pre-K. He remembered “nap time” and waking up from his dreams of being a power ranger. Growing up, he went through three different schooling experiences. He attended Christian schools all of his life. He attended his first school from pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, which was predominantly Black. He was considered the nerd there, which resulted in getting picked on often. His dad would often say “be strong” in response to bullying. He eventually left that school in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade after becoming rebellious and being “over it.” There were also a lot of shootings and lockdowns happening at that school. He ended up going to a predominantly white school next, from 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. He had to adjust to a limited amount of Black kids. He would experience racial discriminatory behavior during Obama’s presidency for example. He had seen school as a toxic social place. He did have support in school through his teachers, particularly a Black female teacher who knew of him at his old school. Ever since first or second grade, Sam’s parents were big on college. They always asked him what he wanted to do. He would let them know that he wanted to be a lawyer, doctor, or teacher so they insisted that he go to college. In terms of first thinking about

college, he knew he would attend college in middle school, especially after hearing so much from family.

In terms of parental influence, his dad went to a trade school and told him that he could make something out of himself by getting a degree. His mom echoed the same sentiments. A degree holds value for him and his family. They mentioned getting a Master's or Doctorate degree also holds value as a Black person. Therefore, he felt that one must find a way to do it irrespective of the cost. In terms of peer influences, one of his friends who was a student athlete told him about the difficulty of transitioning from high school to college as a student athlete. His friend mentioned how tough it could be to obtain a degree. It can be a struggle with finding a balance for some student athletes. Sam characterized himself as sarcastic, introverted, and athletic. He said he was not introverted on campus since he had to associate and interact with other people.

Sam defined education as a tool. Education is something that should be accessible for everyone. He mentioned education as something that helps you learn more about a desired field. Education is like a learning process. It means gathering information for yourself. He said you can learn general history, dates, and grammar in school, but education is so much more than that. One gets to learn different things to apply to the real world and pass on the new generations of people. Attending college and obtaining a degree shows that he is more than a stereotype or statistic in the United States, as a Black man and person of color. He said it means you succeeded in college. Getting a degree becomes the benchmark for future employment. For him, obtaining a degree suggests you overcame the odds. In terms of school type, he felt like it was such a huge thing with Black people. He mentioned watching people on television cry about not getting into a Yale or Harvard and taking it really seriously. He

said the type of school does not matter, as long as you are learning something that you can use later in life.

### **Alicia's Narrative**

Alicia, a 19-year old rising sophomore, grew up in the San Gabriel Valley area of Los Angeles County during her early childhood years. Once she turned 10 years old, she remembered moving to the Inland Empire (IE), which she lived for the rest of her childhood and then adulthood as well. After elementary school in San Gabriel Valley area, she continued her schooling in the IE. She eventually got used to the IE culture over time. She mentioned seeing a lot of things change in terms of infrastructure and increase of people moving in. She also noted the increase in diversity over the course of time. She mentioned seeing more Black, Hispanic, and Asian people in the community. She characterized her town as a nice city. She mentioned San Gabriel valley area as predominantly Hispanic as a kid. She said she had a good childhood in both areas. She described the IE as a “big improvement” in comparison to where she initially lived however. She recalled preschool as one of her first school memories. She remembered attending with other students. Her preschool was next to the elementary school she attended from K-5. After the first half of sixth grade, she moved to the IE. She also remembers her teachers and peers. In terms of race, she was one of the few Black people in class. It was predominantly Hispanic and white. Growing up, Alicia really enjoyed school. She was always on top of her academics and very determined to do assignments. Though she did not participate in many extracurricular activities, she was big on academics. She said she was in the top of her class during K-8. She was also exceptional academically in high school, but not like K-8 since there was more competition. She was considered a smart kid who participated in the GATE program and

earned honor roll recognition. The competition increased in high school, but she was still at least above average in her opinion. Overall, she considered herself a good student. She always did her work on time and received A's and B's. Alicia always thought about college, but it was mainly television interpretations of it. She also had older siblings so it was always in her mind. She started to seriously think about college in high school, particularly sophomore or junior year. This was around the time school began to push college on them, especially with taking AP and SAT exams.

In terms of parental influence, her mom and dad always emphasized academics. Something that came up in high school was making sure she studied and put an effort forth in academics to assist with going to college. If she received anything less than a B, her parents would make sure she stayed focused. Her parents were not seen as strict, but they did expect to see A's and B's. In terms of peer influence, lots of her peers talked about college and education in AP classes during junior year of high school. They were always speaking about getting good grades and doing well on SAT exams. She would study closely with one of her close friends for AP tests to be better prepared. They would share resources and college preparation materials like Khan Academy. She also checked college admission rates in junior year with her closest friends. She characterized herself as calm, determined, and nice, which was the same for on campus.

Alicia defined education as gaining knowledge throughout the years from teachers and experiences in school specifically. She continued with acknowledging experiences in school like academic classes and learning different subject material, but also noted the importance of work experience too. For her, education means a lot of things. Education means better opportunities in life. She sees high school as the foreground for higher

education, college, graduate school, and more. The main goal is having a good career and being successful in life. For her, education is important for a stable successful life in America. To attend college and obtain a degree, Alicia sees it as a “big step,” but as the first step to achieving the goal of a great career. She mentioned how now she sees the work and determination needed to get that degree. She did not think it necessarily mattered the type of college attended, especially now with alternative routes to higher education. In general, she felt that you can still get the same opportunities in terms of success by attending community colleges, trades or vocational schooling. She emphasized the importance of setting career goals and making sure it is something you want to do. She does not think a 4-year institution is the only place that allows those career goals to be realized.

### **Zion’s Narrative**

Zion, a 19-year old rising junior, grew up in the San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles County and moved around a few different times. He did not feel like he settled in until high school where he currently lives. He described his childhood as good for the most part. He enjoyed his neighborhood, and his childhood is something he was happy to look back on. He recalled his first school memory being in kindergarten. He was in Montessori school and had recently been moved from the pre-K area to Kindergarten/elementary. He remembered taking spelling quizzes in first and second grade. He remembered being the only person out of the first graders through sixth grades who spelled the word lieutenant correctly. And he was in kindergarten then too. Growing up, he considered himself a “little gem.” Once he switched schools in elementary school, he felt he turned into the troubled kid. He would always get into trouble and be a distraction. Though he would be called to the principal’s office, he never really thought it was for the things he did. He felt it was put on him. As

much as he got in trouble, he never thought he deserved it. He just thought he was too ahead of course material, which caused him to get bored in school at times. Therefore, he would wander off and get into trouble as a result to his boredom. Overall, school was good for him. He stopped getting into trouble in school around his sophomore year of high school. His best friend group from elementary school to middle school were all Black and they would always get into trouble. His mom always received emails about him getting into trouble. Though he got in trouble, he always did well in school. He did not start thinking about college until sophomore year of high school. He did really well during his junior year, which is when he started getting things together and buckling down for college pursuits.

In terms of parental influences, education was something you had to do in his household. It was considered a necessity for life. The expectation was always to complete homework assignments and get good grades. He remembered having a conversation with his grandma about his behavior in school. She emphasized to him that constantly getting into trouble would not put him in good places in the future. This was also when he started taking education more seriously and changing his attitude. In terms of peer influences, one of his best friends who he met as a freshman in high school while running track together intervened on his behavior in school. He reminded Zion about how good he is with school and acting up would impact that. They eventually shared life goals with each other and Zion was able to reflect on that conversation moving forward. He characterized himself as ambitious, outgoing, spontaneous, and introspective. He felt the same way about himself on campus as well. He was always involved a lot on campus in leadership positions and always down to hang out with friends.

Zion defined education as learning new knowledge that would help you in the real world. Education allows you to have more tools for you to use in your daily life. For him, education means opportunity. He mentioned education giving opportunity and opening more doors in different places in life. He acknowledged that being a Spanish minor, for instance, could provide more opportunity with speaking Spanish and having that knowledge base. To attend college and obtain a degree, Zion stated that it means you really tried hard and you really worked for it. There was a time where he felt college was not right for him. It can be a lot and make one feel like stopping and doing something else. Thus, for him, reaching the degree and making it all the way through means you care and you tried hard enough. He further expressed that you realize the importance of getting a college degree after going through it. He did not think it mattered the type of college attended because “college is college.” Going through many years to get a degree regardless of college type still means you put a lot of work in. Also, he mentioned how people choose different majors or areas of study, which can impact the type of college attended.

### **Dana’s Narrative**

Dana, a 20-year old rising junior, grew up mostly in south Los Angeles, in what she considered a low-income community. She grew up in a townhouse apartment where her parents were the property managers. These apartments were listed as section 8 housing. She mentioned her and her brother being instructed by their parents to not be around the other kids in the area since things were disruptive and heavily gang ridden. They were not allowed to play outside at all due to potential drive-bys and more. Her first school memory was attending preschool. She said it was part of a head start program, not too far from home. Her brother attended as well. She remembered them teaching how to clean up after themselves

and different behavioral expectations. Dana was sent to Catholic school after preschool, attending from kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. She recalled one of her largest class sizes being around 40 students, which she knew since they switched classes together. She did attend another school for middle school for a few months, but switched back to her Catholic school after an incident. During this same time, her parents went through a divorce. As a result, she attended three different high schools. She did her first year of high school at a charter school in Los Angeles. She did one semester at a high school in the Hollywood area, but her grades were not good so she did not stay. By this time, she experienced depression due to her parent's divorce. Her mom eventually got most of the custody of her, which is when she attended another high school in Los Angeles from the latter end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade to graduation. Besides the one semester in Hollywood, she considered herself as a very good student, getting A's and B's. She would maintain a 4.0 GPA once she reached her third high school. Dana started preparing for college in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. She talked about how her dad had the opportunity to attend college, but never did go. Her mom never graduated from high school, so college was not talked about much at home. Once she saw her grades getting better after switching from the Hollywood school, she saw that college was in her grasp. Her GPA was initially messed up from switching school, but she kept working at it.

In terms of parental influences, she would speak to both parents about college separately. She would speak to her dad about funding. He did not care how far the school was, just as long as she was happy and could afford it. However, her mom wanted her to be closer to home. Her mom also did not really push her to attend college either. In terms of peer influences, her high school friends were very supportive. She tried to surround herself



with people who had similar goals. Her friends were excited when they found out she got accepted to UCSB.

Dana defined education as very important for giving people a better start at life. She mentioned “the earlier the better” in reference to education. For her, education plays a huge role in everybody’s lives. It can change how people perceive you. For instance, people were surprised at knowing where she came from as a kid because she appeared as a “valley girl” and someone who they categorized as “sounding white” or “talking like a robot.” She would sometimes respond by saying her parents did not want her growing up around the kids in her apartment and general home area. Though she mentioned her parents as not being well educated, she noted the education piece changing how people perceive you. Obtaining a degree means she would be in a better place than what her parents were and she could go further. She said she wants to live comfortably and know that she did all she could as a young person, in terms of grasping all opportunities. Based on her thoughts, it did not matter the type of school one attended. She said she could have gone to California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA) like her brother who attended there before deciding to join the Air Force. Attending a CSU would have been okay for her. She just did not want to attend a community college first due to what certain jobs look at on a resume.

### **Elizabeth’s Narrative**

Elizabeth, a 19-year old rising junior, grew up in south Los Angeles. She described the environment as not very welcoming. She was not allowed to play outside as a kid. She mostly stayed at home with her family growing up. Her first school memory was in elementary school. She recalled staying after school often, helping teachers while she waited for her mom to get off work. She would sit in the room and cut out papers and everything.

Growing up in school, she considered herself as a determined student, always on top of her work even with extra credit. She always wanted to stay in school and do as much work as possible. She had a lot of great opportunities in school. She went to school in LA mostly, but moved around a lot. As a result, part of her schooling was in the Whittier area for one year. That year became a rough time for her, in terms of her surroundings and state of mind. College was always on her mind. Her mom and grandparents emphasized the importance of college. The expectation was always to go to college and make a career or be something. She knew she would attend college around the end of 9<sup>th</sup> grade. She recalled speaking to her dad about not wanting to be in high school any longer and going to college. She wanted to prove people wrong and prove she could do anything. She was set in her goals from that time on.

In terms of parental influences, her grandfather would stress the importance of going to school and being focused during their car drives. She became determined to go to school and have a better life than her family did. They would often tell her to use the opportunity to attend college now while she could. They encouraged her to do as much schooling and work hard now because it would be worth it. In terms of peer influences, she mentioned how many of her friends at home did not want to attend college, so they had a negative outlook on her attending especially with her moving so far. They suggested that she just go to school near home and get a degree that way. She mentioned how the ones who spoke highly of college ended up staying in town for school. They figured it was the same education, so did not see a point in leaving the area.

Elizabeth defined education as an opportunity to get more knowledge and learn about more things, and see different perspectives that you may not have noticed prior. For her, education was her way out of her home environment. She wanted to get away from home and

college became that resource. Once she realized she could attend college wherever she wanted, doors seemed to open up for her. She felt that a college degree makes people look at you differently, especially as a Black person. They may initially expect you to not have accomplished much of anything, but that was different with a degree in her opinion. Obtaining a degree signifies that she is making a name for herself and she is not wasting her time. She believed the type of school mattered based on the person. She mentioned how some people may need a 2-year college first while others will go for a 4-year university. There could be factors like affordability or family obligations that limit their ability to leave far from home.

### **Antonio's Narrative**

Antonio, a 19-year old rising sophomore, grew up in the South Bay area of Los Angeles. He described the environment as “pretty good.” His parents kept him out of the trouble that went on in LA. He witnessed rough times for different people, but his experiences growing up was not the worst it could be. He said it was not the best either, but life happens. His first school memory was getting kicked out of preschool. Growing up in school, he considered himself as an “okay” student. He described himself as “lazy.” He was not big on studying, but acknowledged that school came to him naturally and he always earned good grades. His parents stressed the importance of getting good grades, so school was never bad for him academic wise. He finished high school with around a 3.86 GPA and scored high on the SAT. He was not the type of student to study in the library. He was more sports-oriented, but academics was a given for him. He mostly started thinking about college during his freshman year of high school. He never thought he was going to attend college for academics however. He thought he would be attending college for basketball, but he said life

happens as you get older and mature. He started looking more at college for academics during his junior year of high school. He always saw college in his future. Attending college was always preached to him by his parents. There was no second thought. They would expect these goals from him even before high school, whether it be for basketball or academics.

In terms of parental influences, he recalled his parents scolding him about missing homework or needing to do something better for school. He did not remember getting “commended for school” by his parents in terms of recognizing his academic accolades. If he did something bad in school, then he was scolded. He mentioned the expectation was “don’t mess up” so he would not get scolded about it. In terms of peer influences, a lot of his friends back home were not really big on school, so the first real conversation about school with peers was at UCSB. He said he always had better grades than his friends growing up. The first time someone cared about how he was doing in a class was at UCSB.

Antonio defined education as the way people teach you how to conduct yourself and move throughout the world after you get out of school. In a business world or as an adult, it teaches you how you are supposed to portray yourself and how to move between different spaces. He looks at education as a means to get money. It becomes a way to show that he did this “thing.” It means furthering one’s education to eventually get hired for a big company or start their own business to make money and live a better life. For Antonio, a college degree is a piece of paper that shows “the white dude who’s gonna hire him” that he is smart. Thus, he said that the degree means you have passed all courses, completed 4 years of school and now can be hired. A company or person would not be looking at him for his color, but because he has this piece of paper which is proof that he is educated in a sense. Initially, he thought attending a community college meant a person “messed up” so they would attend there first.

He had his thoughts about a community college versus 4-year universities at the time. He thought it mattered more about where you receive a Master’s or doctorate degree versus getting a Bachelor’s degree. He believes that is what people look at now. He mentioned it being more common now for students to start at the community college level then transfer to a 4-year university afterwards.

## Part II

### College-Decision Making and College Reaction

The results reflect a conversation about college-going aspirations and students’ decision making process. Table 2 breaks down the student experiences around college decision making and initial college reactions once on campus (for each participant). For college decision making, the researcher inquired about students’ journeys to get to UCSB, in terms of their decision making and how that process looked like for them. As seen in Table 2, the researcher asked several questions:

- What information did you gather about UCSB before deciding to apply?
- After getting admitted, what was your decision making towards choosing to attend UCSB? What did that process look like? Who and/or what helped you make your decision?
- What other schools did you consider, if any?

Table 2

*College Decision making for each study participant*

Participant	Info gathering	Admissions Process	School Considerations
Tara (f)	Not much, told to apply to all UCs	UCSB best admitted school, not ready to leave family behind, area nice (beach, home proximity), list of pros/cons, UCSB cultural as con, made own decision but conflicted with mom, scholarship removed due to injury	Other admitted school expensive, Howard a big draw for family

Kalin (m)	Not much, told to apply to all UCs, did some CSUs	Campus visits, environment enjoyed (beach, home proximity), far enough to learn independence, do things on own, did not get into Stanford (just wanted a degree), UCSB had best financial aid package of UCs, people seem stressed at CAL	HBCUs - Clark Atlanta, Howard
Larry (m)	Yes did research on each applied school, considered distance, costs, people, resources for black and queer, campus visit prior, somewhere they can grow	Their choice, mom unable to help financially, financial aid package biggest factor, applied to 10 schools: 4 UCs, USC, CSUs, Ithaca College, UCSB was not top choice	Considered other UCs
Lanita (f)	Looked at campus demo and proximity to things	Did not apply to UCSD (close to home), low Black population at UCSB but family hometown nearby, private schools too far, UC better than CSU, best friend went to Santa Cruz which made her pick SB to pave own path, financial aid package big role	Considered Santa Cruz, toss up between SC and SB
Lauren (f)	Google search on schools with good GPA, comfortable with acceptance rate, preferred a UC in SoCal, enjoyed campus visits (calm and relaxing)	UCSB top choice, happy when got accepted, applied to 5 UCs, LMU (mom wanted her to attend), if she didn't like school she could always get involved more or make better use of time	Considered University of Oregon, knew she was going to UCSB once accepted
Briana (f)	Did little research, rankings	UCSB was last option of 4 UC applications, UCSD was #1, UCSB top ranked school so chose as 4th slot, didn't see pictures or know its location, find out more info after acceptance	Considered SD State but too close to home (dad would have her stay home instead of dorms), USF, UCSD, Sonoma State based on city, financial aid, proximity to home
Connor (m)	Campus tour, loved it, beautiful campus, info limited, knew he wanted to attend school in CA and didn't want to attend UCLA (grew up near it)	Mom attended UCSB for 9 years (huge influence), visited TMP during campus visit to check business-related major options, energy on campus biggest factor, got admitted at invited dinner with Chancellor	Considered CAL but did not like campus energy, Santa Cruz was not same environment as SB, interested in SD State business program, UCSB was higher ranked

			and seemed like best fit
Jordan (m)	Not much research, searched school ranks, no visits prior	Applied to CA schools and visited after admission, HS counselor suggested UCSB as good school, independent decision, got into 4-5 schools, first choice was UCLA but didn't get accepted, second choice was UCSB so was excited when admitted, small college town aspect helped decision, felt like good fit	Main four was Cal Poly Pomona, SD State, CSULB and UCSB
Carly (f)	Did not gather much info, knew she wanted to apply to UCLA	Wanted to attend UCLA but did not get accepted, chose to attend UCSB and give UC a try, spoke to mom and guidance counselor, mind was made up after speaking to family friend who attended UCSB	Considered SAC State
Sam (m)	Gathered no info on UCSB, knew it was a UC and that is it	Wanted to leave CA, high school coach suggested visiting UCSB before deciding, given tour by old high school teammate, enjoyed the visit and committed on spot, only 2 hours from home so ideal, people seemed cool	Scouted by Lewis College, considered University of Alabama too (dad from town)
Alicia (f)	Info gathered based on brother and high school teacher recommendations	Oldest brother attended UCSB so that was major influence, admitted at invited dinner, UCSB seemed like best fit, high school environmental studies teachers attended UCSB for grad school and recommended it too, personal decision	Considered SD State, UCI, then between UCI and UCSB
Zion (m)	Not the best, but knew UCSB was well ranked and had beautiful campus since he took campus tour prior, had older friends at UCSB from his high school	Peers, tour, school reputation, rank, within his top 3 schools, did not get into other two schools so it worked out, came down to finances, heard from schools late	Other schools considered was UCSD and Oregon, would be financial burden, UCSB more in his range
Dana (f)	Did not know much at all, knew she had 4 free UC apps, paid more attention to CSUs, didn't think she'd get into UCs	Applied to UCLA, UCSD, confused UCSC with UCSB, and applied to UCI, researched more after getting into UCSB, financial aid a huge part, got full ride scholarship through Promise Scholars, attended Spring insight campus event with dad, they talked to financial adviser that day about funding options	Considered CSULB but was impacted, CSUN
Elizabeth (f)	Did not know UCSB existed before applying	Wanted to attend college out of state but could not afford it, applied to CAL (mom influence), applied to UCLA, UCSB and Davis were schools she did not know about, she knew she would have to live at home if she attended school near home, wanted to attend UCSB and make name for herself	Considered UCLA since she got accepted, but did not want to be stuck in LA, got into CSULB too, chose between UCSB and CSULB

Antonio (m)	Did not know much about UCSB, had a friend who attended, he visited as a high school senior, liked the environment	Someone tried to discourage him from applying to UCSB since they did not think he would get accepted, getting accepted to UC proved people wrong, knew it was a PWI campus, knew the environment he was coming into, felt like somewhere he could be for 4 years, liked San Jose State campus as well, made informed decision based on himself and parents	Considered San Jose State for business major, since UCSB does not have business major he initially was not going to attend
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Based on information gathered, 9 participants did limited research on UCSB before applying, and 1 participant did not do any research at all. Of the nine participants who did little research, all tended to look at school rank or were told to apply to all the UCs. As seen in Table 2 above, many students were unaware of UCSB. With at more than half of participants doing limited research on school, this reveals that students either knew enough information to feel comfortable applying without prior knowledge of the campus, or was instructed to apply to 4 UCs to fulfill the free application max. Five participants did more research on the school and at least 3 of 5 had a strong desire to attend UCSB and had already been introduced to some of the resources offered on campus.

Based on results for student's decision making process after getting admitted, all participants had some form of influence on their decision. 6 participants mentioned proximity to home. These students either did not want to leave their family behind or felt a need to move far enough from home to establish themselves independently, but still not be too far from home (i.e., able to still drive back). Financial aid was also another huge factor for at least 7 participants in the study, as it strongly impacted their decision on what college to attend. Some students expressed wanting to attend college out of state, but could not afford it. Others attended UCSB solely based on getting a scholarship for a full ride. Other factors that came up included family members (mainly parents), campus environment, and feelings about



the UC in general. At least two participants expressed having relatives who attended UCSB, which strongly impacted their decision as well. There were others that knew of people (friends) that attended the school and some even visited the campus prior to attending officially. There were a considerable mix of responses, but a majority of responses centered on the student making their own decision about their future. As indicated in Table 2, several scholars expressed utilizing information gathered from friends, advisors, visits, family, but they ultimately chose the best school for them. In some cases, they felt UCSB was the best college they got into. So, college choice and those influences did come up during interviews.

Based on results, participants expressed consideration of different schools during their decision-making process. All participants applied to more than just UC schools, and even out of state. A majority of students applied to UC and CSUs, while at least two participants considered attending an HBCU. At least 11 participants considered a college within the state of California aside from UCSB. At least 4 participants considered colleges outside of California aside from UCSB. Again, these decisions were largely influenced by family, proximity to home, and financial aid. A cost effective approach seemed to be the main decision making strategy. If participant got into more than 1 UC, then they tended to consider between the UCs. If participants got into more CSUs, then students considered CSUs as a viable choice to attend. One participant was on an athletic scholarship so was scouted to attend an out of state school; however, his campus visit convinced him to attend UCSB for sports instead and be closer to home. Many students were not opposed to attending out of state, but did not have the proper means to support themselves financially.

## Campus Experiences Addressing Identity, Adjustment, and Career Attainment

After detailing their decision-making processes, students were asked questions about their arrival to campus and their level of preparation (or adjustment) during their first quarter.

The researcher asked the following questions:

- What did you feel like after arriving to UCSB for the start of the academic school year? Did you utilize the information gathered?
- Looking back, do you wish you gathered more information prior to deciding to attend UCSB? Explain your response.

Table 3

### *College Reaction for each study participant*

Participant	Initial reaction to campus (Upon Arrival)	Wish for more info before applying?
Tara (f)	Beautiful environment, felt like she made right decision, went to CLAS, EOP, Black Studies, tried connecting to faculty for research	Yes, wish she did more research specifically with minority student body, more than just what's on orientation pamphlets but understanding departments and their worldviews
Kalin (m)	Initially cool, suspended after 2 weeks on campus for punching roommate in face after housing dispute, dealt with court hearings and probation as first year, went back home and was over school	He would probably have more biases and expectations had he got more info prior, wanted to go in with open mind, he doesn't like being unprepared but do not like being biased either
Larry (m)	Started with FSSP, new independence was scary, didn't know anyone, joined Facebook group to help transition, got involved in 3 clubs after first quarter to meet people	Could have looked more into double-majoring and minoring, didn't know you can tailor your degree in a sense
Lanita (f)	Ready to get out and do things mentally, but physically didn't feel like doing things, her desire to do things didn't always translate to action, went to spaces like BSU but wasn't for her, took a while to socialize and missed a lot of activities during first few weeks of freshman quarter due to being with family	Yes, wish more info was gathered, wish she loved the school before choosing it, found out college is more than just classes and opportunities, wanted to be happier
Lauren (f)	Nervous adjusting from high school, tried to find friends and locate resources, joined clubs	Knew she was going to UCSB and if she didn't like it, she could always get involved or make better use of time

Briana (f)	Scary since she was only one who attended from her high school, perceived as rude and mad so difficult to make friends, just shy, felt lonely, didn't see a lot of Black people so thought she made wrong decision, considered transferring but out of town friends talked her out of it and offered for her to visit them if needed, arrived to campus a week late while roommates already made friends, her family speaks Spanish so she eventually connected with them	No, do not wish she gathered more info, made lots of good friends at UCSB, if she went somewhere else then it wouldn't be the same, feels closer to friends in college than back at home
Connor (m)	In Black Scholars Hall first year, had mentor system which helped with navigating campus, nice having that community to get advice from, didn't join a frat but thought about it initially	Yes, wish he gathered more info, still learning things even as he finishes up school, lots of great programs to take advantage of
Jordan (m)	Transition was pretty good, had two friends attend UCSB, felt behind in terms of meeting people since he wasn't in summer programs, branched out and joined a frat, went out his way to explore and not be dependent upon pre-existing friend groups, having his close friends on campus as a support was helpful too	Yes, wish he gathered more info, but he does not see it as a bad thing, enjoyed coming in open-minded and willing to learn
Carly (f)	Was initially excited to finally attend college like most students, that got old and she focused on education after certain amount of time, had the initial fun but now it's about education	No, did not wish to gather more info, she had family friend who went to UCSB recommend the campus and said it was vibrant
Sam (m)	Athletics department does good job here, got a head start with FSSP which was very helpful, when school started it took a while to adjust even with going to predominantly white schools in past, kept introverted for a while, took a while to talk to people	Yes, wish he gathered more info, realize now that there's opportunities he could have been part of if he knew earlier, feel he could've did more with his time here, but no as well because he has learned over time as a result, not upset, happy with it
Alicia (f)	Went to STEP for before first quarter, involved with EOP, orientation helped, older brother shared resources on campus since he was involved as a former student on campus, think she did alright for fall quarter	Yes, would have liked to get more info on majors, did not really take that into consideration when deciding a school, could have looked at political science departments across schools
Zion (m)	Moved in on their own without family so it was nerve-wrecking, meeting new people and seeing others with their families was overwhelming, got excited for week of welcome since there were lots of events, was more outgoing and social than roommates but felt he could not do anything without them, trying to be best friends with roommates and not talking to others as a result kind of set him back, freaked out when learned he had to buy textbooks for class, had panic attack for first time and wasn't prepared as he thought	No, but would have liked more info on what to do once you are on campus to relieve stress and anxiety for incoming students, you get lots of info from orientation but what do you do with it when here
Dana (f)	Started in FSSP, had black roommate who was the only other black female FSSP student on her floor, she was comfortable, was aware of limited black enrollment, used to being around white people since her parents would take her out of the area, she knew UCSB would be a good opportunity	No, had enough info about UCSB before deciding to attend

Elizabeth (f)	Overwhelmed first time on campus, her mom stayed with her for first few days and mom was more excited than her, was a lot to take in being away from home on big campus, did not exactly feel like she fit in with people looking at her differently but she'd figure it out	Yes, wish she gathered more info, did not know much about the school, people referred to it as a party school, just looked up rank and picture but could've gotten more info to be more prepared
Antonio (m)	Initially was okay, jumped into meeting people from different crowds not just black people, eventually he found BSU and found his friends who he believes will be long life friends, felt out of place since not at home, but good at adjusting since he attended 3 different high schools, was more about finding his niche	Yes, if he had more info about the social aspect of UCSB it may have changed his decision, but if it was just more info on stats and general school info then it would not have changed decision

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Based on the collected data, at least 3 participants expressed being part of a summer bridge program prior to their first quarter on campus. This group of individuals relayed the importance of getting to know the campus and its resources, getting familiar with staff, and making friends to help with college adjustment. Some participants who did not take part in these summer bridge programs mentioned how they felt behind or felt like they had to catch up in a sense to those who had already established a foundation. Some participants expressed feeling nervous and it being difficult to adjust to the different environment being away from home. Some students remember their family helping them move into their dorms while others moved in on their own. At least 9 participants mentioned their desire to meet new people or connect with resources on campus during their first quarter. Another aspect that came up was students being able to find the spaces they identify with, which was not straightforward. Some would find comfort in Black-centered spaces and others would find comfort in a mixture of spaces. Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), Black Student Union (BSU), and Black Scholars Hall came up during this part of the interview for some students. Sentiments of the first quarter were seen as cool initially, yet nerve-wrecking. Participants loved the beautiful campus space and the vast amount of activities and spaces they could occupy to establish their independence. Notably, one of the participants

experienced a very different set of circumstances during their first quarter as they were suspended and eventually kicked out of the school for a physical altercation in the dorm room.

Yeah, when I first got here it was cool. I had a good time. And I was living over in Santa Cruz. So I was in the dorms with everybody else. My roommate seemed pretty decent. But actually, I got suspended. Like the first two weeks I got here. Because my roommate was smoking in the room. And I have asthma so I had talked to all of them before I even got there like, "hey, like I don't have a problem with weed or anything like that. But if you guys do smoke, just make sure I'm not in the room and make sure you guys open up the window." So so you know, he didn't do that. And so I woke up one morning after like staying out late to because my friends needed some help because she was too drunk. So I had to go...anyways, so I woke up in the morning and he was just like smoking in the room. So I was like what the fuck [chuckles]. So so he put it out or whatever and I went back to sleep and then when I woke up again I got ready to study in the room and the RA came and he was like "why does it smell like weed in here" and this is like two or three hours later so I was like "It doesn't smell weed in here." And yeah so yeah, woopy woop whatever long story short I... he wrote us up. I went to go study and I came back and my roommate was there and he was like "how are we gonna get out of this?" I was upset because you know I work hard to get here you know what I'm sayin? So I was like yo like I'm not really tryna talk about this right now. Like this is your fault. I didn't do nothin. You're gonna take the blame 'cause I worked too hard to get here right now like that's it. And he was like oh no [muffled] so I was just, we were going back and forth a lot. I told him like yo you keep on talking to me man I'ma punch you in the face. Like stop it. And he didn't believe me. So one or three more times, I hit him so. (Kalin, first in-person interview, 13:47, July 30, 2019)

Kalin continued his story with the following:

And then I went to my next class, the cops were there to pick me up and shit like that. So I just finished fighting the case, just got off probation n shit like that. And while I was in jail, they had my court hearing here like on campus. Kicked me out of my spot for...I had 48 hours to leave starting when I was in jail so I got out of jail, came back, I had like 24 hours to get all my shit out the dorm and find a new spot. Yeah, so they let me finish the academic year, which is what they should have done, I guess. But uh, yeah, I had to find housing n shit like that and then after that quarter, I was out. So, I was back uh, I went back home and went to a CC back home. And then I wasn't even really gonna come back here. I was kind of saying fuck college for a second but then like my job my internship I was doing, it kept on having me come back out here. And then every time I came back out here, it was like I had a good time n shit like that. And then I got like a letter like towards the end of summer, saying like, "Hey, if you're trying to come back, you know, you can". I was kinda like man this might just

be a sign. So it's still fuck UCSB, but it's like, it's a good place, you know? (Kalin, first in-person interview, 13:47, July 30, 2019)

In addition to the earlier conversation about deciding to attend UCSB and their initial reactions to the campus life, the researcher asked if they wished to have gathered more information on the school before deciding to apply now as someone who's been at the school for a least a year or more. At least 9 participants said yes to wishing they got more information about UCSB before deciding to attend. Of those 9 participants, students mentioned (a) finding out more information from student organizations and not just orientation, (b) types of majors and minor options, (c) loving the campus first, (d) feeling happier, (e) still continuing to learn about opportunities on campus even after several years, and (f) more about the social aspect. At least 5 participants said they did not wish to gather more information about the college before attending. These reasoning here was due to (a) students wanting to arrive to campus with an open mind and not be too biased about what to expect, (b) trusting their family member or peer with their information about the school, and (c) they would just get more involved if they felt they needed more. One participant said no, but they would have liked to know about more on what to do when on campus to relieve stress and anxiety for incoming students.

The next interview segment centered around student experiences at UCSB once they enrolled and arrived on campus. The first set of questions involved a discussion about identity formation. The researcher asked the following questions:

- Do you feel your past schooling experiences prepared you for college? Explain your response.
- How does it feel being in a different environment away from your hometown? How do you utilize/include family and home within your college experience, if at all? What tools?

- At what point did you feel a sense of belonging on campus?
- What support systems are you aware of on campus? Do you feel comfortable using them?
- Describe a moment on campus where you felt your identity was being challenged.

Table 4

*Students' Campus Experiences regarding Identity Formation*

Participant	College Preparation	Environment	Belonging	Campus Support Systems
Tara (f)	Yes, prepared with nice foundation, something to build upon more conceptually, wish she had more grounded and progressive foundation	Felt claustrophobic with no car and bad public transit, everything felt far away but people were close together, lots of partying which got tiring, confusing when people have certain viewpoints and they were different in social settings, started talking back to mom since she moved to Europe, grandma is supportive, convincing family that she can do something with art (won money in art exhibit)	Felt cultural difference when switched into art department, she loves that the department questions everything and has a sense of otherness, they do not push a liberal agenda, she loves that they do not subscribe to one thing	Feels comfortable using professors for support, CAPS with Black therapist, should be more of them
Kalin (m)	No, school was super easy so did not know how to study when arriving to college, hadn't really studied since elementary because it just clicked, so much faster in college and must learn on the go	Different environment in college, did not think he would get arrested for punching roommate in the face, where he's from you don't snitch you just handle the situation straight up, white people different here than back at home in the bay, paying the school but they do not watch out for him, missed a full year of school but got a good group of friends now	Felt belonging between sophomore and junior year, worked mainly during second year so did not have time to get situated, met people from his internship which became big part of family, got close to people through work and projects, involved with group that helps learn about owning businesses	Used CLAS a lot when he was an econ major, used writing center, recently found out about EOP through one of their staff, wish he knew about EOP earlier
Larry (m)	Yes and no, was used to being only black person in APs during high school, prepared them for social component but not academic rigor, things not	Being away for college helps step into your own person, parents do not have as much power in your decisions, family don't play a huge role in their college journey since they do not know about college and never been	Felt belonging fall quarter freshman year, found spaces where they could be themselves, fully felt part of community on campus during third year, no imposter	Lots of support resources on campus, CAPS is favorite, must be careful for who you select as therapist, based on preference, hard to get help if they do not

	learned in HS that you're expected to learn in college		syndrome any longer, deserves to be here like anyone else	understand your experiences
Lanita (f)	No, was theater kid growing up so everyone knew each other, college structure was different than high school, felt prepared in her third year finally	Very different in SB than SD, Lompoc its own town where family from, IV within SB area is small unit but powerful, can be far reaching to go to downtown SB, SD is great too but more color, called mom all the time and spoke with friends at Santa Cruz when she first got to campus, over time in SB she now gets into debates with family about generational differences on society and history	Two moments: when she met her closest friends here during first year winter quarter randomly for dinner, felt like she was supposed to be here, second is when she got a campus job and got more involved with theater department, felt like part of the machine, like it was her purpose to be there	Been to CAPS a few times but never stay, went to career services once and it changed her life, been to SRB and EOP a few times, talked to people in linguistics department, desk assistant for residence halls, being in housing made her more involved as well
Lauren (f)	Yes, high school prepared her for college	Sometimes she really misses home, family, friends, and church, has a support system but forced to make another one, struggled with that initially so called parents everyday	No she has not yet	Never been to counseling since she does not feel comfortable using it, career center helpful, feels comfortable using math lab at CLAS, going to Cheadle Hall, friend helped her find resources
Briana (f)	Yes curriculum wise, some stuff taught by teachers helped her for college, mainly helped with writing	Very different, used to seeing Black and Mexican people, not many Black people here, her and her friends speak Spanish together back home but people are weirded out by her speaking Spanish here, they assumed she was Mexican but she was native African, she calls mom often and she helps with cooking strategies, she tries to go home every break so she does not get homesick, stays connected with family and friends through video chats, goes to beaches as well	When with friends she feels she belongs, in class or at office hours she doesn't feel like she belongs, got to always tell herself she got into school like everyone else, some professors make you rethink everything, can be intimidating, if having a tough day she would call mom or hang with friends	She does not use a lot of resources, part of EOP, tried attending BSU meetings but stopped, involved with BSEP, career mentors, encouraged to apply to children's center and she got the job
Connor (m)	Yes took APs in high school for lots of credit, helped him get into groove of college, not prepared for the college pace with exams and quarter system	SB an extension from back home, old time friends at SB, dorms were great situation for developing own family, housing super expensive for no reason, had good roommates so easy transition	Almost right away, bonded with great people, Black scholars hall was helpful, BSU, had people he already knew too, different communities emerged for him, connected with people he played	Aware of CAPS and been a few times, different academic advisers, had a few friends work at the writing center, wish he utilized more to see what he likes and do not like, school does a good job at promoting services



			basketball with at the gym, integrated socially	
Jordan (m)	Yes, education wise, curriculum not too challenging, was overall prepared for academic college, culture shock even with knowing limited black students	Stronger connection to home than here in college, focused on work and getting things done in college space, at home he thinks of family and friends, thinks of college as time to grind, family does not visit him, mom does not like freeways, he does go home and keeps them updated, family not part of his college life	Felt he belonged at beginning, rushed frat, sense of belonging reduced over time when you don't see people who look like you, used to seeing diversity and different mindsets which is not normally the case in SB, feels more monogamous here in terms of interactions, different from when he first got here	Always hear about CAPS mental health, got written up in dorms and had to attend drug and alcohol program CASE, part of show on KCSB radio, heard of MCC and BSU but he does not use these support systems on campus really, more independent
Carly (f)	Yes education wise, socially it is different	Feels different, misses home, different environment but she has to get educated, weather social setting and number of minorities different back home, she holds family close to her heart but it is her journey, she includes their love and support but cannot call them for every little thing	Not really, there was a lot of bias, sometimes it is best to keep to yourself	Yes she uses CAPS
Sam (m)	Yes the schooling part, learned how to write in high school which was super helpful, similar demographics so interactions same, being in a bubble was hard and punch in the face	It is alright, he does not love it, feels more himself at home, his girlfriend likes seeing him in his hometown because he is different there, tells her sorry and that is just how it has to be up here, family tries to make effort to visit, attended one of his invitational in Hawaii, connects through texting and calls	Does not know, still trying to figure it out, thought volleyball team would be his thing but realized he does not really fit in and never has, does not do the same things they do or talk they way they do, he is not an outcast but does his own thing, would hang out with people in his dorm freshman year but that was short lived, feels he should be here but does not feel like he belongs	CAPS, athletics, does not feel comfortable using them, never been person to ask for support unless it is being handed to him, comes with upbringing, got to hide things, toxic masculinity he guesses
Alicia (f)	Yes academic wise and somewhat social, not overwhelmed in college party wise or social since she	Weather is different, hotter back home, very isolated in SB regarding options, very local, things are expensive, must save money, talked to parents a lot during first year plus siblings,	Toward end of fall quarter, the beginning was tough with finding place, working, establishing friend group, felt	EOP is main one she goes to, feels comfortable there, knows about CAPS but never been, some of her friends go

	wasn't surrounded by it, adjustment from semesters in high school to quarters in college	goes home for most breaks so don't feel too homesick	better after understanding courses and the campus more	
Zion (m)	Yes, high school super difficult, some college classes easier than his high school classes, connecting with right spaces on campus was harder	Loves being away from hometown, wants to establish his own life and own person, don't want to worry about family drama, calls mom often, keeps contact with paternal grandma since she helps him financially too, always keeps family in mind whether it is Black Studies courses or Slavic Studies courses, make sure to tell family when he gets good grades, his sister just graduated and going to college too	Took a year before he felt he belonged, got involved with Resident Assistantship in housing, everyone in housing was so welcoming and inclusive, they were some of most diverse group of people on campus, he never felt out of place when he spoke up, never felt he was overstepping, met his best friends in that space	aware of a lot of support services, worked orientations in summer so advocated for support services, he has used CAPS, he is an EOP student but never used services
Dana (f)	Yes she feels like catholic school prepared her, grew up in schools that were never majority black so used to that as college student	She feels safer here, gang violence back home, she misses certain things about home like in summer, ghetto things, expensive here, she reaches out to family, mom and wife with baby boy, brother in air force and stationed in the south, uses video chat to connect	Believe it was during FSSP when she felt she belonged, everyone become friends with it being a small amount of them, felt happy, cannot picture herself at another university	Her scholarship program gives support, they have financial advisers, feels comfortable using that, aware of CAPS but not going to use it, heard bad things about CAPS so rather go off campus for that
Elizabeth (f)	Yes partially, took a college prep class but did not prep her, attended several high school so not consistent in terms of academic rigor, got to figure things out	Feels exhilarating, glad to be away from home but still do miss home and being around family, you miss a lot of things going on, calls home often, everything moves fast paced so cannot always talk to them but generally talk to mom once a week	Around beginning of second year, joined a dance team, was starting to make friends, started to recognize people, settled into a group with different backgrounds but had similar ways	She knows of DSP, worked as a proctor, been to career services a couple times for classes and for resume
Antonio (m)	Only one year of his high school prepared him for college, high school structure different than college	Definitely a culture shock, more free not living with parents, had to adjust to the demographics here, not uncomfortable around different races, he includes family in how he acts and uses the lessons they taught in certain situations, taught to be independent, does not try to call them for money, he wants to make his own, reaches out to dad if needs help in certain	Second quarter freshman year, when to ABC conference and got closer to friends, got closer to black community, got to see different school cultures, wanted to engage on campus afterwards, by his third quarter he and friends started a new club	CAPS for mental health, mentor program, he was a mentee last year and now will be a mentor, haven't identified with a lot of things on campus, does not feel comfortable talking to CAPS about mental state, he was taught to handle things himself where he is from, push through if going through

classes since he is an  
accountant

something, utilized  
Black Scholars Hall  
mentee program and  
OGYG

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As seen in Table 4, at least 13 participants felt that their schooling experiences prepared them for college. Of these 13 students, at least 7 felt only parts of their past schooling experiences prepared them for the university level. Academics tended to be the area students felt most prepared for versus the social aspects and environment change piece. 2 participants emphatically said no their past schooling experiences did not prepare them as they were forced to changed their study habits and the college structure took a while to adjust to. The talk of college pacing came up often across interviews. All 15 participants acknowledge a difference in the college environment versus back at home. Navigating college on and off campus was part of the conversation. While some participants appreciated the small-town college atmosphere and locality of everything, other participants expressed frustrations with the public transit and the difficulties with traveling around in the full SB area, versus just being near campus. For some participants, the beach town atmosphere reminded them, in part, of home based on their community context back home. Family did come up in each interview as participants expressed their level of communication and engagement with their family. At least 9 participants utilized their family or home within their schooling experiences, whether they (a) contacted family every day or every week keeping them updated, (b) let family know about any events that may occur on campus, and (c) maintained a level of representation of home within their daily practices. Several participants mentioned how they hold their family in high regard as they navigate college. Other participants acknowledged the importance of establishing “their own person” or becoming an independent from family. Within this conversation, these participants felt that

family would not understand their college journey since they did not attend. At least 6 participants expressed feeling of belonging at some point during their first year in school. A few other participants felt more belonging during the start of their second year after getting more involved on campus and taking on leadership positions (and learning more about their respective home departments). Some participants voiced not feeling a sense of belonging yet, which came up with younger participants. All participants said they were aware of campus resources to support students. At least 13 participants acknowledged that they used resources on campus like Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Campus Learning Assistance Services (CLAS), Writing Center, Athletics, Disabled Students Program (DSP), Financial Aid, EOP, BSU, Black Student Engagement Program (BSEP), and more. Some participants did not feel comfortable using certain resources like CAPS or being involved with organizations like BSU because of the differences in thought and beliefs. Some participants mentioned their desire to frequent resources like the career center, but had not made the effort to do so as of yet. One particular student utilized resources as a form of professional development, working with KCSB radio. Or another student working as a Desk Attendant (DA) for housing and gaining her nucleus of friends through that job.

As seen in Table 5, the researcher asked whether participants felt their identity had ever been challenged during their college experiences thus far. All 15 participants relayed feeling their identity was challenged at some point whether it be out in public, in a classroom space, in social settings, in housing, and more.

Table 5  
*Students' Thoughts about Campus Impacts on Identity*

Participant	Identity
Tara (f)	During freshman year being around different people that is not family, living in dorms and being social changes you without noticing, sometimes you compromise yourself even if you do not agree with something, joined women's group later first year, two other Black girls involved, felt good to have shared feelings about discomforts on campus
Kalin (m)	Not sure besides getting kicked out, people tend to mind their business here, people not trying to tell you what to do, just do what you got to do
Larry (m)	Difficult to get into Communication major, had same Communication TA from first year during third year and they were surprised to see him in the class implying they were not good enough, he was the only Black person in space so not surprising, never had someone challenge their intellect and ability until then
Lanita (f)	All the time, took course in linguistics on race and ethnicity and felt her identity was being highlighted the entire time while being the only visibly Black person in class, felt tense, dropped course second week, would get out of class exhausted which was not good for mental health, class activities uncomfortable, teaching style made her feel ostracized, and was going through family stuff too
Lauren (f)	Came into college thinking it will be like high school and that you would understand material, no need to study, then you bomb the midterm, then forced to changed your daily schedule and adjust to new rigor and tackle it
Briana (f)	Went to grocery store recently and was called whitewashed by roommate based on upbeat trap Rihanna music she was playing, another situation occurred on the bus with a friend where white bus driver took their bag of chips and started eat it, looked through her groceries and being rude
Connor (m)	Hesitant on how he would be perceived by Black Scholars Hall regarding his love for academics, given his earlier high school encounters with Black students who he played basketball with, was resistant and categorized Black people in college like they did not prioritize academics, but that was not the case in college, helped him grow and realize his own biases
Jordan (m)	Speaking to Indian friends and at some point in conversation the guy said he did not "act Black," he lost respect for him at that point, did not speak to him for a while, he tried to challenge his identity, he would not like if he said 'you don't act Indian'
Carly (f)	Always challenged, just part of being Black, part of the biases and stereotypes, people do not know you but have preset images of you, most of time they expect POC to be impoverished and then they see her, it is just bias, it is not true, it is everywhere
Sam (m)	On volleyball team it is always being challenged, known for jumping high and being good athletically, who he is versus how he is perceived as a Black athlete playing volleyball is polarizing, feels like he is being dumbed down as just the Black kid that jumps high, it is troubling because he puts the work in, but it is watered down
Alicia (f)	Was working and taking calls from a fellow peer during student strike for UC workers, she was upset that strikers were outside near housing area on campus, she was hostile and said "you need to do something," wanted to throw stuff at workers, seeing this response to people wanting a better wage threw her off, her white peers automatically assumed these workers to be disruptive and not consider their struggle, showed the disconnected between them, their response was entitlement
Zion (m)	Challenged as Greek IFC social frat member, not a lot of POC, was only one in frat hour, had to check white people using the n word and letting them know he will not tolerate it, then they would stop when they knew he was serious, another would be not being as involved with BSU or being seen in Black community as "not that Black" or "the whitest Black guy", he is treated different outside the SB space, they just see him as a Black guy

Dana (f)	Attending parties full of white people and they start dancing and using certain words, challenging
Elizabeth (f)	Challenged all the time, work at front desk of library, feels she must act a certain way to prove herself especially with certain questions people ask, feels she is not always herself in those moments, watching herself get torn apart
Antonio (m)	Challenged all the time, mainly by Black community, his personal identity being attacked, had encounter at party where shirt was off and group of girls felt uncomfortable, he was not aware until next day when someone else brought it up, felt gossip was being spread instead of communicating directly, feels they try to push you away in Black community at times

The second set of interview questions for students' campus experiences centered around social adjustment. The researcher asked the following the questions:

- What has been your involvements on campus?
- What (navigational) tools of support have you developed for yourself on campus?
- How has UCSB been supportive?
- What relationships have you formed at UCSB, if any? This could include, but not be limited to, friends, peers, staff, faculty, and community leaders.
- Describe your interactions (or encounters) on campus with staff. With peers. With faculty. Does it vary based on setting/space? How so or why not?
- What do you enjoy about UCSB? What aspects do you enjoy? Conversely, what do you dislike about UCSB? What do you consider your least favorite thing?
- What improvements or suggestions might you have as a Black student on campus?

Table 6

*Students' Campus Experiences regarding Social Adjustment*

Participant	Campus Involvements	Navigational Tools	University Support
Tara (f)	Jumped all over the place, did WORD, KCSB freshman year, Community affairs board alternative break program in Florida, did Intramural soccer, started magazine with friends, multiple jobs with Arts & Lectures and club guest house	Used mace on campus, had lots of anxiety and did not address until CAPS, course and workload did not help anxiety, had to stop something, used parents as a support, weed, WORD was helpful but stopped going, did internship with art and design museum	Took intro to research course which was supportive academically, helped understand what research university was about, inspired her to have more purpose in learning which is why she ended up in art, felt like a robot before, CAPs and mental health too

Kalin (m)	No much, works a lot, works for furniture store on campus, work and sleep	Used writing center for papers, utilized TAs during office hours for assignments, prideful person so do not like asking for help, learned that college is hard and need to ask for help sometimes	Felt no support from university itself, the people are cool, cool TAs, EOP reps cool, actual people seem really cool, have not seen any support from admin
Larry (m)	“Pretty involved,” AS internship under internal VP for improving campus spaces, worked on AS queer commission, worked on fundraisers for student resources, admissions diversity initiative intern, did BSEP for retention efforts	Friend group a great tool of support more than family since they understand college more, family supportive too but limited, friends listen instead of judge, glad to have friends in predominantly white spaces where it can be challenging	Being honest, he loves UCSB but only way they are supportive is through financial aid, everything else is supported by them or they find in different means but no so much UCSB telling them this is where to find these resources, EOP is great but limited to academics, over time he did not need the academic help, same with CLAS
Lanita (f)	Mainly housing and theater, feel empowered working with linguistics department, TA connections	Campus events amazing, RCGSD events, met a ton of new people at events, would attend events with her close Black friend it was always great, met great resources through housing, helped her grow in her identities	Does not think so, hiring great people is only thing she can think of and that is not everyone
Lauren (f)	Did Sidetrek chemistry outreach, women in stem house, part of OGWG program in BSU, did CALPIRG, work at coal oil preserve working with birds, aquarium guide next quarter	Office hours, talking to professors, roommates and people across hall sometimes take same courses so they ask each other questions and grown about classes	School emails for her major are helpful, these emails speak about jobs, activities and upcoming lectures, she feels a lot of resources are here, can borrow textbooks from library even, she feels she has enough resources
Briana (f)	Not that active on campus, desire to join Black Greek life, trying to be more active	Goes to library a lot, CLAS, goes to SRB space when library is closed	Zero financially, SRB spaces like EOP and Women’s center, and her mentor, MCC supportive
Connor (m)	Been in BSU for a while, part of TMP program, working on own company, volunteered for senate campaigns 1st and 2nd year, works for Henley Hall doing legal work for construction projects, worked for club and guest house dining	Must know who is around you, people you live with should have a similar focus whether interested in med school or engineering, loves being around different groups of people for different conversations, finding a crowd with his focus has been important	Super supportive across the board, received several scholarships from UCSB, TMP new venture company is now funded, getting paid by university to do summer work, professors approachable, office hours beneficial with professors and TAs to get better sense of subject matter
Jordan (m)	Involved with social IFC frat, joined a professional frat for entrepreneurship, worked at KCSB radio, really involved with TMP, worked with Recreation Center	He does not really classify things as support systems, gets support from organizations he is part of, organizations help keep him social, would not classify it as seeking out help type of support	Educationally supportive, TMP has given him more motivation to go after things he wants, like the professors, like how classes are structured, Recreation Center gives you priority to work there which is nice, very flexible and not too hard to do, give you enough money keep afloat, support through orgs too

Carly (f)	Not really involved on campus but hope to change that, will be working as CSO next year	She is all about self-discipline, won't have a shoulder to cry on everywhere you go, all about self-motivation and discipline	Supportive to an extent, still up to the individual, use the little support they offer and make up for the rest, she does not reach out to a lot of support honestly, she makes up for herself, she is more individualistic
Sam (m)	Part of student athletic committee for 2 years, running for media chair this year	His athletic director helped with his academics and journey, hard to adjust, helped to find classes, socially live with friends from the dorms, his girlfriend a huge support system, and his parents	Been helpful in the sense that he has been able to find people on campus, supported him in finding people that look like him, few of us in classes so he tries to reach out
Alicia (f)	Was not too involved fall quarter other than work, tried to attend events and BSU meetings but work schedule does not allow for it, aware of things happenings	Used academic resources during spring quarter, attended office hours for assignments, spoke with family for support, roommates helped with venting to each other, would attend study sessions too	Feels like there is a lot of support out there, just have to find it, surround yourself with the support, see campus ads for EOP and CAPS, gone to EOP, if she did not use EOP may not feel as supported, UCSB should do better at advertising their resources especially for students who may not have the means to come out
Zion (m)	RA for 2 years, worked with summer orientations, in acapella group, joined Greek life, DSP note taker his first year	RA lead staff was a huge support system, could talk to them about anything, part of acapella group the longest	Rarely has he needed the services provided, have not made effort to seek any support on campus, he did get scholarship money to help with college, RA benefits been helpful
Dana (f)	Involved with Cheadle Hall or Ecological Biodiversity (CEBER), worked with restoration and North Campus open space, senior FT, distinguishing native versus non-native plants, propagation stuff, wants to do more but cannot due to class times	Friends are supportive, the larger the friend group the easier it is for her to navigate campus	Likes the location, it is therapeutic, calming and relaxing compared to other UCs, UCLA is crazy, Berkeley is depressing, everyone here is pretty mellow besides exams, when other people anxious it makes her anxious
Elizabeth (f)	Part of singing group on campus for short time, DSP note taker, not really involved with campus orgs	Learned to ignore people, put earbuds in and just walk, unless someone points things out to her she will not notice, used interactive maps for campus	UCSB tries to put off image of diversity and everybody is a family, realistically not the case, still people set in their own minds and only some that are understanding and nice and know people come from different backgrounds feeling more welcoming
Antonio (m)	Involved with BSU, was in CMP as a mentee, he is a mentor now, president of men of excellence club	Mentor program is supportive, older students are there who may have taken your classes prior, staff great with helping time management and study habits, pulled from different sources of mentorship	UCSB does not really support Black students with what they need to know on campus, they do more for other students, the AdCRC does send emails but communication not fully there for Black student support, there are staff members that are willing to support but it is not widely advertised, students forced to go out and physically find resources which is tough for some



As seen in Table 6, the researcher asked about campus involvements. At least 12 participants acknowledged being part of some form of involvement whether academic, social, or work-related activities. 3 participants voiced not really being involved at all, but looking forward to being more involved the next upcoming year. Participants were involved in a variety of areas including, student government, outreach and fundraising, KCSB radio station, UCSB furniture store, housing, Greek life, recreation center, academic departments across campus, environmental studies initiatives, athletics, student affairs, and more. At least 3 participants mentioned being part of entrepreneurial endeavors whether it be starting their own company or launching something with friends. The conversation about campus involvements transitioned to a discussion about how participants navigated the campus. In terms of building their own set of navigation tools of support, all participants had their own sense of navigation whether it be more independent or more group-oriented and seeking outward support. As seen in Table 6, at least 8 participants sought out support from friends on a daily basis as a way to navigate the everyday demands of college life. Several other participants favored more self-motivating tactics and emphasized the importance of focusing on their purpose in school. Participants developed their own routines in supporting their goals while on campus. At least 8 participants utilized campus resources and spaces as a way to assist their college navigation. These resources created a foundation for them as they matriculated through school, in terms of who or what they can count on. In terms of thoughts about university support, very few participants considered the university as supportive. At least 7 participants thought of UCSB as having limited to no university support. Participants

thought of the university support as an administrative component, which students felt a disconnect in that respect. Some participants acknowledge financial aid and scholarships being a major component of university support. Aside from that, there was a sentiment that one must find their own support through student affairs departments, academic programs, initiatives, and being connected through some individual staff people. Some participants mentioned the location as a form of university support as well, especially since the campus promotes the campus environment (i.e., the nearby ocean and mountain views) to support goals and help cope with day to day university student expectations.

In Table 7, the researcher asked questions about student relationships on campus as well as encounters that might occur on a daily and/or weekly basis. At least 14 participants voiced establishing some form of relationship with friends, peers, faculty, or staff. These relationships were developed through courses, programs, internships, campus events, mentorship, counseling, housing, research, and various organizations that build community. Some participants were more connected to external relationships while others expressed their close friends being the main established relationships, being able to bounce off ideas or critique each other. Once students found their spaces, they seemed to maintain those relationships established in them. All participants recognized how beautiful the campus was and stated that they enjoyed environment on that level. Students really felt like you can do anything at UCSB. They mentioned how (a) people are always smiling, (b) the atmosphere is laid back, (c) the weather is gorgeous, (d) there is potential to grow, (e) the campus seems welcoming, (f) they love the small-town aspect, (g) they enjoy the freedom, (h) it feels safer than home, and (i) loves the carefree attitude. However, there were also dislikes about the university as well. One participant mentioned how the school was beautiful but felt artificial

or curated in a sense. Additional sentiments about UCSB from other participants were that (a) it is too expensive to live, (b) Greek life culture is toxic, (c) people hold lots of biases and there is a lot of strife, (d) people are too relaxed, (e) they do not like the diversity ratio, (f) people have a very politically-narrow mindset and think one way, and (g) they do not like how Black Studies majors cannot get into Black Studies courses.

Table 7  
*Students' Thoughts about Campus Impacts on Adjustment*

Participant	Relationships	Campus Enjoyment	Campus Dislike
Tara (f)	Connected with professors more, could be tough at times because they are always on the go, connected with community, involved with BSU for a bit, felt like she was not Black enough so stopped going, had imposter syndrome and did not know how to voice herself in BSU space with being uncomfortable	She enjoys it, feels like you can do anything here, setting is serene, she does not feel weighted down since her grandma helps financially, feels no pressure, just academics to handle and mental health, people are active, she feels like if she went to Howard then she would probably be in the dorms more often	Though it is beautiful, it feels artificial too, like curated, not sure if she is understood by people or if they are just agreeing with her which can make her anxious, like that faculty doing research and being active so not stagnant
Kalin (m)	Working on research with two TAs, usually not trying to talk to people like that, if he wants to be noticed in classroom then he must make the first move, must make noise, must take that step if you want help	The weather is gorgeous, really like it, people cool and always smiling, it is a pretty welcoming place	Does not like how privileged everybody is here, people do not get that everybody not from same background, lot of ignorance, not always their fault they just do not know
Larry (m)	Love UCSB promotion of community, you must find the community for you here, can be friends, professors, coworkers, but may have to go out and talk to them, professors helped him with getting an internship	What they like most is potential to grow at UCSB, both academic and social opportunities to grow if you like, UCSB a unique pace because it is isolated from world, in its own bubble but still close, true college town where you can go days without seeing someone over 24, similar mindsets, "less judgey," you get to grow into the person you want to be, be yourself	So expensive to live in SB, when not supported by family you can feel the financial stress, must be cautious on spending despite others spending like crazy, some peoples' parents buy everything but they have to work, would be nice for mom to spend a food packet but that is not the reality, sometimes they have to skip buying books for class in order to pay rent
Lanita (f)	Met lots of amazing friends, great thing about big campus is you can get whatever you need as long as you are pursuing it,	Love the weather, good hot level, beach is great, love that about the campus, love that it is a campus here and not	Bike paths are the worst, friends got in bike accidents, hearing sirens are scary, parking sucks, UCSB bad at accountability, they

	met great faculty through housing and linguistics, connected to Black studies and film departments, great to know people in paths she would like to follow	embedded into the city, love the email system, find out about a lot of events through email which is important, love reading emails, UCSB has great faculty, amazing research being done and available to you	don't focus on what they can do for certain identities on campus, they focus on the whole, if they acknowledge people being different it would be happier people
Lauren (f)	Roommates, people across the hall, CALPIRG is friendly, on first name basis with chemistry professor, office hours helps a lot, mentors at OGYG, WISE, and NSBE	Enjoy being next to beach, can take a break at beach, seems like a close-knit campus from outside, enjoy that there are CSO officers, academic and therapeutic resources you can turn to	People are too relaxed [least favorite thing], everyone is laid back and okay with C's and just a 3.0 GPA, still need to find group that really cares about what they are doing, does not like the wind, does not like how it is overly white (not used to that), thought it would be more diverse, can count on her fingers how many Black people she has seen today
Briana (f)	Supportive friends, they critique her if she makes a bad decision, job at The Arbor is supportive, always talking with each other about majors and work opportunities, admin staff supportive, can be intimidating to approach professors on your own, better in a group, financial aid office is nice	Lots of stuff she likes, people are friendly, nice environment, not much violence going on like back home	Do not like the diversity ratio, lots of protests about pay for employees so that can also be fixed
Connor (m)	Really good mentors in the area, working for judging downtown, connected with former chair of alumni association who is a well-known lawyer, connected with people who have done it and willing to help others who might be interested in similar paths, good relationships with professors, been good with faculty interaction to get what he needs but it can be intimidating for some people, faculty willingness to interact with students varies across departments	Enjoy the laid-back culture, people are not high strung like in other places like Berkeley, more open to what you have to say whether they agree or not, good collaborative culture, study groups another great thing people are willing to do, not many complaints	People willing to hear other opinions but the political landscape narrow, professors are liberal in how they view or state things, guest speakers are very liberal streaming, protests occur when people have opposing viewpoints, should add more than a liberal sense on campus
Jordan (m)	Close to friend group from freshman year, they live together, branched off and met different people, close with a couple professors, TMP professors are helpful, one professor is helping him with business start-up goals, he stays to himself and focus on his	Really like the small-town aspect, first thing that really brought him here and he still loves that, likes the campus energy, people are outgoing, friendly and welcoming, education been good, been getting involved more with	People he interacts with can have a monogamous way of thinking, a lot of group thinking here, people are less willing to challenge a status quo, where he is from you can get called out for saying something stupid but it is different here

	goals and keeps the close friends he has	faculty recently, really like the faculty here	
Carly (f)	None related, nothing foundational or strong enough to be called relationship, some people helpful some not, instructors and teacher are nice for the most part, they do their jobs	Does not enjoy nothing really, it is alright but it is not like heaven or anything, love trees, love nature, the views here are beautiful, she has a view like that in her apartment	Sees a lot of strife here, SB in general not just UCSB, lots of bias exists everywhere, everyone wants to pose as some rich person but not everyone is rich, strife as in people feel like they are better than someone else, everyone wants to be pretty and be noticed, but not everyone will be noticed, that is just how it is
Sam (m)	Developing relationships with teammates, one of his history professors is cool, has established relationship with former assistance coach	Enjoy the people, beautiful people here, happy, big campus so nice seeing new faces, live next to beach which is "pretty nice," sunsets really pretty, does not go to beach a lot though, can see the moon really big and the stars sometimes, the ocean and mountains atmosphere is one of main highlights here from him	People can be rude too, or non-apathetic at times which is frustrating
Alicia (f)	Made a decent amount of friends, close with roommates, met people from STEP orientation, met people from EOP, gotten close to TAs in political science, did not reach out to professors as much as desired, leaned on TA connections, housing was not great at the beginning but now living with former roommates	She likes the freedom, able to do what she wants and not feel restricted, she has a lot of choice, she can choose to study, hangout, use resources, she feels there is so much opportunity for students, she likes that, people she is around are welcoming and friendly, she can be herself around them, she does not have to put on a show, the people and environment school culture she likes	Some aspects of the culture she dislikes, Greek life part can be toxic, she lives near a frat house and music plays all the time, some students very entitled and not as friendly, more clique-ish when not needed, even heard folks in the sororities say some people not as friendly, so sometimes there is that shallow part
Zion (m)	Formed great relationships with peers and people in his club, haven't connected with peers like high school yet, best connections came through housing, faculty bonds through Black studies, usually involved in spaces where faculty are more aware of social justice issues, one of worst encounters was in a Black Studies lecture hall with the professor, reminded him of his grandma the way he was put on the spot for being late to class	Enjoy the community aspect, people genuinely friendly, crazy things happen in IV but it is the norm for things to be unusual and weird which is unique to a campus, feel like the school does good job at promoting education and awareness of social issues and injustices and making sure students are aware of these things in media and locally	Prospective students and family take tours and assume it is a beach school and mostly white, like blonde and blue eyes, looking from a far this could be true in terms of largest population, but there is a high Hispanic population too and you see more diversity recently which is cool, still not enough Black students, one person came up to him like where are the rest at, like her son was the only Black student visiting in the group
Dana (f)	FSSP roommate became best friend, close to Promise Scholars staff, lots of	Feels safer and she likes that, like a college town since every around her age and she does not	How cultured certain people are on campus, she understands a little staring but it is right off the

	mentorship, got opportunity to work internship at Santa Monica mountains	like to be “PG” all the time so she likes that	bat them seeing you and knowing they do not like you, thinks it is more of a home thing
Elizabeth (f)	Made a lot of friends on campus, lost a lot of them too, only one person from her initial friend group that she still talks to, connected to a couple staff members, her library boss is cool, work at the library is cool but some people have bad attitudes	Enjoys the carefree attitude here, but also all working hard, everyone with overall feeling of trying to relax but getting stuff done too, we have good balance of getting work done and having fun, stressed out but not driving ourselves down	Cannot expect everyone to be understanding, does not get how folks come from all these different cultures and come to a university and still does not have that understanding nature to welcome people, she does not have to agree with them but at least respect them, lot of people do not do that
Antonio (m)	Considers his friend group as his brothers, he has acquaintances as well, close with math professor, know him on a first name basis, can talk to him whenever, can talk to one of housing staff whenever, RAs cool too	Enjoy the environment, the beach right here, enjoy his friends, socially could be better, parties based on who you know, but social aspect pretty cool, enjoyed the professors here, none of them have been boring, the devote their lives to teach, they try to make classes enjoyable, interactive	Does not like how Black Studies Department is set up, lot of Black students cannot get into those classes, not saying to put a hold on course for just Black students but there should be priority to Black Studies major at least

Participants had the following recommendations for campus improvements:

- More attention to cultural organizations on campus – should be a protected space
- Should be more attention towards returning students assisting incoming students in terms of learning about the campus
- More Black faculty outside of Black Studies Department
- More Black TAs
- Should not be “BSU or nothing” – other Black spaces should be promoted
- Better access to Black Studies courses (and other courses) – priority enrollment
- Increase Black student population on campus
- Increase visibility of support systems for people of different ethnicities
- Increase participation of athletes in campus-related spaces and opportunities
- Adding more Black events on campus

The third set of interview questions for students' campus experiences centered around career aspirations and attainment. The researcher asked questions that involved the following topic areas:

- What is the highest level of education you hope to attain? What kind of job or career do you hope to have in the future? (BMW 2.1) Is this aspiration different from what you actually expect to attain?
  - What people or experiences have been major influences on your plans for the future?
- How has UCSB impacted your career goals?
- What opportunities have you received as a UCSB student?
- What have you learned the most about being a student here? What have you learned the least?
- What spaces do you occupy on and off campus? How much are these spaces connected? (BMW 4.1)
  - How have you been able to use these spaces to navigate college? What tools are employed? (BMW 4.1)
- What are your long term goals? What are your challenges and resources to reaching these goals? (BMW 4.4)
- Do you feel UCSB prepares you (or has prepared you) for a career or job opportunities after college? If so, how? If not, explain why not.
- Do you feel you have succeeded thus far at UCSB? Why or why not?
- As a current Black student at UCSB, what would you tell a prospective Black student interested in applying to UCSB?

Table 8

*Students' Campus Experiences regarding College & Career Attainment*

Participant	Degree Level	Future Career	Career Influences	Opportunity
Tara (f)	Master's of Fine Arts degree	Animator and/or practicing artist, does not feel school prepared her for animation, art taught from a general perspective, wants to get MFA in Germany since it is cheaper and continue learning about animation and production within 5-10 years	People in the art world that she has found through research, IG, magazines, she has found out what she is not like at UCSB which helped her find what she is like, career identity helped shape more specific goals, went from BLST, to ECON to COMM, to Art History to Art	Fully funded academy, mentorship in art department great, get faculty who seen so much in the art world, not pompous
Kalin (m)	Bachelor's degree, no more school after this	Sales and marketing, good at selling, been selling paint jobs for last 3 years, been selling stuff since a kid, want to start something that can take smart people from back home out of those situations	Mom is a big influence on being better person, boss taught him importance of business different than just being friends, sister an influence, loyal friends, his family and way he grew up, UCSB taught him that he does not want to be an accountant, school designed to make money off you not produce smart people	Research with TAs, technically part of school wrestling team but don't show up, he shows up like once a quarter, climbing club too but not present due to work, he loves to be active, used to be more active in HS with track, football, wrestling, he likes to keep his body moving
Larry (m)	Bachelor's degree	Wants to go into media field, change how queer people Black people and POC are represented in media, how they use our faces and bodies and spaces they take up, through writing, TV host, or advertising, public relations	All the people who treat him differently for how he talks, acts, looks, and all barriers from society and media, took long time to love how he looked, how he acted and sounded, does not want others to feel that way, working as diversity initiative intern is motivating, UCSB taught him the use of social network connections, not always what you know but who you know because that can get your foot in the door, boss at UCSB admissions helps him	UCDC in the fall



			with career goals, boss helped write letter for UCDC	
Lanita (f)	Realistically a Master's degree in second language acquisition, if she was in love with school like back in high school then a doctorate	Editor for TV shows, documentaries, anything to do with media but not paper stuff, not different from what she expects, wants to be in this field	Being in love with ling came from Kennedy language and life in college and TAs that spoke to her, media outlets like YouTube, all def digital produces great content, made her think about doing editing with her ling background, Kennedy and theater department impacted career goals, costume head path excites her	Lots of research opportunities, professors talented, TAs great, talking to them you can get a lot, most rewarding part here, few people she can connect to within school and housing when she graduates
Lauren (f)	Master's degree, probably not PhD, it seems like a lot of work, going toward aquatic biology and may need to do more research but should only need masters	Something working with coral reefs and trying to sustain them, climate change, conservation stuff, not sure what it is called but probably marine biology, not sure if that is fully what she will actually do in future but she hopes so, could change in two years	Originally wanted to be a lawyer, she saw how much work that takes as doctor and lawyer and you are not really home, her dad is a doctor and gets home late, would have liked to see her family more, took a bit of medical route and law route combined to be marine bio, like analyzing, taking documents and what is needed to convince others, like kids so could work at aquarium with a marine bio degree, decided upon marine bio before deciding UCSB and UCSB is top 1 or 2 in marine bio	Getting experience before and after aquatic biology class, with chemistry outreach
Briana (f)	PhD	Wanted to become a professor at first, get tenure and do research, still deciding on options, but for sure want to do something with travel and kids, always wanted to work with kids and traveling since middle school	Her mentor is the dean of students, helps shape what she wants to do, wants to work with kids like she does, don't think UCSB impacted career goals because she wants to do the same	Calfresh card, does not have to pay for food out of pocket, spend money on rent and books, work helps pay for loans, children's center will

Connor (m)	Law school	Interested in law, love business, love sports, does not want to use degree in traditional sense, would like to merge these interests, something he expects to attain and get accomplished on some level, when he expects to do something he does it with full effort	thing since prior to college Mentorship from attorneys, judges, and folks who showed him the power law can have and what career is possible, his uncle is a big lawyer and taught him about that, he worked years with the senate, through his teachings and through experiences working in SB, it has been beneficial for his career path	really help in deciding what she wants to do Campus does great job of opening up whatever you want to do, pursued like 6 or 7 different things he started but did not end up doing here, whether its senate campaigning or whatever, great place to try things out
Jordan (m)	Master's degree, Technology Management	Goal is to be a good business owner, start up or have a big role in a company, he does not really want a corporate kind of job but I know the experience could be worth it, interested in technology and music, want to bridge both, entrepreneurship is big for him, biggest professional goal, this will not be different from aspirations, he know he will be running own company some day, he expects it to happen, open to other opportunities as well	His friends from Long beach, some he met here, they impact his goals, usually around people who are like minded, classes he has taken too, wanted to be a software developer at first, goals have not changed but more narrow now, university helped with the start up and small business community, econ classes	TMP has been big, started a year ago, before that he did not feel he was getting into a lot of opportunities, had a small scholarship from his frat, had leadership positions in his business frat, new venture completion helped, got funding for a startup, did not feel the opportunities came to him early so started to seek them out, being more proactive
Carly (f)	Want to go past a Doctorate, want to be Business Lawyer	Since she was a little girl, she wanted to be a lawyer, in high school she was a bit conflicted with her path, wanted to be a psychiatrist too, wanted to but medical is not her calling, wants to stick with lawyer route, grow from that and be great	Her mother is a big influence as she is a great woman and she taught her to be great, she hopes to be an even greater woman, she inspires her everyday, UCSB has not impacted goals much, it makes you focused and think ahead, all universities should make you think focus and get it right	Heard the financial aid is good, there are resources here but you must look for it, if you help yourself then you can find help somewhere, put an effort forth and you will find it

Sam (m)	<p>Hope to attain a PhD, looking to get Master's degree after this, want to be history teacher or education, and want Master's/Doctorate in History or Education</p>	<p>Being an educator, as a teacher or looking to get more into education department, being principal or superintendent</p>	<p>No major people to influence plans, wanted to be a lawyer as a kid but realized he did not want to be in politics, his mom is a big influencer and on his desire to teach, UCSB impacted career goals in that he knows he can do something especially as a student athlete, have opportunities outside of education with professional volleyball, and maybe being able to play overseas while also getting a masters</p>	<p>SAC and sports, what was mentioned before, that's about it</p>
Alicia (f)	<p>At least a Master's degrees in Political Science with emphasis in Public Policy</p>	<p>Something like government hopefully, maybe political work, yeah things could be different, she wanted to become lawyer initially but realized she did not really see that in her future where she is now, ventured into more of public policy government side</p>	<p>Family, advisors, TA advisors throughout her first year in political science, in comparative policy class she would speak with TAs about career opportunities and stuff with political science degree, internships with mayors and governors in California, so it shaped her idea of what she wants to do, seeing things she can do as a UC student like going to DC, UCSB has made it more set in stone with taking her political science courses, feel a better understanding of what she wants to do</p>	<p>Would get emails about joining sororities, Black events, offered job at VCSA office during her first year, then recruitment events</p>

Zion (m)	<p>Would hope to attain PhD but he does not know, seems far away, Bachelor's degree sounds "pretty nice," still not sure of his exact path he wants to take after his 4 years here, once he figures that out then he would know more about pursuing more education, almost did not choose UCSB because they did not have his exact major, but chose it for financial reasons, getting into physical therapy</p>	<p>Yes if he can make it work as physical therapist for sports injuries, that would be his number 1, regardless of route he wants to work with people, if he could be anything he wanted, he would be an artist, a singer, that is the golden picture</p>	<p>Yes his mom and then grandma, they always motivate him to keep going and ask him what his plans are post-college, good conversation, his plans are based on experiences he has that can lead him down a certain path, just being at UCSB and around students of similar age kept him on his grind too, having smart like-minded people around</p>	<p>Answered during earlier question</p>
Dana (f)	<p>Happy with a Bachelor's degree, not going to change her mind, not going towards a Master's degree</p>	<p>Want to go into conservation and restoration, and biodiversity, feels like she can attain it with all opportunities she has, if not, then she can get connected at her dad's job in Santa Monica, lot of UCSB folk who work at his job, some are environmental studies majors</p>	<p>Classes influenced decision to switch, took one of needed courses to get in English major and hated it, took environmental studies class and it introduced her to restoration, she was really interested, much easier for her to learn that way, opened her eyes to how flexible her career path can be, more you can do at a research university, not just Business and Accounting Environmental Studies but you can take a year-long series of classes for certification in Business for Environmental Studies, can get a six figure job, was advertised through a class in Promise Scholars</p>	<p>When you put UC in front of school you get strong reactions at home, must take it more serious</p>

Elizabeth (f)	Wants to get a Master's degree, planning to go to graduate school after this, in Psychology, Clinical Mental Health	Either counselor or life mentor, thought about being a therapist for a long time, but want more of a personal connection with people, being able to form the relationship, changed what she's wanted to be many times, it will most likely be different than she plans, she is willing to go into whatever it ends up turning into	Feels like mom and granddad been huge influence, mom a teacher, granddad always the type to give advice, they're the go-to people when she has a problem, they will tell what is on their mind even if you go to them for help, she just listens, people come to her and rant out their problems too even when she does not know them per se, grandad is a retired carpenter, she feels UCSB has impacted goals, made her reach higher, wanted to get a regular college degree at first, once she realized she could do a double major and how school helps to get to masters level she changed mind	Feels like she received a lot of great opportunities, was looking for a job for years but no one would hire her, said she did not fit image or was not old enough to work there, the library took a chance on her, then other opportunities of just being able to come here and they provided a lot of grants and scholarships for her, otherwise she would not be able to attend
Antonio (m)	Master's degree, that is probably the highest, going to get an MBA	Hopes to be a financial advisor, then possibly be a real estate agent, he expects to attain all of that	His dad a major influence because he does not like his job and he feel like he does, he is very interest in his classes, never boring, engaged even if not doing as well in the class, mom does what she loves but he would never do that, dad only works at his job since it pays well and that is what he got his degree in, puts a strain on you plus an 8-hr shift when not loving job, like a part-time job almost, UCSB kind of pushed him in a different headspace, does not think they affect it career wise, just pushed him to be more job-oriented, focus more on money	Been informed about a summer program, going to look into that next year, there's career fairs, always have to go out and do it yourself, have not been presented with many opportunities, he is a second year so most of stuff for juniors and seniors, jobs come down and look for them, he could go to career fair but does not really have anything on resume yet

As seen in Table 8, the researcher asked about students' highest degree expectations. At least 12 participants indicated that they would attend graduate or professional school for at least a master's degree. At least 5 participants expressed getting a doctorate degree whether it be law or grad school. 3 participants expressed they would not pursue more schooling after obtaining their bachelors. In terms of career focus, there were a mix of career paths including, animator and/or practicing artist, sales and marketing, editor for television shows, documentaries and other media platforms, marine biology, lawyer, business owner in technology and music, teacher, government and policy, physical therapist, conservation and restoration, counselor or life mentor, financial advisor or real estate agent. All participants expressed career influences based on their experiences and people around them. A sense of career identity was shaped by people from those fields, courses and internship opportunities with programs and department faculty. A majority of participant either spoke about a mentor or family member that really inspired/motivated them along their path as well. Participants who worked on a daily or weekly basis also developed their own sense of entrepreneurial spirit/nature wanting to even create their own businesses as mentioned above. When speaking about the opportunities received at UCSB, participants noted the ability to (a) participate in a fully funded academy with lauded faculty, (b) conduct research, (c) join sports clubs like wrestling and climbing, (d) get accepted into internships like UCDC, (e) experience working with chemistry outreach, (f) access to Calfresh for food security, (g) campaign for senate and student government, (h) learn about technology management programming, (i) do athletics, (j) work at the library front desk, (k) attend career fairs, and (l) be part of retention programs. Various spaces that participants would frequent during their college years would be the workplace, home, friends' homes, Isla Vista (IV), on the internet,

skateboarding, within education programs, library, class, Mosher Alumni House, Storke Tower Radio Station, residential housing, campus organizations, social media, recreation center, grocery store, coffee shops, and lecture halls. One participant mentioned these spaces occupied as one ecosystem that was intertwined.

### **Part III**

The researchers asked several other questions that began to reveal what students have gotten out of college and how they perceive their levels of success thus far. Lessons that participants learned over time produced some of the following thoughts:

- “Don’t let yourself be misled by what’s beautiful or what’s nice.” (Tara, third year, Art major)
- “Trust your own sense of morality. Don’t work hard for something that means nothing to you.” (Tara, third year, Art major)
- “The quarter system is fast. You’ve gotta be on top of doing your work.” (Kalin, fourth year, Communication major)
- “If you want a job, then you gotta be on top of your game.” (Kalin, fourth year, Communication major)
- “Speak your opinion. Say what you want. Your words have weight. What you say impacts others.” (Larry, fourth year, Communication/Professional Writing major)
- “Not everybody is on your side, even if they look like you.” (Briana, third year, Sociology major)
- “You should work through things you feel you may not be good at...it’s about your interest level, not your ability to learn.” (Connor, fourth year, Political Science major)
- “Learned how to think. Learned how to navigate and deal with interpersonal relationships.” (Jordan, fourth year, Economics major)
- “Did a lot of growing up in college. Expanded viewpoints.” (Carly, second year, Economics and Accounting major)

- “Seems like everyone puts on a mask. It just depends on which one it is. Once they take off the mask, it’s like they don’t know who they are. They’re just lost.” (Sam, fourth year, History major)
- “Learned how to understand individual differences and where people come from and how that shapes how people perceive the world around them.” (Zion, third year, Sociology and Spanish major)
- “Learned about more personal life things like taking care of yourself, budgeting, and paying rent.” (Dana, third year, Environmental Studies major)
- “Learned that everyone is not gonna share your perspective about things. Don’t let that discourage you.” (Elizabeth, third year, Psychological Brain Sciences and Sociology major)
- “Sometimes, it’s good to have a different outlook on life and different ideas because it makes you stand out. Learned to embrace difference.” (Elizabeth, third year, Psychological Brain Sciences and Sociology major)
- “Enjoy your time at UCSB. Always take care of business.” (Antonio, second year, Economics major)

The researcher also asked about what students did not learn, or what they learned the least. Students responded about what they did not learn with things like (a) not learning about the cost benefit analysis for college, (b) not learning about ones’ self culturally, (c) not learning anything related to the real world, (d) not learning from textbooks, (e) not learning how to do taxes or everyday things, (f) not learning much about how to pursue a career, (g) not learning about practical trades or vocational things, (h) learning the least about loving each other, (i) learning the least about math, (j) learning the least about partying and drinking in college, (k) learning the least about study habits, (l) learning little about opportunities to travel without paying a lot of money, and (m) learning little about career choice. Based on some of these realizations, students’ perceived level of success in college varied. A majority of participants felt they had succeeded thus far in college with an exception of 2 participants who felt they had not succeeded yet. From those who felt they succeeded, some responses



distinguished academic success from social success, which varied even more. Some participants felt they still had not been as social or involved enough to feel success in that area, but school wise they felt good about their progress. Some participants also felt okay with their academics, but wanted to do a lot more or felt they could strive for more success in that area.

They also expressed challenges and resources and university preparation that would impact their sense of success or feeling of preparedness. Students were asked to highlight their challenges and resource towards pursuing their career plans post-college, which resulted in the following areas being of concern for students: (a) networking seen as a challenge, (b) student debt, (c) finding a job straight out of college to support goals, (d) money, (e) entering a PhD program without a Master's degree, (f) funding graduate school, (g) needing financial capital to create businesses, (h) sports can inhibit the establishment of faculty connections, (i) moving back home, (j) career fairs geared towards juniors and seniors, and (k) must always prove yourself as a Black person.

Student recommendations about university support for Black students or what they would suggest for Black students were the following:

- “Interview someone that looks like you. Interview someone that likes the same things you like. Know what you want to do before you go to college.” (Tara, third year, Art major)
- “Find a group where you can learn from each other. Try to get an internship and don't wait until your third year because others will pass you up and college don't care about you like that.” (Kalin, fourth year, Communication major)
- “Don't pick school based on statistics. Visit the school if you can. See if you can picture yourself there. Find the school you feel comfortable enough to thrive in.” (Larry, fourth year, Communication/Professional Writing major)
- “Try to make a connection before you arrive. One connection makes a lot more.” (Lanita, fourth year, Language, Culture and Society major)

- “Find your people. It’s good to have people who are going through the same things you are.” (Lauren, second year, Biology major)
- “If you know that you really want to do it, then just go for it and achieve what you want. Take the risk, even though you won’t see many people that look like you.” (Briana, third year, Sociology major)
- “Don’t judge school based on what you see around you in terms of race. Judge the quality of the education and who you’re going to be when you come out.” (Connor, fourth year, Political Science major)
- “It’s like 4% Black, which is something you’d have to deal with. If you’re comfortable, then do it. You can make the best of it. Just depends on your approach.” (Jordan, fourth year, Economics major)
- “There’s bias everywhere. Stand tall. You should have your own back. Don’t expect people to be loving and caring. Be careful and smart. Get your education first, and everything else is secondary.” (Carly, second year, Economics and Accounting major)
- “Don’t come here. Don’t waste your time. It’s a good school, but look into others before you decide. This goes for all prospective Black students, unless they’re in STEM.” (Sam, fourth year, History major)
- “Research as much as you can. Take advantage of the resources that are there, especially for Black students. Find the right people and the right resources because it’s easy for Black students to feel like they don’t belong since on the outside it looks like there’s nothing for them. You must search for it. If you have the desire, it’ll work out.” (Alicia, second year, Political Science major)
- “Visit the campus and see it for yourself. They do have outlets here for Black students to get plugged into.” (Zion, third year, Sociology and Spanish major)
- “Be aware of how little space [we] take up on campus. Don’t be afraid to reach out and talk to people. Don’t try to just stick with your race. There’s a lot of resources not advertised.” (Dana, third year, Environmental Studies major)
- “Be prepared. Sometimes, people won’t listen to you. You have to make them listen. Must stand your ground without proving the stereotype that Black people are ignorant or that [we] talk a certain way. If situations are frustrating, keep your head and stay focused on the long term goal.” (Elizabeth, third year, Psychological Brain Sciences and Sociology major)

- “Come and visit the school. Stay a couple days if possible. Find out about BSU. Find out when they meet. Immerse yourself in college life. Don’t come here with the mindset ‘This is gonna suck, there’s a lot of white people here.’ If you do that, then you’ll have a bad time. Come with an open mind. Your friend won’t always be Black. Your friends will be from different backgrounds. Find your niche.” (Antonio, second year, Economics major)

### **Students’ Views on Diversity and Inclusion Efforts**

Participants had a variety of “definitions” when thinking about the word diversity and what it meant. Diversity was mainly seen as a racial or color-scheme thing by some, but others opened it up to include thought, language, and more. Participants thought of diversity as campus promotions, groups of people who think differently, no one person looks the same or comes from the same background, a range of people who can offer different opinions, racial undertones or diversity of thought, skin color, mix of people in a given space, color as a metaphor for variety, political undertone, tokening, and inclusive. The conversation continued as students identified different efforts and initiatives that they would perceive as diversity-seeking. Some gave a definition of what diversity seeking might be and others talked provided examples. Some mentioned how these diversity-seeking initiatives could be seen as proactive or progressive, campus orgs came up like EOP, Multi-Cultural Center (MCC), WORD Magazine, BSU, African diasporic Cultural Resource Center (AdCRC), El Centro, National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), CLAS, Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) house, Calfresh, and cultural centers. When asked about these efforts, at least 5 participants mentioned that they were not as familiar with these types of efforts or initiatives on campus. They may have heard about some of these things, but did not attend meetings or get involved with any of these areas. Only one participant voiced they did not care about diversity as much. They were fine with having a few Black

students in each class based on their upbringing. They would like to see representation in courses that are about Black people however. The majority of participants said they cared about diversity and stated that it should be the expectation and Black students should be able to feel welcomed on the campus. Diversity should not be shamed, but should accept that everyone is different. There was also an emphasis on diversity needing to be more than just racial diversity, but diversity of thought, sports, and more. When asked about the sustainability of diversity on campus, at least 10 participants said diversity can be and should be sustainable. For those who were in between, they emphasized the importance of people needing to care more about it, and it depends on the effort people put forth, otherwise it will not happen. People must be willing to make these changes whether it means to hire Black faculty, support Black student goals, assist with courses, or ensure Black students feel welcomed to the campus space. These views about diversity helped shape students' college journeys. More discussion will occur in the next section.

### **College Choice and Academic Experiences at the Research University**

The second round of interviews not only summarized the findings of the first round of interviews. It also expanded the conversation about the academic experience of students and things they had to learn again or unlearn as a result to the college rigor. It also touched upon students' college choice to attend UCSB and the impact that a lack of Black representation may have on their experiences. These additional responses in second round of interviews sought to answer the overall research questions being explored in this study.

Table 9

*Students' Reflection on College Choice*

Participant	Top College Choice	Would you attend different school now?
Tara (f)	Top choice was Barnard which was unrealistic, realistically it was between UCSB, Fordham and Howard, picked UCSB since it was cheapest	Yes she would attend different college today, did not do enough research on what she wanted to do as a career, she thought college would tell her what she wanted to do when she got here, they kind of did but they also know what they are doing with the whole undeclared option, regret not doing her own research and trusting a system she did not full know
Kalin (m)	Stanford, did not really have a top 3, it was mainly what school can give him a chance to make good amount of money, whatever would be the easiest transition, yeah UCSB was a school he knew of, went out mini tour his junior year, UCSB was one he liked the most, he could see himself here, people were smiling, did not look stressed, it was beautiful outside too	If he had to it all over again with no current memories, then yes he would probably try somewhere else, would want to be at Stanford, but in terms of the people at the UC, he is happy with it here, he stays with what he knows and now he knows UCSB so
Lanita (f)	Top choice was USC, she had a top 3 but UCSB was not a part of it	No she would not, she considered transferring to UCSD, but UCSB became her home regardless of everything, really was a great fit for her despite everything
Lauren (f)	Top choice was UCSB, he top 3 was UCSB, SD, and UCLA	Does not think she could get into another school so SB is good, good environment, if she pushed herself harder maybe she could get into SD or UCLA, she would probably be happier there, that school has better reputation for doing academics, think it would fit better there for her
Briana (f)	Remember wanting to attend USC or Stanford, then she did not even apply to Stanford, she was mad about that because teachers were pushing them to apply to UC applications only, did not get into USC, did not know about UCSB until deadline for UC applications, top 3 was USC, UCSD, and LMU	Yes she would attend different college but it would be out the country, just understand a different education system outside of US, since different countries teach differently, want to know more perspectives and how courses are taught
Connor (m)	UCSB was his top choice, this is where he wanted to go, he applied to other schools as safeties and reaches but he knew if he got admitted then he would attend, he was happy about getting admitted, top 3 was UCSB, CAL, SD State	He does not think he would attend a different school, this school has given him everything he wanted, he toured other campuses and did not feel the same energy, same connection to campus that he felt here, and it turned out to be right, he has enjoyed everything experienced here
Jordan (m)	His first choice was UCLA, the other schools were all on same level, UCSB was one of his second choices, then Cal Poly Pomona, SD State, CSULB, those were one equal footing, UCSB was obvious next choice after not getting into UCLA, top choices were based on stats, so the UC schools first	Was probably a school more suited for him but looking back he does not think he would make a different decision now, the experiences he has had he would not change, he also would not say UCSB is the best fit for him either, there are probably colleges that are better fit for him

Carly (f)	Top choice was UCLA, she did not have a top 3, UCSB was sort of a second option	N/A
Sam (m)	Did not really have a top choice, if he did not go here then it would not have been in top choice, his top choice was Lewis and it so happen to change after coming here, academics wise he was looking forward to an HBCU, that would have been his top choice, second choice would've been University of Alabama since his dad is from there, UCSB not a part of it, he found out about the school so late, UCs were not on priority list, had to do late registration, top 3 was probably Lewis College, Alabama, and Cal Baptist	He would attend a different school, it is a different mindset at UCSB that he does not really tap into, thinks he would have a better college experience with maybe going to a HBCU where there are more POC or somewhere that's not California, venturing out
Alicia (f)	First top choice at the time was probably UCSD because she liked the location, did not really know a lot about it, her brother went to UCSB so did not know if she wanted to go to same school as him, but then she got rejected from SD, her second choice was SD state since it was in SD, but thought about it more and choice between UCI and UCSB	Does not know if she would attend a different college today, UCI did give her a little more money and then she would be able to commute, would not be too far, those are perks, but she feels like she is in a pretty good position because there are a lot of resources here, just have to find them, UCI was a lot more her areas and there is more stuff to do, relatively cheaper too, SB a lot more limited with their stuff
Zion (m)	UCLA was top choice, had a rough top 3, UCLA, USC then UCSB was shifting between third and fourth	In his third year now and he would say yes up until this quarter, UCLA was always his dream school, that is the only school that he still thinks about like "I wonder how my life would be..." like what would be different if he got in and chose to attend there, within last few weeks a lot have been solidified for him in terms of who he is as a person, the friends made, his involvements, it is hitting him now that he feels he would not have enjoyed other places as much as SB
Dana (f)	Did not really have one on mind, she picked UCLA as top choice and ran with it, she planned to go to CSULB, she was set on that, then got accepted to UCSB and that quickly became her dream school, no she did not have a top 3, had colleges in mind but never ranked them, she definitely wanted to go here, if had a top it would be UCSB, CSULB and CSUN too	No she would not attend another school, she just feels comfortable here in this atmosphere, everything not perfect, it is pretty laid back
Elizabeth (f)	Did not really have a top choice, knew she didn't want to attend UCLA, did not want to stay in the area near home, it was between SB and LB she guess, in terms of a top 3 she thinks it was UC Berkeley and LB as well along with UCSB	If she could another school now she would, she really enjoys UCSB but wanted to attend a school out of state, wanted to go to school in Tennessee but was not able to, if had same opportunity she would probably go there instead
Antonio (m)	SD state was top choice he thinks, but he did not get into the school, so SB became top choice, top 3 was SD state, San Jose state and UCSB	He would only because he feels the environment is harsh, kind of hard for a lot of Black people coming here or POC, not a lot of them at certain points, sometimes you can feel like you are not supposed to be here, he has gone through this even in the last couple weeks, feeling like he did not deserve to be here, going to a different school with

During the second round of interviews, participants were asked about things they had to unlearn from their K-12 schooling experiences as a result to being in college. Based on the above question, students had to unlearn (or rethink) the following:

- “The meaning of education.” (Tara, third year, Art major)
- “You can respect authority of teaching, but not respect their whole perspective because it’s inherently subjective.” (Tara, third year, Art major)
- “Only in school mode until the last class of the day, then being checked out (or free).” (Kalin, fourth year, Communication major)
- “Small cultural differences and knowing people are not built the same.” (Kalin, fourth year, Communication major)
- “We are all different and navigate differently. College taught her about all her identities.” (Lanita, fourth year, Language, Culture and Society major)
- “Adult influences over her thoughts.” (Lanita, fourth year, Language, Culture and Society major)
- “A lot of heroes praised are not good. They don’t teach that in grad school. Had to learn to always dig deeper. Don’t just do with what the teacher says. Everything the teacher says is not true.” (Briana, third year, Sociology major)
- “Not to cram. In college, you gotta start early because things pile up and you’ll be in trouble. Also, realized you won’t be good at everything.” (Connor, fourth year, Political Science major)
- “You won’t always be the smartest in the room. Found out he’s gotta work a lot harder to get what he wants. Things won’t just come to him naturally. If he desires something, then he must put in the work to get it.” (Zion, third year, Sociology and Spanish major)
- “The campus space is more liberal so she had to learn not to joke in public about things she’d consider edgy or possibly offensive.” (Dana, third year, Environmental Studies major)

- “Had to learn that not everyone is out to get her. Felt people were super mean during her earlier years in school. Now, they’re trying to help for the most part.” (Elizabeth, third year, Psychological Brain Sciences and Sociology major)
- “Everybody is not in your best interest. Things don’t come as easy in college: it’s work. Everything requires a certain amount of effort. That wasn’t always a necessity years ago, but now he must put in time to get what he wants.” (Antonio, second year, Economics major)

Several other results were collected from the second round of interviews. At least 12 participated reported that they enjoyed school growing up. Of those 12 students, 9 mentioned they still enjoyed school to some extent. At least 9 participants preferred a smaller class setting as small as 20 students. Some who do enjoy smaller classes mentioned that they enjoy the section-based classes as it allows them to engage differently than they would in a large lecture hall. Some did not have a preference and others preferred a larger class so they wouldn’t have to engage as much. Some of these responses were also based on how interested students were in the class, and whether they felt the professors were engaging enough. Participants tended to like the class setup in college versus K-12 overall however.

As seen in Table 9, at least 10 participants stated that they had a top three college choice. For those that did not have a top choice, they did have certain schools in mind. They tended to lean on their preferences in what type of school they wanted (i.e., proximity to home, cost, rank, etc.). Of the 10 who had a top three, 6 participants included UCSB within their top 3. Others tended to find out about UCSB later in the application process (when using 4 UC apps) or it was a process of elimination (proximity to home, only accepted to one UC). Students’ top three tended to be California-based schools, where only 3 students talked about schools out of state, with one school being an HBCU. When asked about attending another university if they had a chance, at least 5 participants said they would choose to



attend another school. At least 4 more participants were in between, saying at one point they did want to change schools but now they enjoy it. Another instance of them not changing schools was because they would have to do it all over again and they were used to UCSB at this point. The rest of participants said no they would not attend another school if they had the chance. A majority of participants, who said they would attend a different school if they could, were also participants that did not have a top 3 when choosing a college. For students who had UCSB in their top 3, they tended to say they would not change schools.

### **Impacts of Black Representation on Student Experiences**

The last and final question in the second interview encapsulated all three research questions as participants responded to a question about whether limited Black representation on campus impacted their college experiences. There were a mix of responses, but regardless of positioning, all participants did acknowledge these low enrollment numbers/percentages and understood how it could impact students differently. Notably, some responses were adjusted to fit within this section. These edits did not change what students relayed to the researcher, but rather it was employed to make sure the conversation flowed, as some parts were repeated or fragmented. Student views on campus representation were the following:

4% is definitely visible. The population is so small, it can fit in a GroupMe chat. There's also a Facebook group with Black people included from campus. Don't know what the cause is but it really does hurt...get anxious in class and things happen to you. Then when alone you reflect and have to reteach yourself how to feel about different things. In the library, you can see the lack of Black people too. (Tara, second in-person interview, 15:18, November 13, 2019)

I don't even know about 4% cuz I hadn't seen many Black folks last year. This year, I've seen a lot more Black people. Me and my girlfriend are amazed when we even see one Black person since there's so few. I'm not used to seeing Black people in SB. I don't act that way back home since it's regular to see Black people. When I see a Black person in SB, it's like 'we made it!' prideful thing. Hasn't impacted me much since I've been back and forth and got used to it. My girlfriend gets super excited

though since she's a recent transfer. (Kalin, second in-person interview, 12:59, October 28, 2019)

It's a really small percentage. 4% is usually me in the room. I walk into lots of rooms and it's just me who is visibly Black. Being on campus for 4 years now, the numbers fluctuate. If you're living off campus, you really don't see Black people unless you're hanging out with them. In res halls, you see people walking around, but in IV they're in the nooks and crannies. If you don't know them, you don't see them. (Lanita, second in-person interview, 11:02, November 22, 2019)

First year, it was only me and another girl in a 60-person dorm. I felt obliged to connect with her because we're in the same place. I still see her. I got her number. It's a very low number of Black students in her class. I try not to focus on that. I just make connections with who I can, then in the back of your mind you're like 'dang there's no Black people here!', then you may see someone walking to class in a du-rag. I feel like it should affect me less since I'm lighter and can identify with a majority white population, but it's in the back of my head. Like are they being picked as just athletics or what's going on? (Lauren, second in-person interview, 11:30, November 5, 2019)

In lecture, I feel it can be kinda intimidating. First day in class, I look around to see if there's any Black students in room. I reacted to numbers 'wow that's like nothing.' I feel like a lot of those numbers are athletes. They do a lot of recruiting for athletes, not much for regular students. Wish there were more Black people. Sometimes, I wonder how my experience would be like at a HBCU. I don't have a lot of Black friends personally, but having a small number is easier to know a lot of people if you go out and socialize unlike me. (Briana, second in-person interview, 23:46, November 7, 2019)

You definitely notice you're a minority. I grew up in an area where I always was dealing with this kind of representation. Even if not in class or school, that's sad. Sad that there's not more POC in the environment, but it's also good in the sense that you have to move past that comfort zone. Feels like lots of POC are used to being in a certain grouping. Sometimes you have to make the best of it. Some situations you may not be comfortable with that I'm sure other POC have possibly been in, but it's growth rather than something negative. You can always go back to the people you've known your whole life. Better to experience these complexities in college than in work place. In this society today, you will be in a situation where you're the only one of a certain background. Even though it's uncomfortable and sad, it can be beneficial too and expand from there. (Connor, second in-person interview, 11:54, October 29, 2019)

Lots of times, I'll turn around in lecture and I'm the only Black person. Been used to it. Even in K-12 classes with schools of Black people, I would be of selective few in a given class. At this point, I don't even notice it sometimes. It can be an isolating feeling. I'm here for a reason, so it don't make me feel too lonely. Not many people

here who look like me and share similar experiences. It is a kinda lonely feeling. It's indicative of those numbers. You don't see that many. (Jordan, second in-person interview, 12:44, November 8, 2019)

It's very glaring. It's an obvious fact that there's not a lot of African Americans in college including Santa Barbara. I don't let it affect me. With my personality and who I am, it don't affect me. There's been times I'm the only Black person or POC in certain settings. I don't let it bother me. I know it does bother some POC. (Carly, second in-person interview, 6:11, November 14, 2019)

It doesn't surprise me. When I think of the percentages versus numbers, it's like even 900 sounds like a stretch. I see the same faces. The numbers reflect highly on the lectures and classroom setups. I'm not surprised. (Sam, second in-person interview, 13:24, November 18, 2019)

Very low number, especially when you say the amount, not even percentage. 992 out of 20k is a small amount. You can see it, especially in my econ class. I'm one of 2 Black people in class. When on campus, I feel like I see more Black people on campus than last year, but still not a lot. Think it's gotten a tiny bit better. Minority of a minority here. Definitely shows in sections. (Alicia, second in-person interview, 13:32, November 13, 2019)

That number does impact me on a day to day. No Black people in lectures sometimes. Limited Black professors unless you're in Black Studies. I have a current Black professor but he teaches African Art History. When you do see other Black students in lectures, you get excited. In my frat, I'm one of 2 Black people currently. Having a small number does make the Black community stronger I feel. The community is a lot more in touch with each other. We're all much more eager to communicate and reach out and alert each other news of things that can affect our lives. (Zion, second in-person interview, 17:05, November 6, 2019)

Recently made a new friend in one of my upper div classes. It was great to have another Black friend. There's not many of them in upper divs. Like maybe 3 or 4. The most Black people I see in my classes is maybe 4 out of 100+ students. So it's like 'where they at.' I never even see the numbers mentioned here. Back to the graduation thing, how easy it will be to find my parents in the crowd. (Dana, second in-person interview, 10:14, October 29, 2019)

There's so few Black students on campus that other non-Black people are in disbelief about how we got into the school. Many have not seen a Black person before. People give me looks, especially in the library when I'm working. Visitors will come ask me questions and seek information and they'd be reluctant to ask me the question. Folks are surprised when they see I can articulate myself and my words. Seems like they are expecting something less. Lot of people like to generalize Black students on campus since there's so few. They think one Black person represents all. It kinda makes it to where you have to watch what you're doing all the time. Like all eyes on you. Folks

that aren't Black assume that all Black students get along with each other and they're all friends. Not always the case. We come from different backgrounds. They assume you must be in BSU. I don't always get along with students in BSU cuz they tend to have a different POV, depending on where you're from and what kind of Black person you are. It can go both ways depending on race. (Elizabeth, second in-person interview, 9:45, October 30, 2019)

The one ninth of the population summarizes lecture. It sucks we're scattered. Some classes you're the only one. Other classes, there's like 2-3. Sucks. In the Black Studies classes, it's a 50% chance or higher that you'll be the only Black one even in a Black Studies class. That's really eye opening. Study hall is whatever. You study with whoever you study with. The main areas it hurts is lecture and living situations probably. I lived with 2 white roommates last year. It was weird trying to adjust to cultural differences, how they live. It's not the best environment and definitely takes time to adjust to. It can hurt you and mental health too. It can bring you down. Gotta go out and find people. That's 900 Black people spread through 4-year levels. Seniors don't really talk to freshmen like that. Juniors are like they about to be seniors. It narrows down the numbers. (Antonio, second in-person interview, 16:33, November 22, 2019)

As mentioned in an earlier section, one participant [Larry] was unable to be interviewed for the second round, however here's a few of Larry's comments from the first round of interviews in response to views on campus representation and diversity and inclusion:

Yeah, I would say I definitely do care about diversity on campus. And I kind of talked about, touched upon that like a little bit earlier with like getting more, hiring more Black faculty members in general. But I would also say, take more account into what your Black students are saying on campus. Because like while we do have a lot of initiative efforts to get more Black students or people of color on campus, a lot of the people aren't going to aren't going to make those decisions based on what the university is saying, but what the students are saying at that university. And so you should really listen to those students when they're telling you the problems and issues that they face on this campus. Because it's kind of like that whole issue of like, when you like, like, when does, like, an organizations trying to help a community that org always goes into this idea of like, we know what's best for this community and then they implement something and then that doesn't work. And they don't understand why it doesn't work, because on paper, it sounds like it works. But they don't understand that communities culture, how they see the issues, or even what that community sees the issues as because they might think there's completely different issues than what you see as this organization or like a business like UCSB and if you allow that community to be a part of the decisions and the decision making processes, you'd be able to help a lot or resolve a lot of the issues that UCSB does have or colleges have

in general, and I feel like if UCSB implemented more of that, actually how they go about solving problems on campus, we'd have a better or a lot better campus and it'd probably be a lot more diverse and probably everyone probably be better off for it. (Larry, in-person interview, 58:51, August 1, 2019)

These results were recalled from two rounds of interviews, seeking to answer the proposed research questions. The following section will expand upon results and further explain different phenomenon related to campus experiences for Black undergraduate students at a Public Minority-Serving Research Institution.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Discussion**

Findings from the current study when aligned with the proposed research questions informed the wants and needs of Black students at UCSB tied to their lived experiences. Data

reflected students' early childhood, college decision making process, college experiences once they arrived to campus including identity formation, social adjustment, and college and career attainment, and their views on diversity and inclusion efforts. Findings revealed new realizations about the relationship between Black students and UCSB. Moreover, Black students recalled their perceived support on campus and its impact on their overall development along their academic career pathways.

Black experiences are highly complex and nuanced given the level of different circumstances that students enter the campus space with. Black childhood varies. Black backgrounds are not monolithic and unidimensional. The university under study was comprised of a mix of Black students in a diverse set of circumstances, which created very real moments on campus. One can grow up in the same area, but have different family education or be raised with different sets of expectations and different levels of involvements in school. Some grow up with a mix of race and cultures. There were many takeaways from this study that captured the lives of Black students from childhood to young adulthood in an education context. These takeaways were created based on directly addressing the proposed research questions. Each takeaway provided an additional perspective to the Black college experience and their relationships formed within their educational journey.

***Study Takeaways Part I (RQ1)***

1. Black parents were protective over their children no matter where they grew up in California.
2. Personal touch with course instruction was significant for Black students. They would much rather prefer faculty and staff who care about their jobs, promote student growth, and encourage students to pursue their dreams. It is

important to note: How you interact with Black kids matters. It could have a lasting impact on how they view school.

3. Students could be excited to attend school, but the routine of school could get old.
4. Even if students were not as prepared for the academic rigor in college, they were still expected to know in college. The university did not stop to teach students about this level of preparation, which could be a campus improvement to consider in the future.
5. Spanish speaking allowed Black students to connect with more students on campus due to cross-cultural language similarities.
6. Some students felt that school was an extension to home. Being enrolled in college created opportunities for family to travel to support their child in sports games, conferences, and other related events.
7. Students missed being home and being around family because they would be absent during important events or special family moments.
8. Some professors made it hard to ask questions in classes like statistics, which could be intimidating. Sometimes, students just felt like going back home due to classroom fatigue.
9. A student could be part of a sport team for years, but not feel like they fit in socially.
10. A student wished they knew about EOP earlier but could not due to suspension and delay in experience.

11. Students who were socially introverted were not supported as much as those who were extroverted. Sometimes, students were forced to compromise themselves even when they were not comfortable or did not agree. They tended to lose part of themselves this way.
12. Some students made a lot of friends. Some also lost a lot of friends.
13. Students did not like the curated feeling of the school environment. It felt artificial.
14. Being fully funded for four years matters. Some students were adamant on finishing in four years due to funding.
15. Some students would start to attend an organization or club, but work would get in the way of being consistent.
16. Career fairs were designed for upper classmates.
17. Some students thought college would tell them what they wanted to do when they arrived. They trusted the system instead.

Black students also revealed their views about the promotion and sustainability of diversity and inclusion at UCSB and its impacts on their own experiences.

***Study Takeaways Part II (RQ2)***

1. A student's blackness was questioned by his basketball peers in high school since he cared about academics even more so than sports. He was often called "Uncle Tom" or considered "white-washed."
2. Some students were used to being the only Black person in AP classrooms during high school, which prepared them for a lack of representation in college.



3. Some students felt a culture shock even with knowing there was a limited number of Black students on campus.
4. There was a level of camaraderie felt with a small group of Black students on campus.
5. There should be more Black therapists on campus. It could be hard to get help from someone who does not understand your experiences or is unable to relate.
6. Identity was challenged when a student was being questioned for their intellect and successfully getting into a major after one of their prior TAs were “surprised to see them” in an upper division course for the major series.
7. It was hard to engage in Black-centered courses with a majority of non-Black students. Students felt they were expected to speak for a whole population. It could be nerve wrecking.
8. Students had a problem with non-Black people telling them they were “not Black enough”. People had preset images of what being Black was or should be, which fed into centuries-old stereotypes.
9. People were still set in their ways. These images of diversity and everybody being a family just was not the case for many Black students on campus.
10. The university was either not providing or not communicating the resources for Black students. Students had to go and find these resources physically.
11. Black students did enjoy the UCSB atmosphere in terms of nature, weather, location, and the people generally.
12. The Black population was small enough to fit into a GroupMe.
13. Students needed more Black spaces than BSU.

14. A student characterized diversity as color, in every aspect of the word.
15. Given their white-passing status, a student did not always see the discrimination that other Black students faced or heard about.
16. A student thought he would have a better experience going to an HBCU with more people of color or somewhere that was not in California.

Lastly, results revealed how Black students utilized their own cultural practices and tools within their experiences as a form of self-support and agency.

***Study Takeaways Part III (RQ3)***

1. Students may have disliked school, but they understood the importance of it and what it meant to their family and community.
2. A college degree means freedom. It holds weight in the world. Leaving a name for yourself matters. Obtaining a degree challenges the stereotypes.
3. College acceptance letters created a new reality for Black students. It represented a confirmed college journey in the near future.
4. Even if parents or family did not attend college, they stressed to their kids to attend college for more opportunity and promising future. Some students grew up with some smart people, but they just never got out of the neighborhood.
5. Students made an independent decision influenced by others and circumstances. Some students wanted to attend a school outside California, but they were not ready to go too far from family. It came down to finances.
6. For some students, the university did not offer a business major so they were not going to attend initially.

7. A student moved onto campus all by themselves. They did not attend any welcome events nor did they attend any summer programs. As a result, they felt behind.
8. Some students acknowledged the use of code switching by “knowing what to say and what not to say.”
9. College helps students step into their own person. Parents no longer have as much power over students’ decisions.
10. Students loved being away for college to establish self as their own person and establish their own life.
11. Students were interested in owning their own business. Their experiences became centered around learning what it took to be an entrepreneur.
12. Some students wanted to be involved more after attending Afrikan Black Coalition (ABC) Conference. One student started a club as a result.
13. Some students had never been the type of person to ask for help unless it was handed to them or they were confronted with it. They were taught to push through it.
14. A student felt she had to act differently to prove herself. She was watching herself get torn apart.
15. Some students had been involved in a variety of campus activities (i.e., internships, magazines, clubs, organizations, jobs).
16. Students evolved over time. For example, a student was once a mentee, and later a mentor and founder of a club.

17. Students created career paths through their involvements on and off campus. They did not have a prescribed path. It was created and captured through dedication and creativity on their part.
18. Students would like to use their career platform to create new pathways and new representations of Black people in public spheres.
19. Moving back home after college was a challenge for some students.
20. Students realized what they would tolerate and what they would not during college.
21. Students learned more about their family dynamics and how to deal with their positionalities as an adult in college.
22. Students enjoyed finding their own way and not being told where to fit in.

This work reflected the need for conversation about the various themes that speak towards CRT and BMW and DLE models. These frameworks provided an opportunity to transform the discussions of Black students in higher education, how they are socialized and racialized, and what they deserve as information and support within the academy to support their career goals.

### **A Critical Approach to Student Development Models, Experiential Knowledge, and Bridging Worlds**

As mentioned in an earlier section, Critical Race Theory in Education was essential for foregrounding and humanizing the experiences of young Black students matriculating through school and developing from childhood to adulthood in the process. The five main tenets really speak to student experiences, at different levels of their school/college journeys. Through Black student experiences in this study, we get to see 1.) how race and racism plays

out in higher education spaces, 2.) how dominant ideologies are challenged (and questioned) in these historically white spaces, 3.) how experiential knowledge is both humanizing critical to the growth and development of students, 4.) how students advocate for changes they want to see through a critical social justice approach, and 5.) how interdisciplinary set of knowledge can be utilized to support students' navigation and journey.

A Bridging Multiple Worlds approach was also utilized to (a) foreground these experiences, (b) acknowledge the multitude of worlds and/or spaces these students were in constant contact with, and (c) think about how BMW could support college navigation in more nuanced ways. BMW theory can be adapted to address the lives and needs of students from diverse backgrounds. This research addressed students' worlds in terms of culture, language, and other identity constructions based on the social worlds of students and community members. This theory looks at how youth forge identities for themselves that coordinates their worlds—and established relationships—and emphasizes how institutions can enhance or impede developmental pathways. This theory became integral to examining the issues of access for Black students, and was a useful way to see how they navigated across worlds while also providing commentary for college eligibility, enrollment, and retention efforts. This also sets the groundwork for a discussion on how students support themselves through this navigation process, while incorporating cultural elements that affirm their Black identity.

The researcher applied the BMW toolkit to construct parts of the interview questions, particularly with the use of two main areas: youth identity pathways to college and careers, and cultural brokers bridging resources and challenges across worlds. According to these two components, youth identity pathways to college and careers included questions about (a)

students' aspirations and expectations for their education and careers and (b) students' career identity exploration and commitment; while cultural brokers involved with bridging resources and challenges across worlds will include questions about (a) what students' worlds are and how they are connected, (b) expectations in each world, and (c) challenges and resources for students' educational and career goals. From a socio-racial, socio-cultural and developmental perspective, these models provided an opportunity to gather in-depth information about student experiences in higher education more concretely.

As mentioned prior, Hurtado et al. (2012) worked on building a new climate model that accounts for diversity dynamics within university settings. They acknowledged that prior work in developing this climate model was incomplete, lacking depth in elements that influence the climate for racial/ethnic diversity modeling. Building on evidence regarding the critical need to invest in supporting the value of diversity (or representation on campuses) in higher education, especially for assessing institutional impact on students' experiences, Hurtado et al. (2012) created a new model called the multicontextual model for diverse learning environments (DLE).

The DLE model is being utilized for further, new research supporting institutional change that explores student experiences on large public campuses not only to assess student diversity, but also to capture the relationships between individuals and institutional components that impact students' worlds and navigation across them (i.e., how climate shapes these spheres). The DLE model was implemented given the nature of the study in discussion of complex organization systems (rigid) and thinking through spaces of diversity and diverse learning environments (how to create them, how to reimagine them). This model was also utilized given its alignment to the first two frameworks in providing clarity about

spaces that promote diversity and inclusion (holding units accountable) and also given its point of being created to challenge systems in place, to hold institutions accountable for lack of representation in critical spaces, and also given its history of fighting for social justice through using school data to refute or challenge court cases and support change in policies and practices that exclude and isolate and discriminate populations historically.

These models are rooted in creating change, in reimagining the possibilities, the different worlds that can assist in creating these changes, and so forth. Student experiences within this study reflect these conversations had by scholars working in CRT, BMW, and DLE.

In addition, this study was further informed by Contreras et al. (2016) work on how the state of California invests in its Black student population, particularly dealing with college choice, diversity and exclusion. In continuation, Contreras et al. (2016) informed the public about the increased need for a more diversity student body. Their study results indicated that a lack of Black students in the UC system limits the academic opportunities and critical connections between students and faculty across racial/cultural groups. Addressing these core issues of campus representation and developing healthier relationships are key for supporting equitable opportunities amongst a diverse student population. Furthermore, there is a need to humanize and/or personalize students' college experience versus allowing a disconnected non-welcoming, business-like learning environment that can be restrictive to overall student outcomes.

### **A Moment to Reflect: Things to Consider**

Based on the results and discussion points above, several implications come up to further explore. Below are some proposed ideas that will help think about student

development models and student experiences in an ever-changing world. With students' ever-changing situations, it is critical to look at the fullness of experiences in order to grapple with how support might be improved for Black students in a higher education context that promotes diverse and inclusive learning environments.

This study highlighted Black student experiences within predominantly non-Black spaces (or institutions). Through student interviews, we get to learn that success is tied to more than just a 2-3 year window. We must widen the scope and speak about the relational components that influence or contribute to the overall experience. This work speaks to what support looks like for Black college goers. Students are essentially their own self-agents based on principles, experiences, and people who influence how they make their decisions. We get to see firsthand the evolution of the student by way of development of scholarship and action sought to accomplish their goals in the most effective ways possible. Results suggested that diversity is not specific enough. Students note how it is very broad but it usually means race and ethnicity in a superficial demographic sense. This talk of diversity must change to be more intentional in usage. Practical skills came up a lot in the study, as students felt they were not getting adequate opportunity for practical, applied experiences.

There is a level of masking personal identity through politics. This sort of learned public behavior whereas Black students may look happy on the exterior but could be really sad internally. Once Black students get accepted and enroll into the university, then what? It should not stop at recruitment, but rather look at how Black students are retained and prepared for life after college. Black students want to learn, explore, and create pathways for themselves. They want to know they can be supported because the university wants to, not because the university feels obligated through diversity and inclusion policies that are upheld



but not always maintain adequately. A sense of interest-convergent takes place with diversity and inclusion on many of these MSRI and HSRI campuses such that the university benefits financially and reputation-wise by holding these minority-serving designations. We must rethink why Black students want to be on these campuses to begin with. There are some students that can imagine themselves at another school, especially an HBCU.

These affinity groups promoted on these MSRI campuses are useful for students, but there must be more than one singular fixed space that affirms their racial cultural identities. These students should be affirmed throughout the entire campus, not just a small section of it. These divisions or feelings of segregation should not be the norm on these campuses that promote diversity and inclusion. How students feel on campus should not be seasonal or predicated on being “placed” in one space on campus for a sense of belonging. This model does not work, and Black students particularly feel ignored by the institution as it pertains to the level of institutional support. Students have even brought up the need to find their own resources because they “just didn’t know.” Once students arrive to campus, they are trying to find out what it takes to be successful in college besides simply enrolling in courses and selecting a major.

Promoting diversity and inclusion has its benefits, but we must be critical about how this looks like on a daily basis on campus. How are students being supported when an incident takes place on campus that directly jeopardizes this promotion of diverse and inclusive spaces? Who is stepping up on the students’ behalf in these instances? As results indicate, students tap into their own potential as scholars to mitigate some of these instances on campus where students may not feel fully prepared. At different crossroads in students’

journeys, their sense of agency takes over whether it is newly formed, or something taught over time at home that they bring with them to the school space.

Participants noted diversity work to lose steam throughout the year. While the university devotes time during the beginning of the academic year for promotion of events and resources, this level of support phases out over the course of a year. This raises the question: Does the university system really care? Again, this addresses the concern of how diversity plays out in higher education, particularly at a school that promotes diversity and inclusion. It feels similar to a stock going up or down – a supply and demand chain so-to-speak. With the demand high, let's supply resources to ensure our product [the UC or university space] and ensure our donors. But, the supply [the support] is not always there in the same fashion throughout the year.

When it comes to Black student representation, there is a blatant discrepancy with the low numbers. First, where are these 922 Black students on campus based on UCOP fall enrollment data? Some Black students are not applying at all due to high costs, not because they are incapable of producing the work. They may also have other responsibilities that impact their ability to produce work. These additional hurdles can limit student access.

Based on interview data, students tended to pursue areas they felt comfortable in. They either interned or gained some form of experience as an undergraduate student. Students count on building the necessary connections on and off campus to support their career goals. Students should be able to explore any career field, but given varied levels of access and/or resources, students are forced to go into fields that they did not initially want to be in due to weeding out, restrictions, delay of graduation, or inequitable entry into a particular field.

At some point during their college journey, many students enter a sixth gear. Regardless of the support services or resources offered, there is something about a person entering a sixth gear with a certain goal in mind and willing to achieve it despite the obstacles. There is something that clicks. Sometimes, students are waiting for that moment until they know “I need to start working RIGHT now” or “this work won’t get done and I will ruin my goal timeline.” The mentality for a student becomes this notion that “there’s no other way.” Some students feel that there is no second time around. One must get it the first time on their own. Success for many students becomes predicated on who a student knows and how well they can decipher information.

Enjoying school is a moving target. It is fluid. A student may encounter something one day that throws them off course for that particular quarter. Experiences are also not made equal. A student can have all the resources available, but things in real time can happen that impact those memories and encounters.

This is a paradigm shift for student knowledge. College can be seen to mirror the real world in expectations, politics, and needs. These shifts in thought are also fluid. It can be influential on development, thoughts of self, belonging, and more. There are different types of students: ones that are social, less social, about academics, not about academics, and more. In support of Black students, the university should work to develop a pamphlet of what Black students face during college, how they navigate, what tools can be used to help support them moving forward.

In thinking about the types of schools students decide to attend, the notion of a dream school does not fade. The narrative of it might change, but it is always in the mind lingering for students.

## **Limitations**

This study highlighted Black students who successfully made it to college, which did not address the population of Black students who did not make it to college successfully. This study interviewed a total of 15 students, thus making it less generalizable to other populations. This study is not comparative to other groups. It cannot be compared with Black experiences at a HBCU, a CSU or any other teaching institution or a private institution. This study could not be generalized to Black student experiences across all public research universities. For Black students who were not from California (or considered out of state students), their experiences were not reflected in this study. For transfer students and non-traditional students, their experiences were not captured in this study as well.

## **Conclusion**

This study sought to find more information about the Black student experience in large Public Minority-Serving Research Institutions, particularly the UC. This investigation aimed to highlight the levels of support and advocacy for Black students on recruitment, retention and post-graduation career plans. It aimed to assess the relationships between Black students and the university. Learning about these different contexts provided better understanding for acquiring new discoveries about career development, identity, cultural/regional background, and socio-spatial relations on and off campus. Findings revealed new realizations about the relationship between Black students and UCSB. Moreover, Black students recalled their perceived support on campus and its impact on their overall development along their academic career pathways. Black students also revealed their views about the promotion and sustainability of diversity and inclusion at UCSB and its impacts on their own experiences. Lastly, results revealed how Black students utilized their

own cultural practices and tools within their experiences as a form of self-support and agency. This work contributes to the ongoing fight for access and equitable opportunities in higher education and beyond academia for all students. We must continue to investigate these university spaces in search of understanding how to best support student goals and encourage scholarship and action.

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## Appendix A

### UCSB Study Pre-Interview Demographic Information

*Thank you for volunteering your time. Before starting the interview, please answer the following questions. These questions will provide an additional source of information for the current study.*

1. What is your current age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What year in college are you entering for the 2019-2020 academic school year?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your current major? If you have a pre-major, please specify in your response:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - Have you switched majors at UCSB in the past? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Are you seeking to switch majors in the future at UCSB? \_\_\_\_\_
  - If you have no major at all, please state “no major yet”: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your hometown? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What high school did you attend? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is your expected graduation date (Month/Year)? \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### *Interview Protocol*

Hi, my name is Jeremy Edwards and I will be interviewing you today. Again, thank you for your participation in this study. You will be given an interview lasting 45 minutes to an hour. Later after I compile preliminary findings from the interview, I will schedule a second interview lasting approximately ½ hr. to confirm my summary of your interview was accurate and for the purposes of refining my summary as necessary. This study seeks to address the concerns of access (i.e., college adjustment and campus support) for Black students at UC Santa Barbara. In particular, the purpose of this interview is to explore the relationships between Black students and UCSB in thinking about levels of support and advocacy for Black students on recruitment (i.e., why students want to attend UCSB), retention (i.e., quality of life at UCSB, climate issues, academic demands), and post-graduation career plans (i.e., preliminary thoughts about where students are going). This interview is also expected to assess the impact of diversity campaigning on student experiences.

Your responses are strictly confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study. The interview will be audio recorded. If, at any time, you would like to omit a response or portion of a response, please let me know and it will be noted. Do you have any questions before we begin?

*The first few questions involve background info about early schooling and educational aspirations.*

- Where did you grow up? How would you describe that environment?
- What was your first school memory?
- How would you define education?
- Briefly, describe your schooling experiences growing up? What type of student would you consider yourself?
- At what point in your schooling did you start thinking about college?
- Take me through a time when a parent, a guardian, or a relative spoke to you about school/education. What was their message? What can you recall from that conversation?
- Similarly, consider the same scenario but with a peer, a friend, or acquaintance. Around what time was this?
- What does education mean to you?
- At what point in your schooling did you start thinking about college? When did you know you would attend college?
- What does it mean to attend college and obtain a degree (to receive a college education)? Does it matter the type of college? Why or why not?
- If you had to describe yourself in 3 words, what would it be?
  - On campus, would you use those same 3 words to describe yourself? Explain your response.

*After hearing a bit about your educational background and experience, let's delve into your journey to get to UCSB, in terms of your decision making and how that process looked like for you.*

- a. What information did you gather about UCSB before deciding to apply?
- b. After getting admitted, what was your decision making towards choosing to attend UCSB? What did that process look like? Who and/or what helped you make your decision?
- c. What other schools did you consider, if any?
- d. What did you feel like after arriving to UCSB for the start of the academic school year? Did you utilize the information gathered?
- e. Looking back, do you wish you gathered more information prior to deciding to attend UCSB? Explain your response.

*Now, direct some attention to your experiences here at UCSB once you enrolled and arrived on campus. I will focus on three main areas that shed light on the types of experiences you've had as an undergrad.*

### ***Identity Formation***

- f. Do you feel your past schooling experiences prepared you for college? Explain your response.
- g. How does it feel being in a different environment away from your hometown? How do you utilize/include family and home within your college experience, if at all? What tools?
- h. At what point did you feel a sense of belonging on campus?
- i. What support systems are you aware of on campus? Do you feel comfortable using them?
- j. Describe a moment on campus where you felt your identity was being challenged.

### ***Social Adjustment***

- k. What has been your involvements on campus?
- l. What (navigational) tools of support have you developed for yourself on campus?
- m. How has UCSB been supportive?
- n. What relationships have you formed at UCSB, if any? This could include, but not be limited to, friends, peers, staff, faculty, and community leaders.
- o. Describe your interactions (or encounters) on campus with staff. With peers. With faculty. Does it vary based on setting/space? How so or why not?
- p. What do you enjoy about UCSB? What aspects do you enjoy? Conversely, what do you dislike about UCSB? What do you consider your least favorite thing?
- q. What improvements or suggestions might you have as a black student on campus?

### ***Career Aspirations and Attainment***

- r. What is the highest level of education you hope to attain? What kind of job or career do you hope to have in the future? (BMW 2.1) Is this aspiration different from what you actually expect to attain?
  - a. what people or experiences have been major influences on your plans for the future?
- s. How has UCSB impacted your career goals?
- t. What opportunities have you received as a UCSB student?
- u. What have you learned the most about being a student here? What have you learned the least?
- v. What spaces do you occupy on and off campus? How much are these spaces connected? (BMW 4.1)
  - a. How have you been able to use these spaces to navigate college? What tools are employed? (BMW 4.1)
- w. What are your long term goals? What are your challenges and resources to reaching these goals? (BMW 4.4)
- x. Do you feel UCSB prepares you (or has prepared you) for a career or job opportunities after college? If so, how? If not, explain why not.
- y. Do you feel you have succeeded thus far at UCSB? Why or why not?
- z. As a current black student at UCSB, what would you tell a prospective black student interested in applying to UCSB?

*Lastly, let's briefly discuss some of the campus efforts/initiatives towards diversity and inclusion and what this may look like from the student's perspective (on the ground).*

- When you hear the word “diversity” what do you think about?
- What do you know about diversity efforts and initiatives on campus?
- What programs or services would you consider as diversity seeking or accounting for diversity?
- Do you want (or care about) diversity on campus? If so, what suggestions would you have for UCSB to implement?
- Do you feel like diversity work is sustainable on campus? Explain.

*Is there any additional info you would like to share that did not get covered in the interview? If not, thank you for your participation in this study.*



## Appendix C

### *Interview Protocol #2*

- Early schooling & educational aspirations
  - What are 2-3 things learned from your early schooling years that you carry with you today as a college student? Feel free to add more if you like.
  - As a current college student, what are 2-3 things you've had to unlearn from your early schooling years? This can be from anytime within K-12 school.
  - Did you enjoy school growing up? Do you enjoy school now? Why or why not?
  
- College decision making process
  - What was your top college of choice? Did you have a top 3? Was UCSB one of those?
  - If you could attend a different college today, would you? Explain.
  
- Campus experiences
  - Identity
    - How do you feel about the classroom settings in college versus high school (or early schooling in general)?
    - What is your ideal learning environment or classroom set-up as a college student?
    - What factors have been major contributors to your college journey and self-identity as a college student up unto this point?
  
  - Career aspirations and attainment
    - What is your years-to-degree plan? Did your major and/or minor selection and admission or non-admission to a major play a role?
    - Do you ever think about your graduation day? Is it something you think about?
    - What is your ideal post-graduation plan? What next steps are involved after graduation?
    - Do you feel your experiences at UCSB have been unique or have special qualities that stand out? Explain.
  
- Campus initiative towards diversity & inclusion – student views on the matter
  - According to 2018 Fall Enrollment data on the University of California website (UCOP), most recent numbers show that 9,083 undergraduate students were reported as Black or African-American (4.1%) out of 222,493 total students within the entire UC system (across 9 campuses). At UCSB specifically, in 2018, the most recent data shows that 992 undergrad students were reported as Black or African-American (4.3%) out of 23,070 total UCSB undergraduate students. These are the quantitative numbers. Qualitatively, what is the impact of this representation on how you see yourself in campus spaces on a day to day as a UCSB student? This could include areas like

lecture, section, study halls, dorms/housing, library, or any other main campus areas.

- Anything you'd like to follow up on?

Thank you for your time!

## Appendix D

### **Contents Introduction to the Bridging Multiple Worlds Toolkit**

#### **A Closer Look at the Five Dimensions: Sample Questions, Coding, and Findings**

##### **1. Demographics along the Academic Pipeline**

1.1 National origin

1.2 Home languages

1.3 Ethnicities

1.4 Parents' education

1.5 Parents' occupations

##### **2. Youth Identity Pathways to College and Careers**

2.1 Students' aspirations and expectations for their education and careers

2.2 Parents' aspirations and expectations for their children's education and careers

2.3 Students' career identity exploration and commitment

##### **3. Students' Math and Language Pathways through School**

3.1 Five math and language pathways of students' grades over time

3.2 Algebra 1 as a gateway to college and careers

3.3 University eligibility, application, admission, and enrollment

##### **4. Cultural Brokers: Bridging Resources and Challenges across Worlds**

4.1 What are your worlds? How are your worlds connected?

4.2 Expectations in each world

4.3 Challenges and resources: Who helps you? Who causes you difficulties?

4.4 Challenges and resources for students' educational and career goals

## **5. Cultural Research Partnerships from Childhood to College**

5.1 Demographics of attendance and inclusiveness: Who came? Who was missing?

5.2 What is success? Partnership goals for students, families, schools, and communities

5.3 More than one path: Longitudinal case studies of students' pathways through school to work and college

5.4 Transforming the academic pipeline: Building P-20 systemic alignment from childhood to college and careers:

## Appendix E

### Dissertation Codebook

#### *Pre-Codes (A Priori Codes)*

1. Hometown
2. Early schooling
3. Education
4. Type of Student
5. Pre-College Thinking
6. Parental Influence
7. Peer Influence
8. Personal Characteristics
9. College Decision-Making
10. Initial Reaction to College Life
11. Identity Formation
  - 11.1. College Preparation
  - 11.2. Environment
  - 11.3. Belonging
  - 11.4. Campus Support Systems
  - 11.5. Identity
12. Social Adjustment
  - 12.1. Campus Involvements
  - 12.2. Navigational Tools
  - 12.3. University Support
  - 12.4. Relationships
  - 12.5. Campus enjoyment
  - 12.6. Campus Dislike
  - 12.7. Campus Improvements
13. Career Aspirations and Attainment
  - 13.1. Degree Level
  - 13.2. Future Career
  - 13.3. Career Influences
  - 13.4. Opportunity
  - 13.5. College Learning
  - 13.6. Space
  - 13.7. Career Challenges & Resources
  - 13.8. University Preparation
  - 13.9. Perceived College Success
  - 13.10. Prospective Black Students
14. Diversity and Inclusion
  - 14.1. Meaning of Diversity
  - 14.2. Diversity Efforts/Initiatives
  - 14.3. Student View of Diversity implementation
  - 14.4. Diversity Sustainability

15. Free response

***Emergent Codes***

1. Mobile
2. Character shaping
3. Teacher connection
4. Definition of Ed
5. Meaning of Ed
6. Obtaining a college degree
7. Type of college
8. School childhood
9. Student expectations
10. Adaptability
11. College aspirations
12. Message latency
13. Discouragement
14. Awareness of purpose
15. Info gathering
16. Homesick
17. Family education
18. Selection method
19. Family expectations
20. Autonomy
21. Retrospective changes
22. Bliss
23. College transitioning
24. Distance
25. Socially isolating
26. Parenting
27. Familiarity
28. Encouragement
29. Major exploration
30. Criticality
31. Comfortability
32. Openness
33. Creator
34. Worker
35. Support
36. Authenticity
37. Community
38. Engagement
39. Visibility
40. Safe space
41. Doubt
42. Discipline preparation
43. Lessons learned
44. Practicality
45. Diversity
46. Diverse programs/services
47. Competition
48. Consistency
49. Gut feeling
50. Time efficient
51. Cultural differences
52. University regulations
53. Entrepreneurship
54. Agency
55. Entitlement
56. Family
57. Code of ethics
58. Active
59. Focused
60. University priorities
61. Recruitment
62. Self-worth
63. Friendship
64. Hidden connection
65. College expenses
66. Career goals
67. Student impact
68. Limited resource advertisement
69. Life circumstance
70. Quality of living
71. Student activism
72. Representation
73. University turnover
74. College completion
75. Imaginary
76. College counseling
77. Location
78. Fatigue
79. College pride
80. Uncertainty
81. Comradery
82. Laid back

- |                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 83. Strategy                  | 129. Socio-cultural conflict |
| 84. Privilege                 | 130. Enrollment difficulty   |
| 85. Access                    | 131. Dedication              |
| 86. Pre-assumptions           |                              |
| 87. Hostility                 |                              |
| 88. Over-stepping boundaries  |                              |
| 89. Inspiration               |                              |
| 90. Feeling of progress       |                              |
| 91. Out of the loop           |                              |
| 92. Mindful of surroundings   |                              |
| 93. Coming of age             |                              |
| 94. Campus flexibility        |                              |
| 95. Lack of specialization    |                              |
| 96. Race-neutral              |                              |
| 97. Innovation                |                              |
| 98. Non-monolithic voice      |                              |
| 99. Sacrifice                 |                              |
| 100. College prep programming |                              |
| 101. Transparency             |                              |
| 102. Like-mindedness          |                              |
| 103. Confident                |                              |
| 104. Campus pressures         |                              |
| 105. Non-college route        |                              |
| 106. Bitterness               |                              |
| 107. Pretentious              |                              |
| 108. Inactive                 |                              |
| 109. Independent              |                              |
| 110. Irreversible             |                              |
| 111. Drive                    |                              |
| 112. Be strong                |                              |
| 113. Valuable                 |                              |
| 114. Microaggressions         |                              |
| 115. Being tracked            |                              |
| 116. Code-switching           |                              |
| 117. Campus aesthetics        |                              |
| 118. Rude                     |                              |
| 119. Career options           |                              |
| 120. Cost-effective           |                              |
| 121. Leadership               |                              |
| 122. Retention                |                              |
| 123. Mental health            |                              |
| 124. Tokenism                 |                              |
| 125. Sheltered                |                              |
| 126. Close-mindedness         |                              |
| 127. Fast-paced               |                              |
| 128. Natural calling          |                              |

## Appendix F

### Dissertation Codebook (Part 2)

#### Pre-Codes (*A Priori Codes*)

1. School Learning
2. School Enjoyment
3. College Choice
4. Identity Formation
  - 4.1. Classroom setting
  - 4.2. Learning Environment
  - 4.3. College Journey
5. Careers Aspirations and Attainment
  - 5.1. Major exploration
  - 5.2. College Completion
  - 5.3. Post-Graduation Plan
  - 5.4. College Highlights
6. Diversity & Inclusion
  - 6.1. College Representation
7. Free Response

#### Emergent Codes

- |                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Adaptability            | 23. Cultural differences       |
| 2. Collaboration           | 24. Community                  |
| 3. Tracking system         | 25. Graduation plan            |
| 4. Classroom etiquette     | 26. Mental health              |
| 5. Meaning of education    | 27. University expectations    |
| 6. Teaching style          | 28. Strategy                   |
| 7. Single child            | 29. Family                     |
| 8. People-person           | 30. Worker                     |
| 9. Distance                | 31. Campus atmosphere          |
| 10. Dream school           | 32. Career goals               |
| 11. Affordability          | 33. Mentality                  |
| 12. Selection method       | 34. Creator                    |
| 13. Info gathering         | 35. Non-monolithic Black voice |
| 14. Career preparation     | 36. Coming of age              |
| 15. College expenses       | 37. Visibility                 |
| 16. College trust          | 38. Representation             |
| 17. Critical thinking      | 39. Social media groups        |
| 18. Autonomy               | 40. Mobile                     |
| 19. Small class settings   | 41. Observant                  |
| 20. Student treatment      | 42. Friendship                 |
| 21. Living conditions      | 43. Human connection           |
| 22. Pre-assumptions/biases | 44. Campus visit               |



- 45. Comfortability
- 46. Agency
- 47. Focused
- 48. Engagement
- 49. Major changes
- 50. Access
- 51. Support
- 52. Racial pride
- 53. Study skills
- 54. Diverse class size
- 55. Diverse settings
- 56. Student expectations
- 57. Practicality
- 58. Social introvert
- 59. Authenticity
- 60. Time management
- 61. Efficiency
- 62. Fast-paced
- 63. Positive reinforcement
- 64. Encouragement
- 65. Typical college experience
- 66. Privilege
- 67. Openness
- 68. Socially isolated
- 69. Scholarship
- 70. Family expectations
- 71. English language learner
- 72. HS guidance counselor
- 73. Distance
- 74. Study abroad
- 75. Activism
- 76. Intimidation
- 77. Recruitment
- 78. Type of school
- 79. Confidence
- 80. College transitioning
- 81. Active
- 82. Conflict resolution
- 83. Effort
- 84. Ebb and flow
- 85. Entrepreneurship
- 86. Familiarity
- 87. De-sensitization
- 88. College tenure
- 89. Writing skills
- 90. Mindful of surroundings
- 91. Location
- 92. Athletics
- 93. Doubt
- 94. Fatigue
- 95. Work intensive
- 96. Family education
- 97. Large lecture halls
- 98. Course exploration
- 99. College completion
- 100. Independence
- 101. Leadership
- 102. Student impact
- 103. Laid back
- 104. Code of ethics
- 105. Belonging
- 106. Mentorship
- 107. Encouragement