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Advancing Colleges' Connections to Local Communities:
A Case Study on Higher Education's Role In California's Housing Crisis

By

ANNA MARIE RAMOS
DISSERTATION

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Abstract

In recent years, a breadth of policy research efforts have aimed to deromanticize the starving college student narrative, relaying housing and food challenges as symptomatic of greater systemic inequalities. California's legislators and college administrators have subsequently attempted to mitigate students' basic needs challenges, with accelerated efforts through the COVID-19 pandemic. However, little qualitative research has been conducted to investigate the implementation of basic needs supports, garner housing insecure students' perceptions of needed resources, or understand how students' housing challenges are connected to their local contexts. Further, research efforts and responsive resources have disproportionately advantaged four-year colleges, which serve a larger share of non-local and financially sufficient students.

Given that: 1) racial disparities exist in students' ability to meet their basic needs, and 2) basic needs resources are often tied to community colleges' equity funding, the first paper employs staff interviews and critical discourse analysis to explore the California Community Colleges system's inclination to equitably distribute housing resources pre-pandemic. In a narrower case study approach, the second paper's interviews and focus groups shed light on how select Black community college students have balanced coursework with housing challenges, as well as their perceptions of available basic needs resources. An ecological approach enables this dissertation to provide a humanizing understanding of students experiencing basic needs insecurity, inform student services, and contribute context-driven inquiry to postsecondary research.

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Introduction

California's widening racial wealth gap makes educational costs and rent heavier burdens for families of color, contributing to patterns of racial segregation across institutional selectivity levels (California Budget & Policy Center, 2018; Iloh & Toldson, 2013). That is, the conveniently located and relatively-affordable sticker prices of open- and broad-access college draw in more students of color than selective colleges with larger sets of resources. Among students who enroll in more accessible institutions, California's high cost of living and growing job opportunities in sectors that require higher education further propel Black and Latinx students to disproportionately enroll in short-term programs, for-profit institutions, and/or obtain some college but no degree (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2019; Iloh & Toldson, 2013). Thus, postsecondary research has long acknowledged college-going trajectories as diversifying with growing participation from historically underrepresented and less-resourced students. Yet, the field has only recently focused on non-tuition expenses and basic needs insecurity as contributing to this phenomenon.

Over the past few years, several studies have pointed to differences in students' ability to meet their basic needs across college sectors and geographic regions in California. Despite its small response rate of five percent, a large-scale survey of those enrolled in the California Community Colleges system identified more than 20,000 students as having experienced food and/or housing insecurity in 2018 (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019b).¹ Building on this work, the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) (2019a) revamped and fielded its survey on student

¹ Many studies on basic needs insecurity have fairly small response rates and may leverage samples that are not fully representative of the student population. Notably, students with food and housing challenges may lack the time and stable internet access needed to answer surveys, which may lead researchers to understate the severity of basic needs challenges.

expenses. In partnership with Mathematica, CSAC surveyed 150,000 students across the state's higher education segments, finding meaningful differences in expenses for college costs when broken by region. Consistent with Goldrick-Rab et al., [2019]), CSAC found housing insecurity rates were highest in the Central Valley (42 percent) and Greater Sacramento (41 percent). However, all California regions maintained substantial basic needs insecurity rates of at least 30 percent and had comparable student perceptions of their ability to afford housing. These similarities in student opinions of affordability may stem from students' tendencies to: 1) pick up jobs or additional work hours to make ends meet, and 2) normalize living situations that fall under the umbrella of housing insecurity. The latter can be exemplified by students living in a house or apartment with more people than listed in the rental agreement or incomplete payments of gas, oil, or electricity bills. These early findings highlight an important research gap and need for student supports.

Unfortunately, relative to four-year colleges, two-year institutions are given fewer resources to combat their drastically higher rates of students experiencing basic needs insecurity (Bragg et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al, 2019a; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al, 2017). In addition, community colleges typically possess a more limited research capacity for evaluating and informing their student support services. Thus, the study of basic needs relief efforts has potential for both improving the field's understanding of college-going behaviors and informing institution-level best practices in the two-year sector. Further, as California looks to restructure financial aid programs and assist college students with covering the entire cost of attendance, empirical research holds the potential to inform statewide policy language and college accountability practices. This study informs the policy landscape by using a regional, context-driven approach that examines: 1) colleges' considerations of racial

equity in implementing and distributing resources to address housing insecurity, and 2) how students' perceptions of time, access, and opportunity underlie their day-to-day balance between long-term educational goals and immediate housing challenges. These topics are explored using data collected before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Defining Basic Needs Insecurity

“Basic needs” is a term that encompasses both food and housing insecurity, which have been key topics of interest across both mainstream media and policy efforts in recent years. For example, Netflix’s *Last Chance U* provides insight into the lives of Oakland’s Laney College football players. Contrasting other states, the California Community College Athletic Association prevents student athletes from receiving scholarships, free housing, and food assistance. Thus, many of the show’s featured students who identify as local, people of color, and having fewer resources are shown navigating mental health challenges, employment, and basic needs insecurity while training to defend their team’s championship title. Basic needs as a point of interest in research, however, typically investigates food or housing as isolated issues and primarily through survey measures. This approach has resulted in a more fragmented initial understanding of basic needs insecurity in higher education research. While the studies at hand center the experiences of housing insecure students, issues of food and housing are interrelated. The text that follows prefaces the study at hand by briefly reviewing definitions of food insecurity, homelessness, and housing insecurity as they are used in existing works.

Food Insecurity

The vast majority of research on college student food insecurity uses U.S. Department of Agriculture measures (McArthur et al., 2018; Payne-Sturges et al., 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019b; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Blagg et al., 2017; El Zein et al.,

2017a, 2017b; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Knol, Robb et al., 2017; Bianco et al., 2016; Bruening et al., 2016; Dubick et al., 2016; Martinez et al., 2016; Morris et al., 2016; Twill, et al., 2016; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015; Gaines et al., 2014; Lindsley & King, 2014; Maroto et al., 2014; Micevski et al., 2014; Patton-López et al., 2014; Freudenberg et al., 2011; Chaparro et al., 2009). As a whole, these measures address the quality and quantity of respondents' food intake, placing them on a four-point continuum that ranges from "high food security" to "very low food security." By contrast, two studies are based on researcher-generated definitions of food insecurity. Wood, Harris, and Delgado (2017) measure food insecurity as "the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or the ability to acquire such foods in socially acceptable ways" over any given period of time. In addition, Wood and Harris (2018) use a dichotomous measure based on students indicating challenges with "hunger."

While there has been some researcher and practitioner skepticism towards the low number of respondents and subsequent student representation in food insecurity surveys, the use of shared measures across studies is helpful for understanding how rates of food insecurity ranges across time and geographic region. For example, Bruening, van Woerden, Todd and Laska (2018) have found that food insecurity is significantly higher at the end of each semester than the start of the year. This notion of time sensitivity presents important methodological implications for research on students' food challenges. In addition, Wood and Harris (2018) proposed a nine percent rate of food insecurity among White community college attendees, while a separate study suggested a rate of 59 percent among rural students (Patton-Lopez et al., 2014). These understandings hold potential for guiding policymaker and practitioner decisions on resource development and distribution.

Homelessness and Housing Insecurity

Definitions of homelessness across the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) have led to discrepancies in “housing insecure” definitions across institutions, researchers, students, and community-based organizations. ED (2016) defines homelessness as “individuals who lack a regular, fixed and adequate nighttime residence.” By contrast, HUD (2013), the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and Continuum of Care Programs maintain four categories of homelessness:

1. Individuals and families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes a subset for an individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or a place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution;
2. Individuals and families who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence;
3. Unaccompanied youth and families with children and youth who are defined as homeless under other federal statutes who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition; or
4. Individuals and families who are fleeing, or are attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member.

Subsequently, within higher education research, studies on *housing insecurity* utilize a variety of definitions, sometimes using the terms “housing insecure” and “homeless” interchangeably. Recent research by the California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) system has relied on ED’s (2016) definition of homelessness and mirrors subsections of the McKinney-Vento Act (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2017; 2018; 2019; University of

California, 2017). After a qualitative study asking students about their experiences with housing insecurity, the University of California (2020) adopted student recommendations to instead ask about students’ “risk of losing a safe, regular, and adequate place to stay and sleep while waiting on a UC housing waitlist”, thereby improving clarity and reducing stigma for respondents. Much of the research on housing insecurity for college students – particularly for the California Community Colleges (CCC) system – has been conducted by the Hope Center, which views housing insecurity as a broader construct.

The Hope Center, launched in 2015, began with a survey on basic needs insecurity across 10 community colleges. Their services to institutions across the United States has rapidly expanded and reached 171 community colleges and 56 four-year colleges –combined 227 institutions – in 2019 alone (Goldrick-Rab, 2020). While their most popular reports often aggregate data across institution types or nationally, the Hope Center has self-published more than 35 white papers, policy briefs, and academic articles on basic needs insecurity.² The aforementioned breadth of their work and its salience with college practitioners sets the stage for other basic needs researchers to adopt the organization’s definition of housing insecurity. Consequently, many housing-related studies utilize: 1) “a broad set of challenges such as the inability to pay rent or utilities, or the need to move frequently” and 2) “lived with others beyond the expected capacity of the housing” as definitions when identifying housing insecure students (Goldrick-Rab et al. 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al. 2019). Similarly, basic needs surveys from the California Student Aid Commission (2019a; 2019b) appear to use “housing challenges” and “housing insecurity” interchangeably. While some may argue that these ambiguous terms

² This dissertation only includes five Hope Center publications, given the subpopulations and regional foci of other reports. One of the cited publications aggregates data across the CCC system, two aggregate data for community colleges across the country, and two provide nationwide data on both two- and four-year institutions.

misrepresent the severity of students' housing issues, others claim that this more inclusive language enables stakeholders to acknowledge and increase their understanding of students' challenges.

The studies that follow capture colleges' pre-pandemic efforts to support students experiencing housing challenges, with particular consideration towards the contexts of gentrification and subsequent housing challenges taking place in Oakland, California. Oakland serves as a prime setting for this regional research, as it is home to rich dialogue around color-conscious policy issues and pervasive systemic inequalities that shape local resources. Oakland residents have withstood rapid gentrification and housing shifts in the past several years, while experiencing an influx of individuals relocating to the Bay Area for its tech boom and postsecondary programs. As such, relative to other regions, Bay Area college students take on the highest living and housing costs (California Student Aid Commission, 2019a). Given that: 1) racial disparities exist in students' ability to meet their basic needs, and 2) basic needs resources are often tied to community colleges' equity funding, the first study employs staff interviews and critical discourse analysis to explore the California Community Colleges system's inclination to equitably distribute housing resources pre-pandemic. In a narrower case study approach, the second study's interviews and focus groups with Black community college students in Oakland sheds light on their experiences balancing coursework with housing challenges, as well as their perceptions of available basic needs resources. An ecological approach enables this dissertation to provide a humanizing understanding of students experiencing basic needs insecurity, inform student services, and contribute context-driven inquiry to postsecondary research.

Paper 1: Allocating Aid: Community Colleges' Pre-Pandemic Responses to Black Students Experiencing Basic Needs Insecurity

In recent years, policymakers in California have made efforts to expand financial aid and college supports for addressing students' entire cost of college attendance, inclusive of food and housing. In a survey primarily fielded to staff in student services departments across the California Community Colleges (CCC) system, more than half of respondents said they interact with students who are basic needs insecure or homeless either every day or multiple times per week (Henestroza et al., 2018). While this may make housing and food challenges increasingly apparent, not all college staff feel that they are the individuals best suited for addressing such challenges. Just as California State University (CSU) employees have expressed disinterest in becoming a "social services agency," many CCC staff are reportedly reluctant to take on tasks and challenges that were once considered outside of their mission (Henestroza et al., 2018, p. 11). In spite of this, equity funding and institutional grants continue to be allocated to community colleges in hopes of providing more comprehensive student support services, with broad directives and unclear accountability policies.

Three key efforts have been pushed across the CCC system to address basic needs insecurity: expanding supports beyond financial aid, improving service utilization, and forming strategic partnerships with other colleges and local nonprofits (Goldrick-Rab, 2019).

Importantly, as California's community colleges have adopted some of these strategies to address students' basic needs, resources allocated to individual colleges provide institutional leaders with flexibility in identifying traditionally underrepresented populations in need of equitable supports. While this enables colleges to tailor resources to their specific college population, it also makes room for staff to overlook the fact that basic needs insecurity is most

commonly linked to whether a student identifies as African American or Black (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018, 2015; Wood & Harris, 2018; Payne-Sturges et al., 2018; Dubick et al., 2016; El Zein et al., 2017a; Wood et al., 2017; Martinez et al., 2016; Maroto et al., 2014; Freudenberg et al., 2011). Thus, there has been an explicit directive from systemwide leadership for colleges to increase students' take-up of basic needs services. However, staff are not encouraged to equitably serve students of color who have disproportionately experienced basic needs challenges. As a result, this study asks:

1. In what ways, if any, have community colleges' basic needs staff responded to the specific needs of African American students experiencing basic needs insecurity?
2. How has CCC systemwide guidance on basic needs efforts enabled colleges to inequitably distribute basic needs resources?

Using a case study approach, this research employs interviews with community college staff and discourse analysis of directives from CCC system leadership to examine the implementation of basic needs supports in Oakland before the COVID-19 pandemic amidst protests calling for racial equity.

Importantly, in 2020, the deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, and Dion Johnson - among the many lives lost to police brutality and anti-blackness – sparked demonstrations against racism and police brutality across the United States, with solidarity protests held around the world. The widespread calls for racial justice and police reform echoed across industries, including education, entertainment, commercial, housing, and health, as many were already grappling with the systemic inequities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic on Black and brown communities. (See Nawaz and Joseph [2020] for an overview of how 2020's protests varied from past demonstrations against racism.) This dissertation

acknowledges this important period in time as influential to study decision and subsequent policy implications.

Literature Review

Much of the research on basic needs insecurity has aimed to deromanticize the starving college student narrative, producing a greater emphasis on food issues relative to housing challenges. In doing so, food insecurity in particular has been linked to several measures of low academic performance, including lower GPA (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; McArthur et al., 2018; El Zein et al., 2017a; Bianco et al., 2016; Martinez et al., 2016; Morris et al., 2016; Lindsley & King, 2014; Maroto et al., 2014; Patton-López et al., 2014), missing class (Silva et al., 2018; Dubick et al., 2016), and negative effects on degree progress (Silva et al., 2018; Wood et al., 2017; Bianco et al., 2016; Martinez et al., 2016). On top of these lower academic outcomes, a number of socioemotional and behavioral measures were also associated with food challenges. Wood and colleagues (2017) found that those experiencing food insecurity are less likely to feel confident in their academic abilities, to perceive college as being worthwhile, to feel a sense of control in academic matters, to be focused in school, and to be authentically interested in class. These students are also significantly less likely to perceive a sense of belonging from faculty, feel welcome to engage inside and outside of the classroom, report having access to student services, and see campus services as being effective in helping them address their needs. However, little is known about the long-term effects of food insecurity among college students. While researchers have found that students experiencing food insecurity are often updating their job skills or starting a new career (Wood et al., 2017), it is unclear whether the immediate challenges presented by food insecurity lead them to stop-out of college and default back to a previous job.

When dealing with food challenges, students experienced limited financial resources that resulted in an inability to purchase required course textbooks (Dubick et al., 2016), a tendency to purchase cheap processed food (Martinez et al., 2016; McArthur et al., 2018), stretching food, and consuming less healthy meals to eat more (McArthur et al., 2018). Students also coped with food insecurity by working and using financial aid (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017). Given these trends, a number of health issues that have been tied to food insecurity. These include depression (Bruening et al., 2018; Bruening et al., 2016; Lindsley & King, 2014; Freudenberg et al., 2011), having fair/poor health (McArthur et al., 2018; Knol et al., 2017; Patton-López et al., 2014; Freudenberg et al., 2011), higher stress (Bruening et al., 2018; El Zein et al., 2017b), and lower quality sleep (El Zein et al., 2017b). It is worth noting that food insecurity is not associated with obesity or being overweight (Knol et al., 2017). In spite of these arguments, only one longitudinal study has focused on health outcomes related to food insecurity (Bruening et al., 2018). Thus, there may be long term repercussions of basic needs challenges that have gone unexplored or underestimated in relation to student health and success.

Scholars have also tied food insecurity to financial aid receipt (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2018, 2017; McArthur et al., 2018; Payne-Sturges et al., 2018; El Zein et al., 2017a; Morris et al., 2016; Gaines et al., 2014) and students' job earnings (Goldrick et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018, 2017; Gaines et al., 2014; Micevski et al., 2014; Patton-López et al., 2014; Freudenberg et al., 2011) as indicators of low-income status. These studies have connected food insecurity to resource constraints, rather than depicting it as an issue of youth who experience difficulty or lack of familiarity with food preparation. In some cases, links to more specific forms of financial aid were explored. In these instances, researchers considered whether students were using multiple forms of financial aid (Payne-Sturges et al., 2018), received student loans (Morris et al.,

2016), or received a Pell Grant (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018, 2017; El Zein et al., 2017a). Evidence on whether there is a significant relationship between Pell receipt and food insecurity is mixed (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018; El Zein et al., 2017a). This is partially due to differences in FAFSA completion, which have led some researcher to characterize Pell-eligible students as non-recipients in their analyses, conflating some low-income students with their wealthier peers as a result of data challenges in identification. In their entirety, these studies suggest that food insecure college students are indeed low-income students who may receive tuition aid, but may nonetheless not receive enough assistance to cover the entire cost of college attendance.

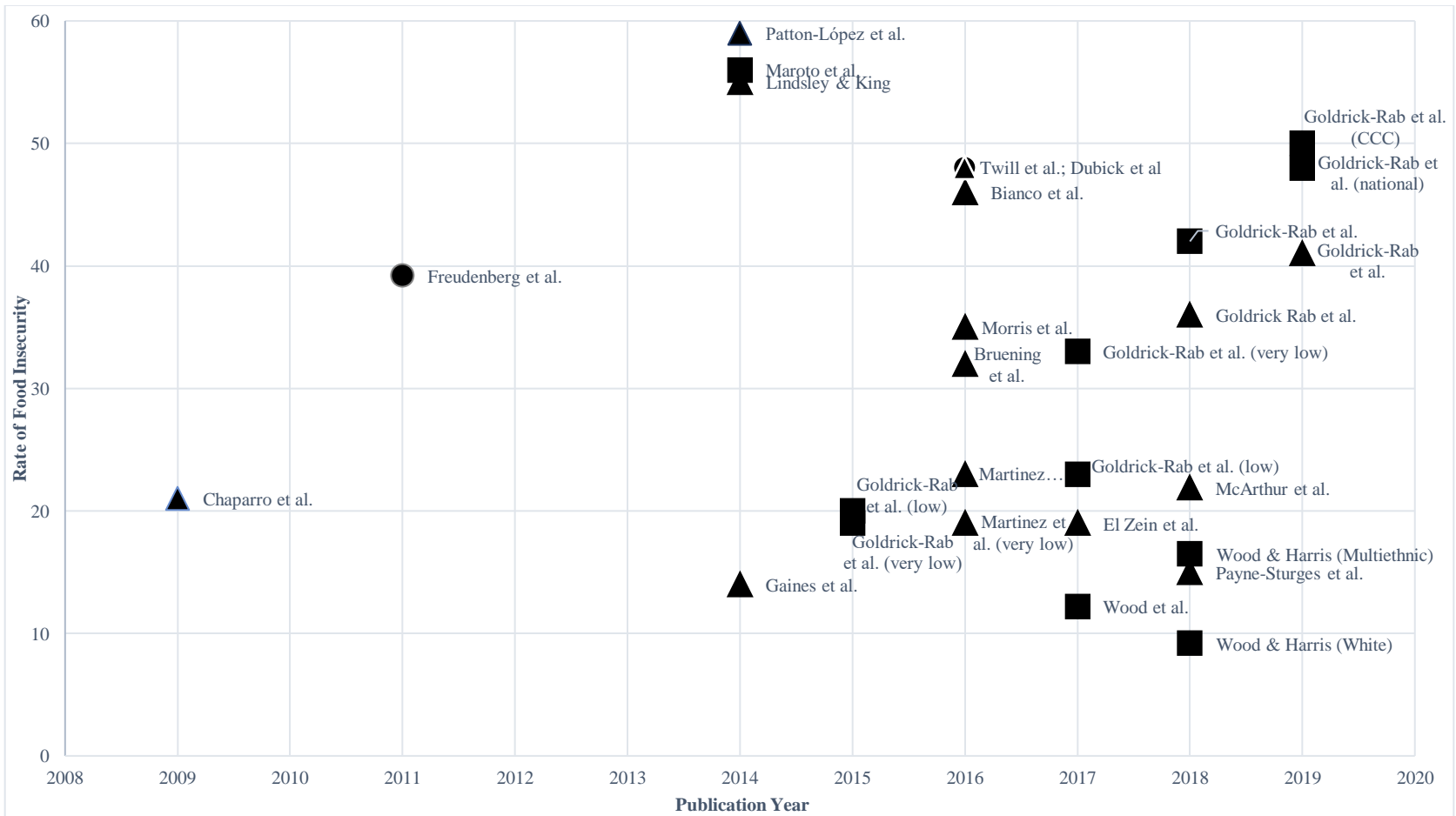
There is a small but prominent set of basic needs studies that center the experiences of those experiencing homelessness as a sub-group of housing insecure students (Crutchfield, Chambers & Duffield, 2018; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Gupton, 2017; University of California, 2017; SchoolHouse Connection, 2017; Hallett & Freas, 2017; Crutchfield, 2016; Ringer, 2015). These students' challenges include academic struggle, long work hours, and negative impacts on mental and physical health (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Crutchfield, 2016). With that, students experiencing homelessness describe experiences shared across many marginalized groups. They experience flawed policies related to jobs and wages, housing access, and education costs. These challenges compound and pose greater difficulties for students who enter college without secure housing, or who lose it during the course of their studies (Ringer, 2015). Collectively, this research portrays food and housing challenges as symptoms of greater systemic barriers and important factors surrounding academic success. Yet, the high prevalence of these issues – particularly among some traditionally underrepresented groups – has only been underscored in recent years.

Prevalence

As researchers, policymakers, and practitioners have learned about the important implications basic needs issues hold for student success, existing research has largely relied on surveys that demonstrate the breadth of food and housing challenges faced by students. With more than 35 published studies, the vast majority of research on basic needs insecurity has explored the prevalence of food insecurity. Studies focused on quantifying the presence of food insecurity among college students in the United States, estimate a range from 12.2 percent (Wood et al., 2017) to 59 percent (Patton-López et al., 2014) of student facing food insecurity. Figure 1 provides additional details for how food insecurity estimates vary across studies and time, relaying basic needs research as: 1) growing in popularity since 2014; and 2) relaying higher rates of food insecurity among community college students. In addition, this comparison of published rates on food insecurity relays that the California Community Colleges system had among the highest estimates, even when compared to the nationwide rate for community colleges by the same researchers and in the same publication year. This paints California as a prime location for examining basic needs issues and sets the stage for this context-driven inquiry.

Figure 1.

Published Food Insecurity Rates Among United States College Students



Note: Statistics are displayed by publication year because data are sometimes collected across academic years. Squares represent rates among (multiple) community college students, triangles relay estimates for individual four-year institutions, and circles provide statistics for four-year systems.

Fewer scholars have sought to quantify students' housing challenges. Thirteen studies have calculated housing insecurity rates among college students since 2011. While two investigated this issue in New York and two took a nationwide approach, nine studies are regional or system-specific studies in California. Scholars note a wide range in housing insecurity rates, from five percent in the University of California system (University of California, 2017) to 60 percent in the California Community Colleges (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019b). This range, in part, speaks to differences in definitions of housing insecurity across the two sectors. Still, these trends suggest the demand for research on housing challenges may be higher in California, with room for additional studies to inform sector-specific student supports.

When considering student characteristics, the most consistent variable linked to food- and/or housing insecurity is whether a student identifies as African American or Black (California Student Aid Commission, 2019a, 2019b; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018, 2017, 2015; Wood & Harris, 2018; Payne-Sturges et al., 2018; Dubick et al., 2016; El Zein et al., 2017a; Wood et al., 2017; Martinez et al., 2016; Maroto et al., 2014; Freudenberg et al., 2011). This warrants further examination into the social and economic barriers that underpin trends in Black college students' access to basic needs. However, few studies have clearly highlighted or problematized this trend among Black students. Three tendencies contribute to this pattern: First, students' self-identification as Black is but one identifier in the laundry list of variables viewed in relation to basic needs insecurity, including gender, age, parent status, (dis)ability, citizenship, foster youth status, and veteran status. These categories often encompass several subgroups, with varying relations to basic needs insecurity across region and sector. Second, with the rapid growth in basic needs research since 2014, few efforts have been made to look across studies and identify patterns by race. Finally, the few literature reviews that have been conducted

oversimplify basic needs insecurity as disproportionately impacting the broader group of students of color, rather than – for example – Black students in particular.

These trends highlight the need for a race-conscious approach to studying basic needs insecurity – one with a particular eye towards how identities intersect to make particular groups disproportionately experience food and housing challenges. Crenshaw’s (1991) conceptualization of intersectionality posits that identity politics frequently conflates or ignores intragroup differences. This speaks to the ways in which Black college students’ disproportionate experiences with basic needs issues are often overlooked as symptoms of systemic racism, given popular and romanticized perceptions of youth as starving college students. However, intersectionality as a concept specifically calls for an understanding of how racism and sexism intersect to pose unique challenges for women of color. Given mixed findings on the relationship between college students’ basic needs insecurity and gender (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018, 2017; University of California, 2017), the field would benefit from studies that investigate whether and how basic needs challenges are differently experienced across genders within racial groups. At the same time, given the lack of existing basic needs research as a whole, studies must also seek to explore how other identities – including socioeconomic class, relationship status, former foster youth status, and sexual orientation – may intersect with race to produce similar (or unique) challenges for students.

Towards an Understanding of Systemic Barriers

While the term “basic needs” refers to both food and housing, the relationship between food insecurity and housing insecurity is under-developed. This is partially due to differing research interests across scholars; some have investigated the proportion of students experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness *among* students experiencing food insecurity,

while others attempt to identify the proportion of *all college students* that experience both. Still, the limited research available asserts that housing challenges among food insecure students is more prevalent than food challenges among housing insecure students (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015, 2018; Wood et al., 2017; Dubick et al., 2016). For example, Goldrick Rab and colleagues (2015) report 73 percent of students with low or very low levels of food security were also housing insecure, while 58 percent of students with housing insecurity also experienced food insecurity. However, among students who experience food insecurity, a smaller proportion appear to also experience homelessness in particular; statistics vary between 15 percent (Dubick et al., 2016) to 23 percent (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015). Virtually nothing is known about how the relationship between food and housing insecurities varies across students' reasons for experiencing basic needs challenges (e.g. food insecurity stemming from lack of time to prepare meals, food insecurity from having insufficient funds).

More importantly, this gap in scholarship notes an important opportunity for understanding the systemic barriers that underpin basic needs insecurity and contribute to academic challenges. Studies that estimate the share of all students experiencing both food and housing insecurity across a college or system are as high as 40 percent for students in the California Community Colleges (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019b). These statistics aim to push the field towards improving its understanding of how basic needs challenges may be causing further harm to students who already experience other forms of marginalization.

Relatedly, many characteristics of students who disproportionately experience food insecurity have also been observed among students who are more likely to face housing challenges. Groups likely to experience both food and housing insecurity are African Americans (Goldrick Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018, 2015; University of California, 2017; Wood et al.,

2017), former foster youth, students who are independent for financial aid purposes (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018, 2017), those who have parents with lower levels of formal education (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018), are Pell-eligible (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2018, 2017), and have children (Goldrick-Rab et al. 2019a, 2019b, 2017). Less commonly explored in research but worth noting are the higher rates of both housing and food insecurity among Southeast Asian students (Wood et al., 2017), those earning federal work-study (Freudenberg et al., 2011), those who live off-campus (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018), are divorced, students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, students who have been formerly convicted of a crime, and students over the age of 21 (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b; Freudenberg et al., 2011). Differences in basic needs insecurity across gender and sexual orientation are inconsistent across studies (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018, 2017; University of California, 2017). Despite these differences, it is unclear how colleges have – if at all – responded to disparities across student populations or strategically allocated resources across students.

While the aforementioned studies consider links between food and the broader classification of housing-insecurity, some differences have been observed between students facing food insecurity and those within the subset of homeless students. College students experiencing homelessness are likely to identify as American Indian or Alaskan Native, veterans (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018), and as gay, lesbian, or transgender (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b). The relationship between U.S. citizenship and homelessness is less definite, as it varies across college type and region (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018). Yet, it is clear that rates of homelessness are not necessarily higher for those who have been enrolled in college longer (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b) or for those who have children (Goldrick-Rab

et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018). This variation across groups points to additional considerations for how and whom practitioners may advertise specific types of supports, if they are looking to equitably service students.

Importantly, high-level college administrators make the decision to include their institution in basic needs studies. Whether this has translated to an awareness of basic needs issues amongst service-providing staff remains unclear. Staff members' knowledge of students' housing and food challenges hold grave implications for resource creation and allocation. That is, the lack of awareness or incentives to address basic needs issues may lead staff to overlook and/or reinforce disparities across student groups.

Conceptual Framework

Traditional forms of policy research have been characterized as operating in a positivist paradigm, concerned with the linear development of formal policies, and needing evaluation to assess its efficacy (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Young, 1999; Young & Diem, 2018). In this sense, research and evaluation are sometimes used interchangeably, maintaining an interest in informing the work of policymakers. By contrast, educational research under critical policy analysis (CPA) is rooted in explorations of education and power (i.e. capitalist states) (Apple, 1982), critical engagement with the methodological decisions guiding policy research (Ball, 1991; 1993; 1994), and considerations of both the social and political epistemologies underpinning education (Popkewitz, 1997). In this regard, critical policy scholarship is not confined to legislative or programmatic policies. CPA may examine the roles of broader power, ideology, and language, in efforts to understand either policy processes or reception.

Since its inception, CPA has often been used to interrogate: 1) the roots and development of policy; 2) the differences between policy rhetoric and practiced reality; 3) the distribution of

power, resources, and knowledge and the creation of ‘winners’ and ‘losers’; 4) the complex systems and environments in which policy is made and implemented; 5) social stratification and the impact of policy on relationships of privilege and inequality; and 6) the nature of resistance to or engagement in policy by members of historically underrepresented groups (Diem et al., 2014; Young & Diem, 2018). While these studies have potential to inform the work of policymakers, critical policy scholarship often holds implications for action across a wider array of policy stakeholders, including practitioners, funders, and families.

Critical policy analysis can also refer to the application of critical frameworks by education policy scholars (Diem et al., 2014). In these instances, as is the case with other research, the specific theory (e.g. critical race theory, critical feminist theory) selected shapes the study’s framing of a selected policy and its subsequent methodological choices. Simultaneously, scholars have noted the approach as maintaining its own conceptual terrain that may be used to guide analyses (Chase et al., 2012; Taylor, 1994). Resulting studies focus on the conceptual commitments and social orientation that were foundational to early CPA scholarship. Apple (2019) reminds contemporary researchers that CPA is grounded in the belief that it is absolutely crucial to “understand the complex connections between education and the relations of dominance and subordination in the larger society—and the movements that are trying to interrupt these relations” (p. 276). Further, CPA acknowledges that “specific and often unquestioned ideological visions of what schools should do and whom they should serve” often drive educational reforms (Apple, 2019, p. 277). Under this thinking, neutrality serves the dominant group. Thus, researchers are tasked with making the effects of policies public, challenging the positions of those in power, and advancing education for human empowerment.

Researchers and policy leaders have asserted critical policy scholarship as underutilized in studies of race and equity in higher education (Bensimon & Bishop, 2012; Harper 2012). This has influenced what is studied in postsecondary research and the framing of problems. That is, the hidden assumptions, policy silences, and unintended consequences which are examined by CPA have often gone unchecked in studies of higher education. Relatedly, racism – whether explicit or covert, intentional or indirect – has typically been omitted from researchers’ understandings of racial differences across outcomes studied in postsecondary education (Harper, 2012). In recent years, higher education researchers have attempted to address this gap in critical policy analysis. However, there is still much to be explored in terms of how existing policies, structures, practices, and resource allocation limit opportunities, particularly for Black students.

Pulling from the conceptual commitments of critical policy analysis, this research is concerned by the ways in which policy silences (e.g. lack of committed resources, dedicated outreach efforts, explicitly addressing Black students as a subgroup) contribute to Black students’ opportunities – or lack thereof – for mitigating housing challenges. Further, this study is informed by CPA’s assertion that an educational institution’s responsiveness to its social and capitalist settings can either disrupt racist structures or leave students – in this case, Black students – vulnerable to them.

These aims align with Dumas’s (2016) calling for an understanding of the Black condition “within a context of utter contempt for, and acceptance of violence” against Black bodies, otherwise referred to as anti-blackness (p.13). Under this framing, non-Black people’s societal positions and privileges have been historically predicated on their “consumption, destruction, and/or simple dismissal of the Black” (Dumas, 2016, p. 13). Put another way: Non-

Black people are incentivized to maintain a system of Black oppression. The historical dehumanization of Black people facilitates opportunities for non-Black people to act for material gain and other self-interest with little – if any – caution towards their subsequent contributions in upholding Black disenfranchisement. This widespread disregard for Blackness then speaks to the ways in which Black people are “expected to forgive, to be peaceful in the face of horrific violence” and “respect a law that cannot recognize [their] humanity” (ross, 2020). That is, the normative dehumanization of Black people is perhaps best evidenced in times where they are dismissed as irrational, extreme, and/or nonsensical when calling attention to violence against them. This is, again, due to the lack of educational or social incentives for individuals to grapple with their contributions to an anti-black system. Related to CPA and the study at hand, policies and programs without explicit directives to combat anti-blackness inevitably contribute to this oppressive structure.

Worth noting is that this study’s data collection and analysis initially sought for a broader investigation of institutional responses to differences in housing security rates across student racial/ethnic groups. Yet, true to form, anti-blackness emerged from “specific and often unquestioned ideological visions of what schools should do and whom they should serve” (Apple, 2019, p. 277). This led to an iterative process between data collection and study (re)design (as detailed below) to account for the role of anti-blackness in state-level funding responses and subsequent college-level housing resource allocation.

Research Methodology

This study investigates how CCC leaders and aid providers responded to the overrepresentation of African American students experiencing housing insecurity during the initial development and allocation of basic needs resources (e.g., food pantries, emergency

shelter). Importantly, this research acknowledges basic needs challenges as inclusive of food and part of a larger systemic issue. However, particular emphasis is placed on housing, as it is presently the most unregulated and developing component of student support services in the CCC system to date. The sections that follow outline the researcher positionality, interview approach, and document analysis decisions. College staff interviews served as the main source of data for answering my first research question. These focused on how college staff were perceiving and addressing Black students' housing needs through college and local resources. Systemwide press releases, institutional documents, and speeches related to basic needs insecurity efforts were leveraged in answering my second research question. These items provided insight on system-level guidance and regulations for race-conscious attempts at addressing housing challenges.

Staff interviews are bound by geographic location and time. That is, this study sought to document insight on college staff members' attitudes and perceptions of supporting housing insecure Black students before the COVID-19 pandemic and George Floyd protests, which brought more explicit systemwide directives for institutional reform efforts. As a result, critical policy analysis is useful for enriching my interview data. Discourse analysis, in particular, affords a richer understanding of how policy silences may enable college administrators to turn a blind eye towards racial differences in housing insecurity – whether out of unfamiliarity with the topic, limited resources to address the issue, or deliberate disinterest in eradicating racial disparities. With this, interviews relay how language is used “on site” to enact activities and staff or administrator identities. Meanwhile, discourse analysis looks at systemwide events, statements, and documents in relation to site-based inquiry, thereby enabling the examination of multiple levels of power. As a whole, combining interviews and discourse analysis enables

deeper consideration about what is said by institutional leaders, as well as how others interpret and make meaning of their words.

Policy Context

Several bills have been enacted in recent years to combat student homelessness and chronic hunger,. These developments are important for understanding how statewide policy may be influencing institutional priorities and the work of college staff, which – in turn – shape the resources made available to students through their institution. This section details some of the key policy developments that took place in California prior to- and during this study’s data collection. Policies described below aimed to reduce basic needs insecurity among college students.

In 2014 AB 1930 (Skinner) required the State Department of Social Services to establish a protocol for identifying and verifying potential exemptions that would allow students enrolled in college at least half time to receive CalFresh. Following the release of several basic needs security research findings in 2015, AB 1228 (Gipson), in part, extended priority for housing at all public colleges to homeless youth, and requested campuses to develop plans to ensure that homeless youth have housing during breaks.

Four bills were passed in 2016 to reshape basic needs supports offered to college students: AB 1747 (Weber), AB 801 (Bloom), AB 1995 (Williams), and AB 1840 (Gipson). AB 1747 mandated that postsecondary institutions located in Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) counties apply to become an approved food vendor for the program, which allows Calfresh recipients who are at least 60 years of age, disabled, or homeless to use their benefits for purchasing lower cost prepared meals at participating restaurants. AB 1747 also required the Department of Agriculture to receive federal reimbursements for CalFresh outreach on behalf of

the educational institutions and established the Public Higher Education Pantry Assistance Program Account, allocating money to food banks that support on-campus pantry and hunger relief efforts. AB 801 required the California Community College districts and California State University campuses to grant priority enrollment to homeless youth until January 1, 2020. In addition, AB 801 requires public postsecondary educational institutions and specified private or independent postsecondary institutions to: 1) designate a staff member in the financial aid office to serve as the Homeless and Foster Student Liaison, and 2) inform current and prospective students about student financial aid and other assistance available to homeless youth and current and former foster youth. Another bill, AB 1995, requires California Community Colleges to provide access to shower facilities for homeless students who are enrolled in coursework, have paid enrollment fees, and are in good standing with their community college district. Lastly, AB 1840 required state agencies, when hiring for internships and student assistant positions, to give preference to homeless youth and formerly incarcerated youth (as has been given to dependent children in foster care).

In 2017, AB 453 (Limón) added to on-campus food pantry efforts by creating “Hunger Free” college campus funding. The Hunger Free campus designation required presence of an on-campus food distribution program, availability of information about the SNAP application on campus, and a meal plan donation option at the UC and CSU. In exchange, \$7.5 million was given to all three public higher education sectors for distribution across campuses with the Hunger Free designation. In the same year, Assembly Bill 214 (Weber) was passed. The legislation worked to increase students’ knowledge of their CalFresh eligibility and clarify the on-campus food vendors where CalFresh could be used. Despite this increase in transparency, low service take-up rates in certain regions point to personal and structural barriers that stint

program enrollment (Bianco et al., 2016). It is unclear how differences in USDA, CalFresh, and self-perceptions of low food security play into students' access to food services. The legislature also took several steps to provide additional supports for homeless students, including: AB 1018 (Reyes) which, in part, requires the governing board of each CCC district to add homeless students to the categories of students required to be addressed in their student equity plans; AB 1076 (Medina), which was held on the Suspense File in the Assembly Appropriations Committee and, in part, required the Legislative Analyst's Office to conduct a study on the implementation of existing law to ensure homeless students have housing when school is not in session; SB 307 (Nguyen), which was held on the Suspense File in the Assembly Appropriations Committee, requested the UC to convene a task force to determine the extent, causes, and effects of housing insecurity and homelessness of current and future students; and SB 35 (Wiener, Chapter 366, Statutes of 2017), which subjects cities and counties to a streamlined approval process for new housing projects if certain conditions are met.

In 2018, an additional \$10 million was allocated to CCCs, and \$1.5 million was awarded to the UC and CSU (each) to continue the Hunger Free Campus Initiative. That same year, AB 1894 (Weber) revisited the regulations posed by AB 1747, through expanding the CalFresh RMP to all CSU campuses, regardless of whether or not their county had chosen to participate in the program for the non-student population. In addition, the Hunger Impact Act of 2018 (AB 2297, Arambula) increased benefits for each CalFresh household by \$28 each month.

These efforts to improve CalFresh access continued in 2019 to include SB 173 (Dodd), AB-1278 (Gabriel), and AB 1229. SB 173 removes barriers for students to get subsidies under CalFresh, in part by streamlining the application process. AB-1278 requires each campus of the California State University and the California Community Colleges, and requests each campus of

the University of California, to include website-based account for an enrolled student notification of, and a link to information on, specified public services and programs, including the CalFresh program, county or local housing resources, and county or local mental health services.

Meanwhile, AB-1229 (Wicks) aimed to increase rates of completed CalFresh applications and CalFresh participation rates of exiting foster youth. An additional bill, AB-943 (Chiu), authorized the use of Student Equity and Achievement Program funding for the provision of emergency student financial assistance to help eligible students overcome unforeseen financial challenges that would directly impact their ability to persist in college. In his May Revision version of his 2019 Budget, Governor Newsom added new proposals to specifically provide resources to the CSU (\$6.5 million) and UC (\$3.5 million) in order to establish rapid re-housing programs for homeless or housing insecure students. These allocations supplement an initial proposal to provide \$15 million ongoing for UC to address student hunger and housing insecurity and \$15 million one-time for the CSU to engage in similar work. Each of these proposals were approved in the final 2019 Budget Act. Notably the CCC was not included in these investments. Relative to other segments, the CCC fared considerably better in the respective budget cycle. Still, it has been underfunded and serves the largest number of low-income, homeless, and basic needs insecure students.

More recently, Newsom's 2020-21 initially-proposed budget suggested allocating \$11.4 million to establish and support food pantries at community colleges. State-level consideration of non-tuition expenses was also expanded. An additional \$10 million in one-time funding was intended to develop and implement the Zero-Textbook-Cost Degree Program, which would have eliminated the cost of textbooks for certain degrees and certificate programs. Similar statewide efforts include the California Community Colleges system's allocation of nine million dollars to

14 campuses across the state to help students find shelter and the California Student Aid Commission's efforts to reform Cal Grant so that it may cover students' entire cost of college attendance.

Positionality

As Creswell and Creswell (2018) cautioned, some phases of research change upon entering the field and beginning data collection. California's efforts to address students' housing challenges are new but moving rapidly. In addition, the supports available to students widely vary across and within higher education systems. My interviews with community college staff were initially intended to serve as reconnaissance efforts for conversations with housing insecure students. However, the insights gleaned warranted more thoughtful consideration and analysis.

In some interviews with community college staff, my identity as Black and Filipino seemed to influence staff members' language surrounding Black students' experiences. That is, whether my hair was straight or naturally curled, the interviewee's attention to my perceivably "Hispanic last name", and the extent to which they listened to my positionality statement *seemed* to play a role in how participants described their understanding of Black students' experiences. For example, in my first interview, one college's head of their African American male initiative explained that Black students "come all the way over here because folks at [other college] don't care about them. They don't care about students that look like *us*." However, an interviewee from another college who helped develop undocumented student resources explained:

"they don't have it as hard as we do. Undocumented students and immigrants – and I also mean Asian students whose families aren't from here – we're the ones having a really hard time. Often, we don't get financial aid or information people who have been here do."

In another instance, a campus resource coordinator – here-on referred to as George – identified as a Black male and denied the disproportionate experiences of housing insecurity among Black students when speaking informally and in the presence of a non-Black staff member. However, George later noted his extensive support and mentorship to Black male students undergoing basic needs challenges during his individual interview. In these instances, the presumed characteristics or identifiers of whom interviewees were speaking to played a role in their willingness to vocalize their (dis)interest in assisting Black students. As was the case with George, I made attempts to interact with each interviewee several times (both formally and informally) and across multiple contexts during my campus visits to get a sense of how their shared perspectives might reflect their interactions with other staff or students.

Alongside this attention to interviewee identifiers and campus relationships, this research is informed by my understanding of housing issues as a fairly new concern that is disjointed from how education stakeholders have previously been asked to consider student success. Some interviewees did not perceive Black students as disproportionately experiencing difficulties with housing; they instead noted the high proportion of white and/or international students who vocalize their challenges and come to them seeking help. However, two of these same interviewees later informally noted their support for seeing a young woman of color working on her dissertation. These interactions seemed to suggest that faculty may be familiar with the way particular students of color disproportionately experience academic challenges on their path to degree attainment, but still viewed non-tuition or basic needs challenges as distinct from academic success.

Interviews

Interviews with college staff were used to answer research question 1: In what ways, if any, have community colleges' basic needs staff responded to the specific needs of African American students experiencing housing insecurity?

Sample.

My sample is comprised of six community college staff who provide housing resources and information across three community colleges serving Oakland residents. The three institutions represented varied in staff consideration of basic needs; the colleges ranged between having one and three staff take on the role of resource development and allocation. At the time of the interviews, none were designated as Homeless and Foster Student Liaisons and primarily responded to basic needs challenges as an informal addition to their paid role on campus. Participants were employed across a variety of student support services centers.

While all participants consider themselves people of color, four identify as Black. In addition, two participants described themselves as growing up in the East Bay. The four who did not grow up in the region vary in their length of time living in the Bay Area. Notably, two stated that they commute long distances to work and have never lived in the East Bay. While community college students tend to take classes on multiple campuses and are not limited to the three colleges represented in this study, my sample is bound to staff who work on campuses that surround Oakland and subsequently experience similar regional resource constraints and opportunities (e.g. hotel availability for short-term student shelter, cost of living, county policies).

My access to one interviewee resulted from a professional networking event. Two cold emails were sent to college support services staff across two additional institutions, requesting referrals to an employee on campus who might be "knowledgeable about the college's housing

resources”. These two, subsequent referrals agreed to participate. An additional three interviewees were referred to me through early participants.

All necessary steps were taken to avoid potential harm to community members and those participating in this research by obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. This review process entailed external consideration of study rationale, research design, recruitment methods, interview protocols, analysis techniques, and potential deliverables. Appendix A provides copies of the initial IRB project approval letter and the modification review letter, which approves changes to the study design that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Collection.

With a broad interest in institutional responses to students’ housing insecurity and how resources were being distributed, interviews enabled me to gather a detailed understanding of staff perspectives and experiences. A semi-structured protocol provided me with a comparable approach across participants. At the same time, I had flexibility with questions and follow-up where additional details were needed. Interviews took place on each staff member’s community college campus, at the location of their choice. This typically resulted in one-on-one conversations in staff offices, but one interviewee opted to meet at a nearby lunch table. Interviews solicited participants’ insight on college guidance for developing housing resources, experiences developing resources, perceptions of students most in need of housing assistance, responses to basic needs research findings, and their consideration of students’ non-academic challenges in relation to regional development (i.e. gentrification). Four of the six interviews followed initial conversations with participants that were intended to build rapport and introduce them to my research. These initial conversations also served to refine my interview questions for improved clarity. Appendix B provides a copy of the final interview protocol.

As previously noted, in addition to the geographic restrictions, data collection for this study is bound by time. Dialogue on housing insecurity and supports for Black students drastically changed during the COVID-19 pandemic and out of formalized institutional responses to the George Floyd murder/killing and Movement for Black Lives protests.³ As a result, document analysis was used to build on interview data. In doing so, this study acknowledges pre-pandemic statements and documents released by basic needs leaders to clarify and enrich interview findings, in light of the social context for this work.

Interview Procedure

Consistent with Creswell and Creswell (2018), interviews contained between five and 10 questions and were consistently used in all interviews. Though semi-structured, each interview typically lasted between 30 minutes to one hour in duration. Even among shorter interviews, I found the transcript in itself to be data-rich, in that the interviewee provided relevant responses to the series of questions. A voice recorder captured interviews with four participants who consented, while detailed notes were taken during all interviews. Interviews were held in a location of the participants' choosing. At the end of each interview day, I wrote short memos which capture "reflections, tentative themes, hunches, ideas, and things to pursue that are derived from [the day's] set of data" (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016, p. 196). These short memos informed future follow-up communication and subsequent interviews. As the project scope developed over

³ In 2020, the deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, and Dion Johnson - among the many lives lost to police brutality and anti-blackness - sparked demonstrations against racism and police brutality across the United States, with solidarity protests held around the world. The widespread calls for racial justice and police reform echoed across industries, including education, entertainment, commercial, housing, and health, as many were already grappling with the systemic inequities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic on Black and brown communities. See Nawaz and Joseph (2020) for an overview of how 2020's protests varied from past demonstrations against racism.

a period four months, four follow-up phone calls, four informal in-person conversations, and clarifying emails served to build on the new direction or insight uncovered after the initial interviews. Table 1 provides details of my communication with each participant.

Table 1.

Interviewee Communication Details

	Participant					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pre-Interview Conversations	X	X	X	X		
Recorded Interview	X	X	X	X		
Unrecorded Interview					X	X
Clarifying Email	X	X	X	X	X	X
Informal In-Person Conversations	X	X		X	X	
Follow-up Calls	X	X	X			X

Analysis.

Multiple rounds of preliminary analyses supported data reading and rereading, which helped guide the next interview with a different participant. Transcription services functioned as practical resources, but their use omitted the “rudimentary analysis” that comes with the transcription process. Instead, detailed notes taken during the interview helped identify leads for post-interview follow-up and future interviews with different participants, following critical thinking about what was experienced during each interview; how the respondent demographics speak to their reported experience; and topics related to methodological, theoretical, or

substantive issues (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016, p. 198). As an emerging qualitative researcher, this process also enabled me to strengthen my interview technique and make more deliberate, informed choices in each interview.

Interview transcripts were coded using one descriptive code (i.e. race) and four of Gee's (2005) task-building components (identity, politics, significance, activity) in Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis software program. Relative to other software programs, Dedoose features a fairly simple interface, straightforward data import process, and monthly subscription plan for users. Collectively, these features make the platform an appealing choice for relatively new researchers working under a fixed data analysis period. In addition, Dedoose enables users to add descriptions for codes. This ability to store pertinent information for the analysis process is both convenient and useful for supporting data reliability (as described below). Also, it is worth noting that Dedoose's cloud-based memory, which is appealing to researchers who may work from a number of devices or with team members, arguably poses data security concerns among skeptics of online data storage. However, the Dedoose platform incorporates encryption technologies, files uploaded to Dedoose did not contain any personal identifiers, and data incorporated interviewee pseudonyms – all of which work to ensure participant confidentiality. For reference, Appendix C provides a visual of the Dedoose platform and snippet of the demo coding page.

The analysis process for this study leveraged descriptive codes, which summarize “in a word or short phrase, most often as a noun, the basic topic of a passage of data” (Saldaña, 2015). This approach was helpful for understanding how participants viewed race as playing a role in students' experiences with housing insecurity. My additional four codes are pulled from Gee's (2005) approach to discourse analysis for its deliberate attempts to “balance talk about the mind,

talk about the social interaction and activities, and talk about society and institutions” (p. 6).

“Identity” was a particularly useful code for understanding what personal identities interviewees saw as central to their own role of addressing students’ housing issues. Similarly, “significance” was useful for understanding how interviewees downplayed and emphasized housing phenomena to relay the stakeholders and activities they saw as most important. Thus, descriptive coding “leads primarily to a categorized inventory, tabular account, summary, or index of the data’s content” (Saldaña, 2015), while coding with task-building components facilitates consideration of staff perceptions as demonstrations of individual power that are enabled by systemwide policies and social politics.

The initial six codes were tested on interview notes and a few transcript pages, informing the creation of several “child” or sub-codes. For example, the code “activity”, used to identify “something being enacted or attempted by college staff”, was broken down into three sub-codes: 1) assistance provided, 2) resources used by staff to support students, and 3) student outcome or experience. The “significance code” was also split into two clearer codes, with one indicating “significance” (e.g. something “very important”) and the other capturing something the interviewee perceived as “not significant” (e.g. “not as bad”). Finally, the code “politics” was used to track interviewee perspectives on a social good, and was given two child codes to distinguish between perceptions of what is viewed as “a necessity” and interviewees’ *assessment* of a college or community resource (e.g. “it’s good”). Importantly, the “necessity” child code varies from the “significance” child code; *necessity* indicates commentary on a resource provided to students, while *significance* provides insight on the larger problem or phenomena.

Analytic memos were created after each set of data coding. Memos captured my analysis of the data for emergent patterns, interpretation of their potential significance, anticipated

preliminary results, and notes for additional coding. As part of this process, I also reflected on my positionality statement and its relation to the data takeaways in my analytical memo. After several rounds of data reading, the final set of codes were transformed into longer-phrased themes, based on each code's "truncated essence" (Saldaña, 2015, p. 205). This process entailed elaborating on each code's meanings through regular communication with a trusted colleague, who brought new perspective and asked questions that ultimately clarified my thinking. Analytic memos then aided in drafting these findings and my approach to the subsequent document analysis phase.

Validity.

Two strategies were used for addressing study validity: clarifying bias and presenting discrepant information. In sharing and continuously revisiting my positionality statement during the analyses, I clarify the bias I brings to the study. This self-reflection "creates an open and honest narrative" and acknowledges reflexivity as a core characteristic of qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, my findings present negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes, as real life is composed of different perspectives that do not always coalesce. Thus, while evidence and codes often support a theme, I also present information and quotes that contradict the general perspective of the theme, providing a more realistic and more valid account. In this regard, the study is supportive of divergent perspectives and does not seek to essentialize perspectives voiced by a select group of community members.

While member checks are an additional way to address study validity, the COVID-19 pandemic, racial justice demonstrations, and end of the academic year limited the opportunity to reconnect with participants after data analysis.⁴

Reliability.

The analysis process addresses reliability concerns through transcript review and code monitoring. Each interview was transcribed and inspected to ensure they did not contain obvious mistakes made during transcription. In addition, codes were reviewed throughout the analysis period to make sure that there was not a drift in the definition of codes across the process of coding. That is, I continually compared data with the codes. I also wrote memos about the codes, their definitions, and revisited example quotes that reflected each code.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is used to answer research question two: How has CCC systemwide guidance on basic needs efforts enabled colleges to inequitably distribute basic needs resources? In line with critical policy analysis, discourse analysis asserts that language inherently relays perspective. Gee (2005) proposes that being “normal,” “the way things are,” or “the way things ought to be” all have “deep implications for how we believe or wish potential social goods are or ought to be distributed. They have deep implications, as well, for how we act in regard to those beliefs and wishes” (p. 2). Under this logic, speakers and writers use the resources of grammar to design their sentences and texts in ways that: 1) communicate their perspectives on reality, 2)

⁴ At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, most college course offerings were moved to online instruction as a means for preventing viral transmissions. Varying access to reliable internet, fluctuating job demands, career instability, and newfound institutional reform efforts for racial equity made for a turbulent time in education. Though some effort was made to connect with staff, offer support, and provide closure on research plans, member checks would have been an undue additional burden to participants who were generous enough to donate their time towards the initial interviews.

carry out various social activities, and 3) allow them to enact different social identities.

Analyzing language and other forms of communication then involves investigation of situated meanings, social languages, discourse models, intertextuality, discourses, conversations, and other language details. In doing so, we are able to think more deeply about how communication and its respective communicators inform one another.

As previously stated, Gee's (2005) approach to discourse analysis has been selected for this work because of its deliberate attempts to "balance talk about the mind, talk about the social interaction and activities, and talk about society and institutions" (p. 6) which can be adapted for each researchers' theory of the domain. Further, Gee's (2005) approach affords a flexibility for studying themes presented in interviews. By contrast, Fairclough's (2013) analytical framework for critical discourse analysis focuses on *obstacles* to tackling social problems and how semiotic aspects of language relate to the order of discourse and interactions, among other relationships. Thus, Gee's (2005) approach has been adapted to examine the distribution of power, resources, and knowledge, as well as the creation of 'winners' and 'losers' in efforts to support students experiencing housing insecurity.

Criteria for Document Inclusion and Exclusion.

In the presence of funding and absence of formal policy around basic needs supports, press releases, publications, Oakland-based student housing resource documents, and oral statements from systemwide basic needs leaders were transcribed and analyzed to understand perceptions of basic needs support efforts and resource allocation. Given the interviews' focus on student race in basic needs experiences and provided supports, I limit this portion of the study for materials made available between March 2019 and March 2020 for the following reasons: 1) these analyses capture systemwide guidance provided after the HOPE Center published evidence

of systemwide differences in basic needs insecurity rates by race, while 2) acknowledging a shift in social context and leadership approaches that resulted from COVID-19 and the George Floyd protests. The resulting collection of discourses analyzed are:

- Community College League of California's Affordability, Food & Housing Access Task Force Results Summary
- Community College League of California's Affordability, Food & Housing Access Taskforce's Recommendations
- CCC Study Equity webpage
- Student Equity and Achievement (SEA) 7/30/2019 Program Update
- Student Equity and Achievement (SEA) Program Expenditure Guidelines
- Closing the Gap: The New Student Equity and Achievement Program
- *Speech: Laney College President at Basic Needs Summit*
- CCC Emergency Aid Program Promising Practices
- *Speech: CCCCCO Chancellor at Intersegmental Basic Needs Conference*
- AB 043: Student Equity and Achievement (SEA) Program Funds Memorandum
- CCCCCO Shelter Funding Memo

All documents and transcribed oral statements comment or provide guidelines on the production and distribution of systemwide resources for addressing student basic needs. In line with critical policy analysis, the absence of race/ethnicity in conversations, as well as the implications for its absence are important considerations. As a result, documents did not need to mention race to be included for analysis.

Analysis.

In Gee's (2005) approach to discourse analysis, tools of inquiry (e.g. social language, situated meanings, conversations, intertextuality, discourses) guide the use of data. Social languages, situated meanings, discourse models and any instances of intertextuality allow people to enact and recognize different discourses at work. Alongside grammatical cues, tools of inquiry help writers to communicate or build seven "tasks" (significance, practices-activities, identities, relationships, politics, connections, signs systems-knowledge). These tools of inquiry and seven tasks maintain a reciprocal relationship through time. When researchers investigate this relationship, they assemble or trigger discourse models in a time-sensitive analytical process. Importantly, discourse models are simultaneously based on each researcher's experiences in the world and projections onto the word from where the researcher stands. Thus, discourse models are continually revised and developed through their interactions within group members and from outside influences.

Gee (2005) explains that "We gain information about a context in which a piece of language has been used and use this information to form a hypotheses about what that piece of language means and is doing" (p. 20). As such, interviews with college-level staff lend themselves to this inquiry on how language from systemwide leadership was interpreted and used. More pointedly, interviews raise the question: How has CCC systemwide guidance on basic needs efforts enabled college leaders to inequitably allocate housing resources? As a result, I take discourses and examine their relationship with four relevant tasks: significance, activities, identities, and politics. As previously stated, *significance* considers how language can give meaning or value in certain ways, *activities* is concerned with how language recognizes or engages in something here-and-now, *identities* recognizes how language enables the speaker to

take on identities or roles, and *politics* conveys a perspective on social goods. Notably, while building tasks are interrelated, Gee (2005) states it is not necessary to involve all seven because not all building tasks are readily apparent in all pieces of data. In addition, particular attention was paid towards the presence or absence of references to race or ethnicity, either in explicit racial-ethnic terms or in racialized terms often associated with minoritized racial-ethnic groups.

In preparation for analyses, transcripts of oral statements were reviewed to include linguistic detail. For example, underlined words indicated major stress in tone unit or change in pitch or loudness, capitalized words are emphatic, two periods indicate a hearable pause, and two dots following a vowel indicate the vowel is elongated (e.g. trie:d). Analysis then resembled an inductive coding process, in that key phrases in the data were coded across the selected building tasks. Codes also drew attention to the presence or absence of race in discourses. These data fragments were considered in terms of their linguistic detail (e.g. subject foregrounded or backgrounded, what other ways could it have been written?), situated meanings, the overall context in which the data occurred, and the figured worlds these situated meanings appear to implicate. All data were highlighted and color-coded by hand (i.e. without the use of research software). Given the relatively small number of documents (i.e. 12) for these analyses, free-hand coding enabled greater interaction with the materials without compromising organization.

In working to theme data and answer the research question, each document was reviewed with a document summary notes form (see Appendix D). This form detailed each discourse's context, purpose, significance, coded segments, and implication for future analyses. After the initial round of analyses concluded, an analytical memo was created to consider initial themes across tasks or codes, in addition to how the documents: promote or undermine racial equity, assert certain beneficiaries or "winners", promote certain perceptions of institutional progress in

addressing basic needs insecurity, express values, and push for sensitivity to the needs of basic needs insecure students. Several rounds of data reading and re-reading considered patterns within building tasks and looked at coded segments in relation to one another. Significance and identity codes, in particular, were analyzed in terms of how they were fore- and backgrounded in relation to the activities and politics codes. In many ways, these additional rounds of analyses resemble Saldaña's (2015) description of second-cycle coding, in that they further insight into how coded segments speak to one another. With each round, additional analytic memos were created to record new or refined insights, complete with excerpts from the discourses analyzed to retain the original context of the data. Findings build on analytic memos to answer the research question.

Validity.

Gee (2005) asserts that discourse analysis validity rests on four elements: convergence, agreement, coverage, and linguistic detail. Answers to the 42 possible questions from the six tools of inquiry and seven building tasks *converge* in ways that support the analysis and *agree* with how interviewees' (i.e. 'members' of the discourses implicated in the data) understood the language to function in actual settings. In addition, the analysis increased in validity as it was able to predict the sorts of things that might happen in related situations – or have more *coverage*. Finally, attention to grammatical details, subject foregrounding or backgrounding, and other ways of communicating the ideas relayed consideration of *linguistic details*. In accordance with these elements, I engaged with four building tasks, asking the relevant questions to help answer my research question. I also remained open to finding evidence that might go against my favored views or hunches from the interview phase. Answers that emerged from examining my tools of inquiry in relation to the building tasks provided evidence for the meanings of themes in this study.

Limitations.

Findings in this research are subject to researcher positionality, the discourse analysis approach employed, the specific set of materials analyzed and the social contexts in which they are considered. Thus, this study acknowledges that “truth” in discourse analysis is a matter of taking, negotiating, and contesting perspectives created in and through language. Each researcher has their own active process of creating meaning on the spot; each scholar’s ability to make meaning and recognize patterns result from the social contexts and experiences they’ve undergone. Further, these analyses use but one approach to discourse analysis; a different research and/or different approach may reach different conclusions through their respective tool and terminologies, relative to the seven building tasks leveraged in this study. Finally, while I am considering a set of documents and speeches collectively, each may have held a different meaning, been perceived differently at the point of being available, or left unconsidered in their entirety by other stakeholders. In line with Gee’s (2005) analytical guidance, the relationships between discourses are complex and evolving.

Findings

First and foremost, interviewees relayed their role with helping students tackle basic needs insecurity as informal and supplemental to their paid position. That is, while they were largely considered the “basic needs person” on campus, their formal duties took priority in their campus efforts and time commitments. Uncovering housing resources, establishing food pantries, applying for external funding, and strengthening local partnerships may relate to the work these staff complete as club advisors or hires under the Student Equity and Achievement program (where applicable). Still, the effort needed to more fully cultivate basic needs resources

was generally seen as exceeding their bandwidth. Tracey, an interviewee who has supported her college's non-tuition financial support efforts, expressed:

The college didn't do anything. It's just like, no one's doing it[...] I find that, you know, if the student doesn't have the basic needs covered, then they can't really go to school. So just because I like students, and want to help the students, and I develop a friendship with the students, did I want to – you know – just give them the resources that I know of, that could help them out.

Thus, staff's knowledge of housing resources and ability to support students were reliant on pre-existing external partners (e.g. philanthropies, nonprofit organizations), available SEA funds, and additional systemwide funding opportunities. In addition, these staff did not actively seek out or learn about housing insecure students; they are only knowledgeable on the experiences of students who approach them.

Despite these limitations to their role, all staff acknowledge a wide range in students' reasons for experiencing housing insecurity, often noting "it's not just one thing". Reasons include families being forced to relocate, abusive homes, bad investments made by parents, parent job loss, and students' desire to live independently from their family. Still, staff typically maintained some assumptions about which narratives more likely were reflective of the larger group experiencing housing insecurity. For example, Liz, a member of her college's career resources team, posed:

I'm not an expert in this, but I'm assuming first there's a shortage of housing and, um, students, some of them don't have the, you know, maybe don't have a credit background yet – you know? Credit to get an apartment[...] So it's kind of harder for them and they may not be tapped into social services out there that could possibly help them.

While all staff acknowledged housing insecurity as experienced by a large number of the college's student population, interviewees vary in their perception of the issue as racialized and its implications for who should receive services.

In what ways, if any, have community colleges' basic needs staff responded to the specific needs of African American students experiencing housing insecurity?

Importantly, most interviewees identify as Black and all work at institutions that have Student Equity and Achievement program plans with stated interests in improving Black students' academic outcomes. However, only two interviewees believe housing insecurity is disproportionately experienced by Black students and should be met with equitable outreach efforts. To that end, one faculty affiliated with her college's Black Student Collective (BSC) (pseudonym) shared her disinclination to equitably distribute resources and interpersonal support while acknowledging Black students' gravitation towards conversations about housing challenges:

I do notice that the Black students in particular really respond when I talk about housing insecurity and homelessness. Okay. That's noticeable. And my students and I have done presentations at the past two Umoja conferences where you, you know, they have a call for papers at the conference and we talked about housing insecurity and there was a lot of interest [from] the primarily Black community college students who would attend the conferences and they talk about it a lot. Yeah. So they definitely relate to the problem, you know... they're... they're very aware of the problem of the crisis of homelessness and in, um, just of having – of struggling to pay for housing. -*Claire, BSC affiliated faculty member.*

However, in explaining their efforts to address housing issues, foster dialogue, and provide students with support, Claire also relayed:

70% of the homeless in Oakland are African American, but I just think[...] since my goal is to eliminate homelessness, not just to help people who are homeless now[...] I think ultimately that we have to like see our commonalities with people across different races. [...] Since most of the students here are students of color, [I] pretty much, haven't noticed a problem, I guess, with that – with... with, um, the fact that the majority might be people [who are] Black and brown[...] A lot of the people that provide the services are also Black and brown, from what I've seen, but I kind of just see that, um, there needs to be – I'm really interested in helping to participate in raising people's consciousness and awareness of this problem and in that it's within our ability to end it. Um, and so I think that talking across races is a good way to do that because [...], it just makes a larger number of people that can help and work on the issue.

Thus, the interviewee acknowledges interest in housing topics and demand for resources among Black students and communities, but relays interest in fostering dialogue “across races.” With this, Claire notes reluctance to acknowledge disproportionate rates of housing challenges among Black students because “most of the students are students of color.” She additionally explains that “a lot of the people that provide the services are also Black and brown,” perhaps implying that equity-related efforts have already been taken up by their colleagues and further support from her is unneeded.

Despite the small number of interviews conducted, differences in perspectives towards housing insecurity appeared related to staff members’ connectedness to the local community. Two staff members viewed Black students as disproportionately experiencing housing insecurity

and in need of equitable resource distribution. These interviewees also described themselves as growing up near the college in which they were employed. An additional two staff members who were long-time Oakland residents considered Black students as disproportionately impacted but did not believe there should be equitable outreach and support. The final two staff members have never lived in Oakland and instead commuted long distances for work. These individuals did not see Black students as disproportionately impacted by housing insecurity or in need of targeted supports. In fact, one named undocumented students as “the ones who really need support,” while the other perceived international and white students as most in need of assistance.

Though interviewees spanned three different community colleges, differences in staff opinions may reflect conversations that happen within institutions. Given the small amount of funding resource coordinators and other staff are given, another faculty member tied this to her own institution’s Black Student Collective relayed tension in securing equity funds for organizations and events catered towards the college’s Black students. This interviewee, Rhonda, more specifically explained:

It has been a consistent uphill battle for getting resources[...] I think that since [this student organization] has always took the back seat and[...] the population is starting to shift from, um, African American to Latinx that the agenda has shifted. And even though the studies still show that African American people are the less likely to enroll in college, the less likely to stay, and the less likely to complete – it still is a hesitation amongst, you know, certain groups of people that don't want to invest in a certain group of people that they think is not worthy of investment. So it is difficult. Like everything that I pull off, I pull off on a tight budget, like a budget so tight that you wouldn't even match it.

Conversations on student outreach and resource distribution typically centered on perceptions of who is “worthy” or most “in need”. For example, another staff interviewee at Rhonda’s institution expressed disinterest in equitably supporting Black students, noting the college’s relatively small African American student body that is likely already connected to local nonprofit resources. Similarly, Tracey observed larger, sheer numbers of students from other groups (e.g. White students, international students) who were more inclined to seek assistance and subsequently perceived these as student groups more “in need.”

How has CCC systemwide guidance on basic needs efforts enabled colleges to inequitably distribute basic needs resources?

Discourse analysis of systemwide guidance on basic needs efforts (i.e. speeches, documents) relays how basic needs leadership undergirds perspectives shared in staff interviews. Four types of activities are emphasized across discourses: institutional learning and development, expanding aid, building strategic partnerships, and increasing service utilization. Across these activities, institutional learning and development was the most concrete, relaying institutional progress and research that has been completed by colleges. At the system-level, this primarily encompassed early task force efforts to understand the severity of basic needs challenges and capture college leaders’ willingness to provide student supports. For example, the Community College League of California (CCLC)’s 2019 Affordability, Food, & Housing Access Task Force Results Summary was primarily a “questionnaire of leadership interest in the development of housing facilities in order to inform strategic planning to address these needs” (p. 1). As the questionnaire was fielded after the publication of various Hope Center studies assessing the magnitude of basic needs insecurity, the text acknowledged that high-level college administrators have become “acutely aware of basic needs insecurity among students” (CCLC Affordability,

Food, & Housing Access Task Force, 2019, p. 1). Still, less than half (46.8 percent) reported a high interest in providing housing. Those in opposition noted lack of adequate staff, limitations in resources, lack of physical space, and inability to conduct a feasibility study. As such, discourses acknowledged student housing challenges and administrators' reluctance to provide responsive resources.

Subsequently, institutional progress and research activities within discourses do not provide directives or detail plans for disseminating information on basic needs issues across faculty and staff. This limits the ability for college employees to take on a shared understanding of basic needs issues or mutual investment in mitigating these challenges. It also distracts from efforts informally taking place on various campuses and prevents these staff from using existing research to make more informed service-providing decisions. A task force document that followed these published survey findings detailed 15 recommendations, among which there are few concrete plans for the colleges. The discourse instead centers the creation of system-level resources and supports to institutions. The few college-level plans proposed entail establishing a "Basic Needs Single Point of Contact" on each campus and creating a space on each campus for community-based organizations to provide their services. Over time, discourse across documents relay a merge between basic needs resource development and Student Equity and Achievement program. While this shift speaks to the system's interest in reducing bureaucratic help-seeking procedures for students, it follows broader patterns of siloed equity and inclusion work in institutions.

By contrast, three additional activities of expanding aid, building strategic partnerships, and increasing service utilization categorized directives placed on institutions for future efforts. Among these three directives, increasing service utilization was the least clear component, as it

relates to the flexibility colleges are given when developing their Student Equity and Achievement program – the resource from which basic needs efforts are typically funded. This ambiguity is exemplified in the system’s newsletter introducing the new Student Equity and Achievement program design, which explained “All we’re doing is encouraging colleges and districts to have a more robust conversation about what is working and what is not.” With this, the program “allows for colleges and districts to allocate funds in a way that speaks to their specific needs.” Expanding aid, then, primarily describes the CCC system’s efforts to make food available on campus and implement emergency aid programs. For instance, a resource on promising practices for the CCC’s emergency aid program encouraged staff to “Balance the need to deliver funds quickly with the need to be responsible with funding [...] Pre-purchase gift cards for gas, grocery stores, and other local stores to distribute as needed to students. Pay third-party bills directly for students, rather than offering cash.” Strategic partnerships then relay cross-campus communication and collaborations with local nonprofits that may also support the creation and distribution of basic needs resources. This speaks to the system’s interest in having a single point of contact and single space on campus for community services, as proposed by the task force in their list of recommendations.

With respect to colleges’ autonomy and the limited supplemental resources system leaders were able to offer, these discourses ultimately propose relatively small tweaks from business-as-usual over an undefined period of time. While this acknowledges the limitations colleges are operating under, it also enables institutions to inadvertently reproduce existing inequalities. While the discourses collected were published after research relaying racial disparities in housing insecurity, the materials only make reference to researchers’ recommended best practices for implementing supports; they do not note research findings or student sub-

populations identified as disproportionately experiencing housing insecurity. Further, it is implied that students experiencing housing insecurity are distinct from the Black and Latinx students the system urges colleges to consider when analyzing institutional data for developing their equity program plans. For example, on a webpage announcing the new student equity program, one practitioner is quoted stating “A few years ago, it wasn’t widely understood that the achievement gap applied to LGBT and ‘housing-insecure’ students just like it does other minorities.” This statement implies that LGBT students, housing insecure students, and other minority groups are mutually exclusive characteristics, rather than identities that may intersect – a notion that disregards existing research and evaluation findings on students experiencing basic needs insecurity and holds implications for how services are allocated to students.

Documents from basic needs leadership focus on relaying college autonomy and respect towards each institution, while communicating their need for feedback during the program development period. In doing so, systemwide leaders provide documented interest in college presidents’ ability to adapt largescale policies for their local contexts. However, the Chancellor’s informal perspective shared during his keynote for the 2020 annual basic needs convening relays a few assumptions about this flexibility to staff working directly with students. For example, Chancellor Oakley explains “This is an equity issue because we know what kinds of students – we’re talking students in poverty, we’re talking about students of color, we’re talking about Californians who have suffered for decades.” This perception is not only omitted from formal basic needs documents, but also in conflict with: 1) the system’s move to expand equity fund application to “other minorities”, and 2) the perceptions expressed by staff interviewed in this research. In this sense, the significance of basic needs efforts relayed by the Chancellor is divorced from the activities promoted across the system.

Further, politics describing what the system is- and should be doing vary by the identities evoked by system leadership. In formal equity-related documents, the system relays respect for colleges' autonomy *from system leaders*, expressing notions of flexibility and hopes for feedback. By contrast, in speaking with basic needs staff, the chancellor's *personal identity* is communicated to emphasize trust and relay additional assumptions:

I grew up in the [Los Angeles] area. I understand the struggles the communities face, like many of you. It's no wonder to me that I see so many faces of color in this room. Of course - of course there are faces of color in this room because you understand viscerally what is going on with our students. You understand. Many of you have faced the same issues.

While seemingly well-intentioned, this statement assumes that staff of color supporting basic needs efforts grew up in the areas where they are employed, experienced financial challenges, and are able to form personal connections with students of color experiencing basic needs insecurity. This assumption conflicts with the identities evoked in staff interviews and staffs' attribution of their basic needs support role to their understanding that "no one else is doing it." It remains unclear whether the chancellor's assumptions about basic needs coordinators are shared across staff on individual campuses (i.e. non-interview staff) and, if so, whether they influence students' anticipated interpersonal support. From an administrative standpoint, coordinators' efforts are typically uncompensated and (relatedly) unregulated. Given that basic needs insecurity is a less-established and -resourced institutional interest, all efforts to develop college resources are steps in the right direction. Yet, from a student's perspective, the limited accessibility and quality of basic needs resources – particularly from staff who are assumed to

reflect their interests and needs – may be reflective of misaligned institutional values and lack of student care.

Lastly, the contrast between assumptions relayed in the chancellor’s speech to staff and the flexibility relayed to college leadership facilitates uneven power dynamics within institutions. That is, racial equity-oriented basic needs coordinators may be momentarily re-enforced by the Chancellor’s speech, but later feel ill-equipped when encountering conflicting interests from more senior college employees who perceive flexibility from system leaders. In this regard, the lack of an established or paid position may also stifle institutional change efforts and discourage staff from fulfilling an equitable vision of success.

Discussion and Implications

Critics of racial equity considerations in California’s higher education space typically point to Prop 209’s ban on race-based affirmative action as grounds for its dismissal. However – in speaking to community college staff and learning of systemwide leadership perspectives – rather than pointing to Prop 209, the disinclination to acknowledge Black students’ disproportionate experiences with housing insecurity can be attributed to a lack of familiarity with research and local contexts or simple disinterest. To an extent, the latter speaks to reluctance in addressing Black students’ disproportionate housing challenges because of the limited resources provided for broader equity efforts across underserved students – leading to competition for equity funding across these groups. This reluctance points to an important paradigm shift needed for combatting antiblackness in research and practice.

From the perspective of system leadership and some college-level employees, staff members supporting basic needs efforts – as largely staff of color often hired through equity funds – hold a connection to the students their college intends to serve. As the data excerpts

suggest, staff members' identities as a people of color brought assumptions about the geographic communities to which they had familiarity and the students they felt inclined to support. In actuality, this is not always the case. Conversations with college staff did relay their interests in supporting the broader student body and creating comfortable environments on campus. Yet, as individuals with intersecting identities, these staff had different levels of exposure to- and subsequent perceptions of Black students, housing insecure students, underserved students who "really need help," and the issues experienced by these groups. Further, staff varied in their familiarity with the area in which their college is situated. Most did not grow up in the region and two have never lived in the same city; they instead commuted long distances from more affordable areas.

Thoughtful consideration of housing insecurity entails an understanding of inequalities as systemic, which has not been explicitly considered, relayed, and/or understood across education practitioners. Even well-intentioned and equity-focused stakeholders can overlook racial disparities because of their limited familiarity/exposure to the issue at hand. In this particular study, staff were aware of differences in academic performance across student racial/ethnic groups. Yet, because their role of providing housing resources and information is informal, they were not incentivized and/or equipped to learn about these disparities as also reflected in patterns of housing challenges. Instead, staff perceptions were typically based on which students were inclined to seek their help. These perceptions mark instances in which good intentions were not met with adequate information for meaningful action.

Several organizational change theories would be helpful in this process of creating and implementing housing supports for students. Using Bishop and Noguera's (2019) Ecology of Educational Equity as an example, education policies that seek to promote equity in academic

outcomes must “explicitly address the ways in which race, class, language, and culture, as well as implementation processes, reproduce and reinforce disparities in academic achievement” (p. 1). These efforts must be based on clear definitions and measurable goals. The framework also asserts that policies must also become more effective and responsive to community needs. Again, while Prop 209 prevents race-based affirmative action, this framework offers insight on how colleges can better communicate their intentions for equity funds and student support. With the many task forces, conferences, and meetings surrounding systemwide efforts to address students’ housing challenges, this framework is helpful for guiding leaders’ efforts to inform staff of existing research findings and provide a more informed perspective of basic needs issues. In consideration of system leaders’ interest in establishing single points of contact and spaces for resource distribution on campus, basic needs efforts must involve clearer communication about housing challenges and existing research. Staff must be incentivized to learn about basic needs issues, the underlying racial inequalities at both the system and campus levels, and best practices for destigmatizing supports.

Importantly, staff interviews also relayed an explicit disinterest from colleagues towards addressing Black students’ difficulties, in favor of supporting other minority groups. Dumas’s (2016) conceptualization of anti-blackness is useful for framing this challenge, as it is reflective of issues beyond postsecondary support services. As previously noted, Dumas (2016) asserts that anti-blackness extends beyond racism towards Black people and pushes education stakeholders to engage with both the “cultural disregard for and disgust with blackness.” This framing necessitates consideration of how college staff’s refusal to acknowledge Black students’ disproportionate difficulties with housing – at best – acknowledges multiple racial groups as undergoing harm. At worst, this tendency masks personal acceptance of challenges often

experienced by Black students and/or speaks to the more passive, cultural disregard that partly defines anti-blackness.

Dumas (2016) also asserts that “Embracing non-Black bodies of color thus facilitates, and is facilitated by, anti-blackness, and can be justified as antiracist precisely because it is inclusive of more than white” (p. 15). With this, anti-blackness does not propose that education stakeholders ignore racism or other harm experienced by non-Black groups; it pushes stakeholders to consider how contempt for blackness is at times evidenced by shifting attention to non-Black people of color. In doing so, limitations in funding, staff time, and opportunities pit under-resourced students of color in competition with one another. This warrants further consideration from system leaders towards college presidents’ and staff members’ language, in that they may reflect intentions of – even indirectly – reinforcing systemic inequalities in education and housing for Black students.

As a whole, interviews and discourse analysis demonstrated that a variety of factors underlie the lack of support for Black students, particularly as they navigate challenges meeting their basic needs. These include race-neutral language, assumed interest of POC, relatively small numbers of Black students on any given campus, lack of information, diversity fatigue, antiblackness, limited institutional supports, and staff time constraints. The COVID-19 pandemic and calls for racial justice have positioned the California Community Colleges system to create anti-racist policies and improve their campus climates. In time, follow-up interviews with staff or original interviews with recent hires for basic needs efforts could serve to explore whether the resulting shifts in institutional practices prove fruitful.

Finally, research efforts hold potential to help combat antiblackness and elevate conversations surrounding basic needs on campus. Future studies on the magnitude of basic

needs issues can more clearly call attention to trends in inequities, rather than listing disproportionately impacted groups in a laundry list. In addition, greater efforts to disseminate research findings across the larger body of faculty and staff would enable researchers to support the work of basic needs coordinators who may experience push-back from their peers. As these staff work to foster stronger connections with local nonprofits and other community partners, researchers may also find ways to help practitioners communicate the severity of basic needs insecurity among college students. These efforts have the potential to help shape discourse and resource availability across campuses and among the general public.

Appendix A. IRB Approval Letters

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

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SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95817

June 13, 2019

Anna Marie Ramos,
Department: School of Education
Phone: 858-213-4066
Email: Amiramamos@ucdavis.edu

Dear Ms. Ramos:

On **June 13, 2019** the UC Davis IRB Administration reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Amendment/Modification
Title:	Community College Perceptions and Plans
Investigator:	Ramos, Anna Marie,
IRB ID:	1371558-2
Funding:	Department
Documents Submitted:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment/Modification - HRP-213-FORM-Modification copy.docx • Consent Form - HRP-502-TEMPLATE-CONSENT-Exempt-Research Clean 6.02.docx • Consent Form - HRP-502-TEMPLATE-CONSENT-Exempt-Research Tracked.docx • Protocol - HRP-503 TRACKED 6.02.docx • Protocol - HRP-503 CLEAN 6.13.docx • Questionnaire/Survey - P1 Interview Protocol CLEAN.docx • Questionnaire/Survey - P1 Interview Protocol TRACKED.docx • UC Davis - Initial Review Application
Determination:	Exempt [<i>2- Minor Modifications</i>]
Comments/Conditions:	<p>This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are being considered and there are questions about whether IRB review is needed, please submit a modification request to the IRB for another determination.</p> <p>In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).</p>

This Assurance, on file with the Department of Health and Human Services, covers this determination:

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SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95817

June 10, 2020

Anna Marie Ramos
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On June 10, 2020 the UC Davis IRB Administration reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Amendment/Modification
Title:	Community College Perceptions and Plans
Investigator:	Ramos, Anna Marie,
IRB ID:	1371558-3
Funding:	Departmental
Grant ID and Title:	None
IND, IDE or HDE:	None
Documents Submitted:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment/Modification - HRP-213-FORM-Modification copy.docx • Amendment/Modification - HRP-503 TRACK CHANGES.docx • Amendment/Modification - HRP-503 TRACK CLEAN.docx • Questionnaire/Survey - Staff Protocol NEW.docx • UC Davis - Initial Review Application

Determination:	Exempt [<i>Minor Modifications</i>]
Comments/Conditions:	<p>This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are being considered and there are questions about whether IRB review is needed, please submit a modification request to the IRB for another determination.</p> <p>In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).</p>

This Assurance, on file with the Department of Health and Human Services, covers this determination:

FWA No: 00004557
 Expiration Date: January 05, 2024
 IORG: 0000251

Appendix B. Staff Interview Protocol

Weather:

Time/Day:

Background/Setting:

Institutional Supports

1. How would you describe housing security among community college students?
 - a. How would you describe the students you've interacted with?
 - b. Tell me a bit about students' experiences balancing housing experiences with their academic responsibilities
2. What resources are available to address student housing insecurity?
3. What steps might a student take if they are experiencing housing difficulties?
4. *College Staff*: What roles do faculty play in your college's attempts to support students in meeting their basic needs?

Connection to Community

5. How do you see students' housing experiences in relation to the East Bay's larger housing market?
6. What (additional) community partners might you refer students to when they are experiencing issues with housing?
7. How would you describe the relationships between colleges and external organizations when trying to address students' housing issues?
8. What resources (e.g. funding, community partners) would you like to have available for students?

Things to Pursue:

Body language and vulnerabilities:

Other notes:

Appendix C. Images of Dedoose Platform

Sample Dedoose homepage

The screenshot shows the Dedoose homepage for 'aaami's Demo Project'. The top navigation bar includes 'Logout' and 'Account' links, along with various utility icons. The main dashboard is divided into several sections:

- Project Summary:** Shows statistics for Users (1), Media (98), Descriptors (58), Excerpts (425), Codes (13), and Code Applications (447). It includes 'Import Data' and 'Export Data' buttons.
- Media Table:** A table listing media items with columns for Type, Title, and Added date. Items include '21.08 Pre', '11.04 Pre', '10.26 Pre', '19.04 Post', '19.06 Post', '1.08 Post', '19.01 Post', '19.04 Pre', '21.15 Pre', '21.08 Post', and 'new chinese'.
- Codes x Descriptor:** A section for analyzing codes and descriptors. It shows a 'Field' set to 'Community Characteri...' and 'Population Density'. It includes two bar charts: 'Reading by Mother' (High 5 or more: 29.8%, Low 1-2 persons per: 20.9%, Moderate 3-4: 49.3%) and 'Duration' (High 5 or more: 20.0%, Low 1-2 persons per: 20.0%, Moderate 3-4: 60.0%).
- Codes List:** A sidebar menu listing various codes such as 'Reading by Mother', 'Duration', 'Routine', 'Frequency', 'Reading by Others', 'Pre-Writing Activities', 'Letter Recognition', 'Parent - Child Talking', 'School Prep Beliefs', and 'Great Quotes'.
- Excerpts:** A section showing 425 excerpts. It displays three excerpts from the resource 'Bruce at MNRS Meeting 2011', each with a thumbnail and a brief description.
- Descriptor Ratios Multi Chart:** A pie chart showing the distribution of codes across descriptors. The chart is divided into 'Low 1-2', 'Moderate', and 'High 5 or more' categories. The set is 'Community Characteristics, Field: Population Density' and 'Zip Code'.

Coded demo transcript

The screenshot shows a 'Document: 11.04 Pre' in the Dedoose platform. The main area displays a transcript of text with various codes applied to it. The codes are visible as colored markers and labels on the text. The transcript includes several paragraphs of text, such as:

- TC spends 6 hours at school. TC goes to school at two different schools and has a break in b/w both. When he gets home he changes and PC gives him some food. She has TC read his little brother a book and then he is allowed to play. He watches some TV and then goes to his other school. He does the same routine when he gets home from his other school. PC has the most fun w/?? (couldn't hear). Everyone eats dinner together and PC and SC don't let TC speak during dinner. After dinner, he will start telling them about what he did at school and his day. Before he goes to bed, TC knows to change, brush his teeth and get into bed. PC then comes over and gives him a kiss. If TC is not too tired, TC will read her a book. TC's favorite tv show/video tape is Spider man. TC's favorite book is Winnie the Pooh.
- PC reads to TC. Sometimes she reads to him at night, but not every night. But every Saturday she does read to him. PC will read to him b/c she knows that sometimes the teacher won't be able to teach him everything. Also, she realized that the teacher can't devote time to all the children, so she tries to help out by helping TC. PC reads to TC for about 1/2 an hour at a time. The books are in English, but PC will make up stories for them in Spanish. PC began to read to TC when he was about 1 yr. old. She did it b/c he enjoyed it and would come down. He also would point to things in the book. PC likes being read aloud to and PC does it so TC can repeat what she says and learn. Once in awhile reading occurs during bedtime. They read more than one book at a time? (not heard). Reading will end b/c TC loses interest hardly ever. TC asks to be read to about 3x a week. Everyday he looks at books by himself. PC and TC do not go to the library together and they have not participated in any reading programs. However, PC says at the HS they have a special reading program teaching parents how to encourage and teach reading to their children. PC goes to this and says it is a very good program b/c she sees how kids definitely improve due to the program. PC's difficulties in reading were not on the tape.
- no one else reads to TC
- PC and SC tell stories to TC, for example made up stories about why you should eat. She tells stories about 3 x a week.
- TC and other children do play with books. Sometimes the neighbor boy and TC get together to play and TC says, "okay we are going to read and I will be the teacher." Then TC will proceed to tell the other child, "come to the front of the class, why won't you read the book...it's a beautiful story." When TC and the others play with books it's about once a week. TC helps other children read, but other children do not really help TC.
- TC does like to do pre-writing activities in the home. When PC is ready to paint he grabs his book and says he's not going to leave. He likes to paint spiderman. PC enjoys that TC likes to do these activities b/c he is learning. She notices him playing as if it were school and realizes all that he is learning. TC does these activities about once a week, but does do writing everyday. TC is really interested in these activities. In the last two months, TC has done pre-writing every single day except for Sunday. TC will do these activities for 15 minutes at a time. PC will do these activities with TC because she knows it entertains him and will help him in the future. There are not really any difficulties in doing these activities. She tries to schedule time w/TC and his activities. TC tries to write words everyday and sometimes does about 2 pages. TC and other children do have pre-writing play. In the last two months, this has happened about once a week. They pretend it's school. There are times that TC and other children help each other. They will tell

The right sidebar shows the 'Selection Info' and 'Codes' sections. The 'Codes' section is expanded to show the 'Reading by Mother' category, which includes sub-codes like 'Duration', 'Routine', 'Frequency', 'Reading by Others', 'Pre-Writing Activities', 'Letter Recognition', 'Parent - Child Talking', 'School Prep Beliefs', and 'Great Quotes'.

Appendix D. Example Document Summary Notes

Document Title: Student Equity (web page)

Publication/Speech Date: n.d.

Retrieved from: <https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/Student-Service/What-we-do/Student-Equity>

Review Date: July 27, 2020

Summary of Document: Sets the intentions of Student Equity program and funds in the CCC: help all every student to improve access, course completion, ESL and basic skills completion, degrees and certificates awarded, and transfer rates for all.

Significance of Document: Describes intentions of SEA program

Task-building Tools

- **Significance:** How is this piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways?
 - No one would argue that all students deserve an equal chance
 - Success indicators: access; course completion; ESL and basic skills completion; degrees and certificates awarded; and transfer rates
 - It's all about giving every student an equitable chance.
- **Activities:** What activity or activities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e. get others to recognize as going on)?
 - advances our goal of demolishing once and for all the achievement gaps for students from traditionally underrepresented populations
 - requires colleges to implement the Guided Pathways framework offering a clear path to a stated goal, to provide all students with an education plan based on that goal, and to toss aside outdated and inaccurate placement policies
 - Colleges must also maintain a student equity plan.
 - Focused on boosting achievement as measured by specific “success indicators”
 - require each college to develop detailed goals and measures addressing disparities that are discovered.
- **Identities:** What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e. get others to recognize as operative)?
 - merged funding for three initiatives:
 - the Student Success and Support Program
 - the Basic Skills Initiative; and
 - Student Equity.
- **Politics:** What perspective on social goods is this piece of language communicating (i.e. what is being communicated as to what is taken to be ‘normal,’ ‘right,’ ‘good,’ ‘correct,’ ‘proper,’ ‘appropriate,’ ‘valuable,’ ‘the way things are,’ ‘the way things out to be,’ ‘high status or low status,’ ‘like me or not like me,’ and so forth)?
 - all students deserve

- an equal chance at a certificate or degree,
 - transferring to a four-year college or university and
 - learning the workforce skills for a good career
- outdated and inaccurate placement policies that are keeping far too many from completing their goals in a timely manner
- **Commentary on Racial Inequities:** What are the implications for discrepancies in basic needs insecurity by student race?
 - students from traditionally underrepresented populations
 - all students
 - disparities that are discovered
 - every student

Other Notes: Basic needs insecurity is a barrier to success (as defined here), not an indicator in itself.

Implications for other discourse review: Must be attentive to how the significance of addressing basic needs insecurity is described.

Paper 2: Persist and Provide: College Students Balancing Long-Term Education Goals and Immediate Basic Needs

Basic needs insecurity research has overwhelmingly relied on the use of surveys to estimate the prevalence of food and housing challenges, in attempts to draw attention and resources to the issue. In addition, the limited qualitative studies that have been conducted leverage trauma-centered approaches to relay the severity of basic needs difficulties and further deromanticize the starving college student narrative. Despite the subsequent, increased attention from practitioners and policymakers, limited research has been conducted to garner insight from students on their experiences to inform the creation of college supports. In addition, limited race-conscious attempts have been made to understand how basic needs insecurity may be differently experienced across student groups.

This research adds depth to the field's understanding of contemporary postsecondary trajectories, as it: 1) leverages an ecological framework for exploring community college persistence and students' perceptions of their life possibilities, 2) uses qualitative methods to understand regional development as the context for *college students'* educational planning and basic needs insecurity, and 3) documents Black community college students' perceptions of non-tuition supports before the COVID-19 pandemic and calls for racial justice in 2020. Specifically, I investigate: How are Oakland's housing challenges shaping Black community college students' educational experiences? To answer this question, I use an ecological framework which situates gentrification as the background for community college students' non-academic responsibilities,

access to educational supports, job opportunities, and ability to meet their basic needs – all of which work in tandem to shape students’ academic opportunities.⁵

Theoretical Framework

I apply an ecological approach, which acknowledges the contexts and systems that shape students’ college pursuit. In particular, Iloh’s (2018) model of college-going decisions and trajectories maintains that college-going is not a static process; students’ college decisions are built around an “ongoing interplay between the contexts of *information, opportunity, and time*” (p. 235). With its explicit acknowledgement of cyclical thought processes, this approach can be used to explore students’ initial movement into a postsecondary institution, as well as their paths to degree after enrollment. As such, Iloh’s model is useful for understanding students’ continual decisions to persist or stop-out of community college, in light of rising living costs, and a rapidly increasing competitive housing market.

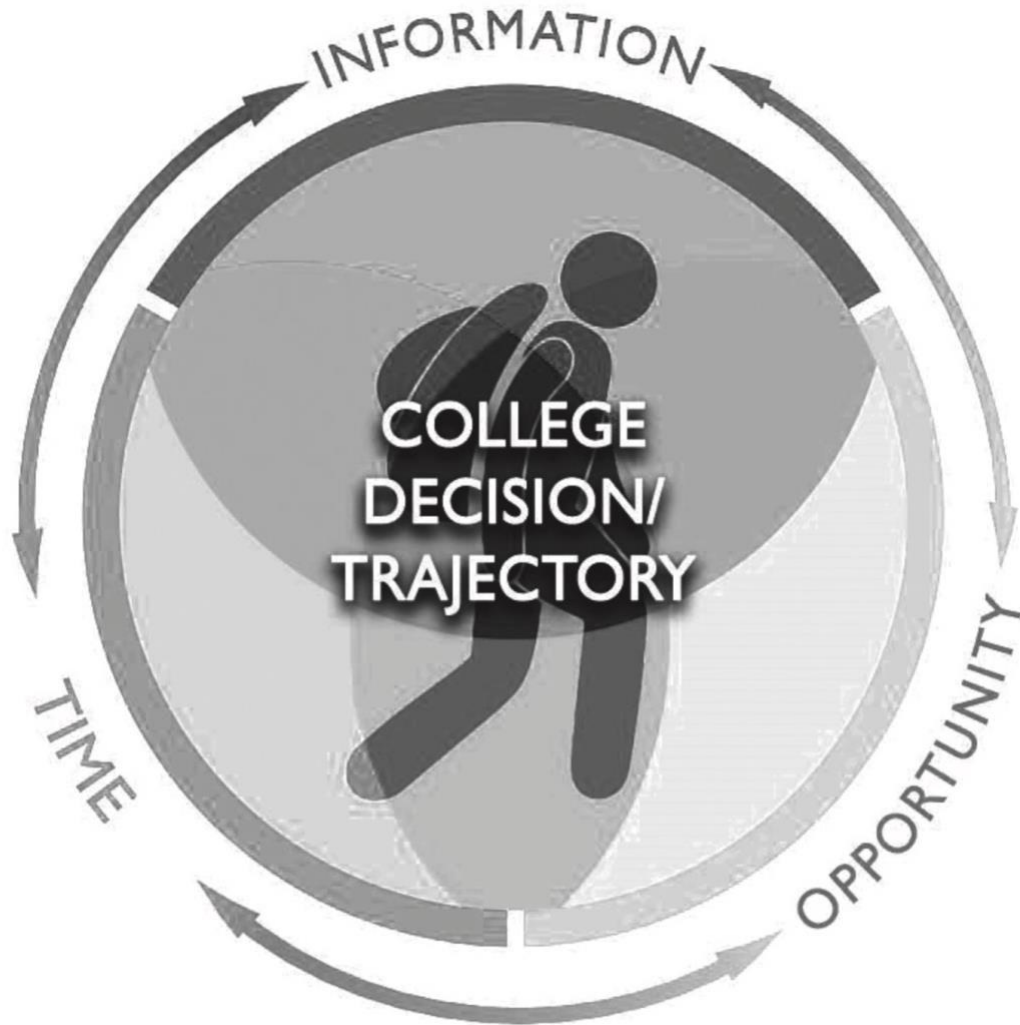
Relative to dominant models of college choice, Iloh’s framework caters towards the thought processes of students with adult responsibilities and other historically underrepresented groups who have been observed as experiencing an ebb and flow in enrollment along their college paths. With this, the model pushes back on “youth centric” notions of college attendance that are often rooted in calculated movements from high schools to four-year institutions (Iloh, 2018, p. 232). Through its consideration of external forces (i.e. systems) and contexts, researchers are positioned to understand students’ perceptions of their college options as

⁵ While this study centers undergraduate student experiences with housing insecurity, studies indicate that the ability to meet basic needs is also an issue among graduate students, which warrants further attention in other research (Perez-Felkner, Ford, Zhao, Anthony, Harrison, Rahming, 2020; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a; Crutchfield, 2018; Martinez et al., 2016).

constrained. Consequently, the model strays away from using the word “choice,” classifying it as a privileged term that simplifies student narratives and assumes college attendees possess a determined level of resources. To be clear, college decisions are demonstrations of student agency. However, in studying students’ paths, Iloh’s model pushes researchers to consider the inequities and life circumstances that supersede any educational preferences students may have as individuals. In researching the aspirations and everyday decisions made by students experiencing basic needs insecurity, this dissertation employs Iloh’s notions of opportunity, information, and time as lines of inquiry. Figure 1 presents Iloh’s (2018) visualization of how the various model components interact.

Figure 1.

Iloh Model of College-Going Decisions and Trajectories



Opportunity can be explored in terms of how financial, geographic, political, familial, and community contexts shape an individual's perceptions of: 1) what opportunities exist – academically, professionally, or other – and 2) how a college opportunity is defined (Iloh, 2019, p.7). For example, past academic achievement and the need to work full-time may restrict prospective students' ability to view college as an available opportunity. Similarly, an individual may *initially* perceive college as a privileged route for self-discovery and barrier to meeting their earning potential, then later find that their career mobility and subsequent salary are stifled without a college degree. These contextual shifts would position the individual to reframe college as a viable opportunity.

Importantly, consideration of the contexts underlying opportunity assists researchers with acknowledging systemic inequalities, rather than attributing trends in educational performance to individual behavior. As Iloh (2019) explains, “While one's race, gender, age, ability, or other identities should not be viewed as a deficit, it is also clear that opportunities are cultivated in the context of hegemonic structures that limit opportunities on the basis of identity.” Thus, patterns in Black students' lower rates of college persistence are not due to inherent differences in motivation or ability. Rather, these trends are produced from differences in financial resources, interpersonal supports, and non-academic responsibilities – among a host of other structural issues that have historically constrained opportunities and impeded Black students' flourishing.

As a whole, contexts of opportunity influence whether a student believes college-going (inclusive of persistence) is possible or the “right” route. This construct lends itself to the present study, which explores students' inclination to continue making degree progress in a community college as they experience housing insecurity. Thus, for some students, the contexts of college as a viable opportunity may be simultaneously familial, educational, financial, political,

technological, experiential and community factors. These elements are important for understanding students' interpretation of college enrollment as a real and "right" option as they navigate immediate housing challenges. Likewise, the aforementioned factors underpinning students' perceptions of college as an available and worthwhile opportunity may – at any given time – shift to make housing challenges and other non-academic responsibilities a greater priority or deserving of more immediate attention.

Understanding *information*, then, entails an investigation of resources and supports that students leverage when making college-going decisions. Information can come from a variety of sources, including college staff, community resources, or social networks. Information can be explored in terms of its accessibility, quality, and effectiveness. Importantly, sources of information can range across settings and individuals. For instance, nonprofits that provide food or temporary housing for students may be more easily available in communities that have sufficient private and public funding sources. As another example, counseling services can be a more readily-available informational source for students in four-year colleges but less accessible for students attending impacted two-year institutions. For this research on students experiencing basic needs insecurity, information is investigated in terms of the resources or coping mechanisms students leverage. These aspects of information include public assistance and emergency aid that students take on to make ends meet.

Finally, the framework's concept of *time* broadly spans moments, events, age, activities, interactions, and historical contexts. In this regard, time is the most fluid element of Iloh's model. While standing as its own dimension, time can shape the information available to students and the opportunities students are working towards. Iloh (2018) gives the example of free tuition legislation as a standalone event that influences the information and opportunities

that are perceived as available by students. The literature review that follows examines time through three lenses: 1) college student employment, which shapes everyday time management, 2) neighborhood developments that shape the local assets community college students may leverage (i.e. gentrification), and 3) students' mental health, as it influences students' ability to balance their time and attention across their various, everyday commitments. Methodologically, time also binds this study's inquiry through examining pre-COVID-19 developments and experiences surrounding basic needs efforts in California, which largely entailed race-neutral allocations of resources to students in higher education.

In line with Iloh's model, the literature review that follows further details existing studies on basic needs insecurity; public assistance, emergency aid; employment, gentrification and mental health as contexts for opportunity, information, and time, respectively.

Literature Review

Research on basic needs insecurity has been met with policy responses of food pantries, additional funding, and college partnerships with local food banks (Wood & Harris, 2020). While helpful steps in the right direction, combatting basic needs insecurity requires sustainable and more comprehensive resources, including efforts to address housing challenges and on-going socioemotional supports for student as they navigate the stress of food and housing issues. As Hallett and Crutchfield (2019) have asserted, housing insecurity and homelessness are symptoms of greater economic inequity, local housing markets, criminalization, marginalization, and oppression. Tackling housing insecurity thus calls for contextualized qualitative inquiry and innovation; bridges between economic, sociological, and psychological literature; and systemic, community-based responses to address such a complex phenomenon.

This study bridges several bodies of literature to understand the aspirations and priorities of Black community college students experiencing housing insecurity, with goals of informing college-level support services. In doing so, existing literature on college students' non-tuition challenges are reviewed in relation to Iloh's (2018) three contexts of opportunity, information, and time. *Opportunity* is outlined as the immediate and long-term possibilities students see for themselves as they navigate housing challenges. This review of literature also incorporates research on public assistance and emergency aid as *information* or coping mechanisms students leverage when striving to persist through their housing difficulties. Finally, *time* is explored through relevant literature on working college students, gentrification, and mental health, as all three have the potential to make housing challenges feel more imminent. As a whole, the following text details consideration of housing insecurity as supporting a more thoughtful interpretation of educational trends and the adult responsibilities faced by students, while calling for intentional and necessary college supports.

Studies on housing insecurity communicate a number of similarities in rates and traits of college students without a stable living environment. Table 1 details key takeaways from recent surveys focused on estimating the magnitude of housing insecurity and homelessness, while identifying housing insecure student characteristics. As a whole, existing literature relays greater rates of housing challenges in California, among students attending two-year institutions, and for those who identify as Black or African American. These trends support the use of a context-driven approach to understanding differences in time, access, and opportunity for Black students in the California Community Colleges system.

Table 1.

Comparison of Housing Security Surveys and Findings

	Crutchfield (2016)	Silva et al. (2017)	University of California (2017)	Crutchfield et al. (2018)
Focus	Food + Housing	Food + Housing	Food + Housing	Food + Housing
Housing Insecure Definition	McKinney-Vento Act's definitions of homeless	McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act	McKinney-Vento Act's definitions of homeless	McKinney-Vento Act's definitions of homeless
Student Standing	Undefined	All	All	All
Institution Type	4-YR (CSU Long Beach)	4-YR	4-YR (UC)	4-YR (CSU)
State	California	Massachusetts	California	California
Response Rate (%)	21	N/A	Undergrad: 33; Grad: 50	5.74
Sample Size	1,039	390	Undergrad: 55,009; Grad: 5,189	24,324
Findings				
Insecurity Rate (%)	12	5.4	Both: 5	10.9
Key Groups Impacted	N/A	-	Both: African American, Hispanic/Latino(a), American Indian, international, LGBTQ; Undergrad: transfer, first-gen, low income, former foster care; Grad: masters, doctoral with no candidacy, humanities, social sciences	Both: First generation college, Pell recipients, transfers, former foster youth, EOP, ESL, DACA, Dreamers, Black first gen students, Black, Non-Hispanic, men, international, upper-classmen, grad students
Most Common Form of Housing Insecurity	--	--	--	--

(continued.)

	Goldrick-Rab et al. (2015)	Goldrick-Rab et al. (2017)	Bill Wilson Center (2017)	Wood et al. (2017)	Goldrick-Rab et al. (2019b)
Focus Housing Insecure Definition	Food + Housing “several forms of housing insecurity and homelessness in the past year”	Food + Housing a broader set of challenges such as the inability to pay rent or utilities or the need to move frequently	Housing “in an unstable living situation if he/she left home (whether he/she wanted to leave or because they were kicked out), and if he/she was separated from their family and living somewhere else temporarily (i.e. shelter, with friend(s), vehicle).” (p.12)	Food + Housing “housing insecurities based on the definitions extended by Goldrick-Rab, Broton, and Eisenberg (2015)” (p.4)	Food + Housing includes a broad set of challenges such as the inability to pay rent or utilities, or the need to move frequently.
Student Standing	Undergraduates	Undergrads	Undergraduates	Undergraduates	Undergraduates
Institution Type	2-YR	2-YR	2-YR	2-YR	2-YR
State	National	National	California	California	California
Response Rate (%)	9	4.5	N/A	N/A (Data subset)	5
Sample Size	4,312	33,934	80,172	3,647	39,930
Findings					
Insecurity Rate (%)	52 housing insecure, 13 homeless	51 housing insecure, 14 homeless	44	32.8 housing insecure	60 housing insecure in past year, 19 homeless
Key Groups Impacted	Both: African American, Housing insecure: first gen college students	Both: Independent for fin. aid, former foster youth, Pell recipients; housing insecure: with children, U.S. citizens, permanent residents, have parents who are U.S./ permanent residents; homeless: women, older, parent without a college degree, under 21, no children, African American, Hispanic, multiracial	--	Southeast Asians, African Americans, developmental class requirements	Both: Gay, lesbian, Black, Lat./Hisp., parent without bachelor’s, older, part-time, transgender, independent for fin aid, Pell recipients, employed, formerly convicted, ADHD, former foster youth; housing insecure: Gender non-conforming, w/ children; homeless: not U.S. citizen, unmarried, divorced, former military
Most Common Form of Housing Insecurity	Difficulty paying rent (22%), didn’t pay full amount of utilities (22%), didn’t pay full amount of rent (18%)	Didn’t pay full amount of utilities (28%), didn’t pay full rent/mortgage (21%), live with other people due to financial problems (18%)	--	--	Rent/mort. increase (32%), unpaid utilities (28%), unpaid rent/mort. (28%), moved in w/ people (25%), exceed housing cap. (21%)

(continued.)

	Tsui et al. (2011)	Goldrick-Rab et al. (2018)	Goldrick-Rab et al. (2019a)	California Student Aid Commission (2019a; 2019b)
Focus	Housing	Food + Housing	Food + Housing	Food + Housing
Housing Insecure Definition	Experienced one or more of 12 housing problems in the last year	housing insecurity includes a broader set of challenges	housing insecurity includes a broader set of challenges	Housing challenges
Student Standing	Undergrads	Undergrads	Undergrads	Undergraduates
Institution Type	2+4-YR (CUNY)	2+4-YR	2+4 YR	2+4-YR
State	New York	National	National	California
Response Rate (%)	15.7	7.3	5.8	10.2
Sample Size	1,086	43,000	85,837	15,419
Findings				
Insecurity Rate (%)	41.7	Housing insecure: 36 university + 46 community college; homeless: 9 university + 12 community college	56 housing insecure, 17 homeless	35 are housing insecure
Key Groups Impacted	Women, >25-years-old, with children, household incomes less than \$50,000, supporting themselves financially, working 20+ weekly hours, those with poor health.	Both: Black, former foster youth, homosexual, bisexual, Pell recipients, off-campus; Homeless: Native American, “mixed/other”, veterans; housing insecure: female, nonbinary, parents not citizens; parents have lower levels of edu., veterans, independent for financial aid, older, with children, work longer hrs.	African Americans, LGBTQ, independent for financial aid purposes, former military, former foster youth, formerly convicted of a crime	Black, Hispanic, older, with dependents
Most Common Form of Housing Insecurity	Not enough money to pay rent (28.6%), experiencing a rent increase that made it difficult to pay for rent (27.7%); all others below 5%	Didn’t pay full amount of utilities, rent/mortgage increase made it difficult to pay, moved in with others due to financial problems, didn’t pay full amount of rent/mortgage	Had a rent or mortgage increase that made it difficult to pay, didn’t pay full amount of utilities, didn’t pay full amount of rent/mortgage, moved in with people due to financial problems, lived with others beyond expected capacity of the housing, had an account go into default.	Did not pay the full amount of a gas, oil, or electricity bill (21%), rent/mortgage increase that was difficult to pay (18%), did not pay/underpaid rent/mortgage (10%), lived in a home with more people than listed on the lease agreement (10%)

Note: Excludes regional analyses provided by Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019; CSAC, 2019a, 2019b.

Opportunity

Much of community college persistence research frames non-tuition challenges as competing priorities of two-year students. Porter and Umbach (2019), for example, surveyed community college students to identify their top “challenges” to success, finding work-school balance, living or academic expenses, and demands of family and friends as the most commonly cited. However, in centralizing respondents’ identities as students, the need to work, living expenses, and demands from personal relationships are undermined as distractions along the path to a degree – rather than viewing respondents as whole individuals balancing their student obligations with other important, adult responsibilities. With the latter perspective, college enrollment is framed as one of many opportunities or responsibilities that individuals can take on, rather than a life-defining experience or central identity. Only recently have studies explicitly attempted to shift the field’s understanding of these time commitments, from distractions against academic success to indicative of greater issues or personal roles (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019). Across the board, studies have previously acknowledged housing and food as essential for improving retention and graduation rates. Still, these areas are viewed as secondary concerns – if at all – in understanding contemporary student perspectives.

Relatedly, more could be done to gather insight on basic needs insecure students’ educational goals and subsequent perceptions of needed supports. Instead, most studies have focused on identifying student demographics disproportionately experiencing housing insecurity and have well-documented the challenges and trauma of students without regular access to food and housing. Such research has depicted limited access to basic needs as inhibiting students’ mental health, as well as their ability to prioritize school and perform well academically (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; O’Neill & Maguire, 2017; Martinez et

al., 2016; Wood et al., 2016; Cady, 2014; Tierney & Hallett, 2011; Tierney et al., 2008). In addition to this emotional and academic stress, social and financial challenges have also been explored. Gupton (2017) finds that students experiencing homelessness may deal with negative peer relationships, family trauma, barriers to financial aid, and a lack of access to technology or a consistent address. Despite the stress and challenges that have been described as immediate outcomes, there is room to investigate students' perceived long-term gain as informing their persistence. For example, homeless youth have reportedly enrolled in community college to attain stability through short-term class schedules and long-term returns to their degree (Gupton, 2017). While trauma-informed approaches have effectively called for the urgent dissemination of basic needs resources, scholars must continue to explore how the perceived opportunities made available by college may play roles in postsecondary persistence for the broader group of students experiencing housing insecurity (i.e. those with housing challenges who are not necessarily homeless).

Relatedly, recent research has called for additional consideration of community college student agency, and how two-year institutions are leveraged for immediate and potentially long-term benefit, particularly by students of color (Salas et al., 2018). Though Wood and colleagues (2017) find that students experiencing housing insecurity are 60 percent more likely to have the goal of achieving a certification than those without insecurities, they also report housing and food insecure students as comparably interested in transferring to a four-year institution and obtaining an associate's degree as their peers without housing or food challenges. This suggests that there is still much to be explored in terms of the personal values and career possibilities basic needs insecure students see for themselves, and how this shapes their college trajectories.

Alongside these efforts, it is important that research studies explore differential experiences with housing insecurity by student age. While an increasing amount of attention has been paid to the financial responsibilities and time commitments of older students who may have children (California Student Aid Commission, 2019a, 2019b; Carnevale et al., 2015), scholars must not overlook the growing adult responsibilities and development processes that can still shape the success of traditional-age college students who have been historically underrepresented. Financial challenges potentially experienced by the latter group may be an extension of their family's socioeconomic standing, just as it may lead them to stop-out and either contribute to the population of adults with some-college-no-degree or later re-enter higher education as one of the aforementioned non-traditional age students.

Information

Understanding information entails an investigation into resources and supports that students leverage when making college-going decisions. For the purposes of this research, information is investigated in terms of the coping mechanisms students adopt when experiencing housing challenges. Though both public and private assistance are underutilized by students, service take-up is higher among community colleges students and students who identify as homeless (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). This is likely due to increased eligibility among these populations, given work and other requirements needed to receive aid. Students who are able to leverage public supports most often turn to Medicaid or public health insurance, tax refunds, and SNAP (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018, 2017). However, these forms of aid often require burdensome application processes, for which many students may lack the resources or time to complete.

Subsequently, studies exploring students' coping mechanisms for basic needs insecurity relay a reliance on working and financial aid (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018, 2017; Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017). However, given that financial aid is often only intended to cover tuition and smaller college-related costs, Goldrick-Rab and colleagues (2015) find that most students experiencing needs insecurity take out loans to pay their bills. It is important to note that these resources are more difficult for homeless youth to access (relative to the broader group of housing insecure students), as they experience a number of barriers to financial aid. Provisions were added to the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA) in 2015 to help homeless youth qualify as independent for the purposes of financial aid. Yet, students reported experiencing burdensome verification procedures and difficulty attaining homeless determinations from school district liaisons, homeless service providers, and postsecondary institutions (Crutchfield et al., 2018; SchoolHouse Connection, 2017). Similarly, financial aid professionals noted extensive justification to prove youth were homeless (Crutchfield et al., 2018). Efforts to increase these youths' ability to receive financial aid include revisions to verification procedures and specialized staff trainings, but whether these changes have generated positive outcomes remains unknown.

Mental health services, discounted/free child care, foster youth advisors, and discounted/free bus passes are additional, commonly offered sources of support available in California public colleges (Au & Hyatt, 2017), but there is still room for improving access and quality of these resources. In instances where referrals were made to off-campus or community-based supports, the "complicated intermingling of social services (i.e. SSI or CalFresh)" were reported as having increased eligibility restrictions or end-points that serve as barriers to service receipt for college students (Crutchfield, 2016). This implies that counselors and other staff

making referrals to external organizations may be unfamiliar with the services in their area. As a result, staff may inadvertently lead resource-constrained students through fruitless, bureaucratic processes for aid, potentially weakening the students' trust in college services.

Given these bureaucratic hurdles, it is common for students experiencing needs insecurity to lean on more informal and less stable methods of coping. Roughly a quarter of students with basic needs challenges seek out free food, potentially from events on campus or nearby food pantries (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015). Students experiencing food insecurity also cope by buying inexpensive food, stretching food, and eating less healthy meals (McArthur et al., 2017). Meanwhile, homeless college students most often manage by staying with a friend/relative or couch surfing (Silva et al., 2015; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018; Bill Wilson Center, 2017; Crutchfield, 2016). These habits echo the need for more sustainable student supports.

Coping mechanisms and help-seeking behaviors among basic needs insecure students are also shaped by number of social and psychological factors. These include discomfort with discussing needs insecurity (Gupton, 2017; Henry, 2017), stigma (Henry, 2017), stress (Hallett & Freas, 2017), and a lack of awareness towards available supports (Gupton, 2017). As colleges and community nonprofits work to make student assistance more accessible, researchers have relayed a need for single points of contact (Hallett & Freas, 2017; Crutchfield, 2016). At the same time, equally important is that service providers practice empathy. The chaos of residential insecurity and constantly living at the brink of crisis can result in trauma (Hallett & Freas, 2017). Trauma can, in turn, overwhelm students, lead them to feel skeptical towards the efficacy of available supports, or otherwise make it difficult for students' to navigate the aforementioned application processes.

As a whole, a better understanding of the information leveraged by students experiencing basic needs insecurity offers the chance to provide a more humanizing view of students' decision to persist in or stop out of college, as well as the number of credits they attempt to take on. Contexts of information are also important for understanding which support services are needed, what policies should accompany them, and how they should be framed or described to students. For example, more recently, some colleges have turned to the costly creation of on-campus housing options for housing-insecure students, often relying on the availability of aid from community organizations and private donors to fund these efforts. (See Walker [2020], which details Cerritos College's housing project as an example.) Yet it is unclear whether room and board fees and subsequent fee forgiveness policies may come into play through administrators' efforts to further incentivize students' academic progress. Thus, there is not enough information or research to understand whether logistical factors underling the creation of housing supports will aid in students' academic success or contribute additional stress. It is worth noting that the sole study which has been conducted on on-campus housing reports that this resource does not have an effect on associate degree completion when room and board fees exist; while there are associated increases in transfer and bachelor's degree completion, these may partially result from the heterogeneity of colleges' respective student bodies (Turk & González Canché, 2019). This poses the question of how colleges can structure resources for students with housing difficulties in a more sustainable and informed fashion.

Emergency Aid.

Until recent years, issues accessing food and housing were commonly considered one-time or momentary hardships students experienced that could be, at least partially, addressed through emergency aid. At most schools, these forms of short-term financial assistance can still

be used to cover medical bills, rent or utilities, and transportation costs (Dachelet & Goldrick-Rab, 2015). Given data limitations, small numbers of recipients, program variation, and ethical considerations, most researcher-led investigations into emergency aid have largely resulted in landscape scans (Kruger et al., 2016; Chaplot et al., 2015; Dachelet & Goldrick-Rab, 2015; Baum et al., 2014). Though, there is one program evaluation (Geckeler et al., 2008) and one empirical study on emergency aid that took place within a larger randomized controlled trial (Evans et al., 2017). This dearth in research suggests limitation to more fully examine the impact of existing practices. Thus, as stakeholders have realized the extent and reoccurrence of basic needs insecurity, research to inform the creation of sustainable supports have lagged.

Understandably, aid publicity, award amounts, and disbursement protocols widely vary alongside colleges' available resources, agreements with funding partners, and other institution-specific factors. In a national survey of 523 colleges, approximately 84 percent of institutions reported offering at least one form of emergency aid (Kruger et al., 2016). Institutions often made these supports available through emergency loans (67 percent), unrestricted grants (54 percent), restricted grants (i.e. grants with academic or other requirements) (47 percent), campus vouchers (e.g. book vouchers, dining hall coverage) (47 percent), food pantries (45 percent), and completion scholarships (33 percent), which are intended to cover unmet financial need for students who are near graduation. More than one-third of colleges noted awarding average grant values of at least \$1,000, with support largely coming from foundations and individual donors. However, the availability of these resources varied across institution type and was primarily communicated to students through "word of mouth" from faculty and staff (Kruger et al., 2016: p. 11). This implies that students who are already able to engage on campus and build stronger connections with campus leaders are more likely to hear about these additional resources.

Relatedly, a number of logistical challenges appear salient across emergency aid programs, including: clear criteria for aid eligibility, limited resources, data availability, coordinating emergency aid with other college resources (e.g. financial aid, student support services), and balancing funding safeguards with timely disbursement to students (Dachelet & Goldrick-Rab, 2015; Geckeler et al., 2008). As such, the ability for emergency aid to reach colleges' most vulnerable student populations, particularly in a timely fashion, remains uncertain.

The limited empirical research on emergency aid suggests that financial support alone does not improve student success outcomes (Evans et al., 2017). One key study in this area evaluated the impact of a comprehensive case management program for low-income, associate's degree-seeking students (Evans et al., 2017). The experiment took place at a community college in Texas by randomly assigning students to three different groups: 1) a treatment group that was offered emergency financial assistance (EFA); 2) a separate treatment group that was offered comprehensive case management, including EFA; or 3) a control group that was not offered any additional services beyond their college's standard supports. In both treatment groups, each student with at least a 2.0 grade point average could apply for up to \$500 in emergency aid per semester, with a maximum of \$1,500 in funds over the study's three-year period. Students offered comprehensive case management were also able to access a navigator to help them identify and achieve their goals, tutoring referrals, course enrollment advising, mentoring, and other coaching services. Across all requests for emergency financial aid, the largest portions of funding were used on utilities (33 percent), transportation (29 percent), and housing (23 percent) (p. 10). Students who were given the option to take on comprehensive case management were most often interested in discussing work issues (approximately 25 percent) and other specialized services (17 percent), followed by housing, finances, and transportation (12 percent) (p. 8). As

part of these efforts, students were more inclined to use emergency aid and case management for accessing tutoring or book vouchers, relative to using these opportunities for gaining additional academic supports. This underscores recent calls to support students with navigating non-tuition fees as barriers to their academic success.

As such, scholars have argued that there is value added by combining cash aid with non-monetary supports (Evans et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2013; Geckeler et al., 2008). While Evans et al. (2017) offers the first RCT to test the direct impact of emergency aid; their conclusions are consistent with researchers at the HOPE Center and MDRC that relay similar suggestions for complementing financial support with comprehensive services for students. In many instances, financial difficulties or other personal circumstances that require additional support services may be on-going or otherwise indicative of larger issues that can inhibit college persistence and completion. For example, a student who needs assistance with covering a medical bill may have health issues that can require future treatments or prevent them from fully engaging in school. Similarly, a student who intends to use their small grant dollars to fix their car or pay for parking permits may undergo difficulty with paying for gas, maintenance, or insurance down the line. Thus, emergency aid can be a helpful short-term solution but should be complemented with longer-term assistance.

As a whole, public sectors and institutions may create new or integrate existing resources that have the potential to address students' non-academic challenges (e.g., SNAP, emergency aid). However, the lack of publicity about these supports, administrative hurdles, and tricky aid disbursement timelines may lead students to explore private loans, personal connections, or nonprofits as more viable options and sources of information for meeting their immediate basic needs. Alternatively, students may take on jobs outside of school as a more sustainable means for

covering non-tuition expenses or contributing to their families as they advance towards degree completion. Across these prospects for battling basic needs challenges, students' (in)ability to access information and subsequent resources can influence their perception of housing and food issues as relatively immediate priorities. Further, familiarity with and access to these resources shape students' insight (i.e., information) on the cost of college attendance. This, in turn, influences their ability to perceive continued college enrollment as a viable opportunity at any given time.

Time

Student employment, environmental context (i.e., gentrification), and mental health are three constructs which can make students' housing challenges feel more imminent and influence their ability to prioritize academic responsibilities. The sections that follow briefly reviews relevant literature on these topics and relay implications for students' academic trajectories.

Working College Students.

Studies find that food insecure students disproportionately report being employed (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a; Patton-López et al., 2014), having a considerably low annual income (Patton-López et al., 2014; Freudenberg et al., 2011), and receiving some form of government assistance (Gaines et al., 2014; Micevski et al., 2014). Further, students with low or very low food security are disproportionately “financially independent” for financial aid purposes (Goldrick et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2018, 2017; Gaines et al., 2014; Freudenberg et al., 2011), work longer hours (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2018; Freudenberg et al., 2011; Bragg et al., 2017), and may work later shifts (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). Collectively, these trends complicate widely-held assumptions that food insecure college students are simply young people learning how to cook and take care of themselves. The aforementioned studies also call attention

to the employment and time constraints students may undergo when managing the financial pressures presented by basic needs insecurity.

As a result, research on college students' balance between work and academic responsibilities may shed light on the experiences of individuals attempting to meet immediate, basic needs while balancing long-term educational goals. However, the field's understanding of working college students is very slowly evolving alongside academia's growing understandings of the contemporary college-going population. While studies have – for quite some time – described most college students as employed, research using Bureau of Labor Statistics data has historically relayed working college students as disproportionately female, white, and young (Stern & Nakata, 1991; Carnevale et al., 2015). Yet, after accounting for differences across age groups and places of employment (i.e. on-campus or other), important discrepancies in working college student are observed. Working learners under 30 are disproportionately white, enrolled in selective institutions, select humanities and social science majors, are dependent on their parents, and work fewer hours with the goal of building experience. Meanwhile, working learners who are at least 30-years old are disproportionately African American, enrolled in open-access colleges and for-profit institutions, pursue healthcare and business, have dependents, and work more hours (Carnevale et al., 2015). These differences reflect two distinct bodies of literature identified by Horn and Berktold (1998): “students who work” and “employees who study.” In line with Iloh's (2018) assertion that college is not a fixed opportunity, the latter references individuals who consider themselves primarily employees that were also taking classes, presenting implications for the motivational and social factors that underlie their college persistence.

It is worth noting that measures for “low-income” among working college students are often foregone in the literature. Student wages, family income, and Pell-eligibility can speak to low-income status but these data are not always available and/or applicable to the research questions at hand. This is particularly true in studies which center students less inclined to complete the FAFSA (e.g. community college students). However, research by the Center on Education and the Workforce identifies low-income working students as those with family incomes that fall below 200 percent of the federal poverty line, and higher-income working learners as those with family incomes at or above 200 percent of the poverty line (Carnevale & Smith, 2018). Under this measure, low-income working college students are disproportionately female, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, at least 30-years old, pursue short-term degrees, and are less likely to have children (Carnevale & Smith, 2018). In addition, hours worked is negatively associated with average parental transfers (i.e. parent financial support) and positively associated with costs of college attendance (Kalenkoski & Pabilonia, 2008), troubling traditional assumptions that college students with paid employment typically work for the purpose of gathering work experience.

Across these dichotomies of old and young, two-year and four-year colleges, and low-income status, limitations to education data systems have resulted in research on working college students that seems to gloss over the experiences of younger workers from low-income families and those who may work off-campus. In this regard, literature from social psychology can be used to complement the work of economists in postsecondary research. Emerging adulthood, in particular, is a concept that has been heavily explored among academics studying psychological development but has failed to generate a comparable “buzz” in education studies (Murray & Arnett, 2018). That is, though distinct from other types of postsecondary research, emerging

adulthood literature has centered the experiences of college students and has the potential to complement the field's understanding of young adult students' balance between school and work. In doing so, research on working college students can explore topics of student agency and adult decision making.

Emerging adulthood speaks to a period individuals typically undergo between the age of 18 and 25. Arnett (2006) characterizes it as a time of possibilities, instability, identity explorations, self-focus, and ambivalence toward adult status (Arnett, 2006). This phase is distinct from adolescence and young adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Oyserman and Destin (2010) posit that this period of changes in environments and social contexts lead students to undergo constant renegotiations of their individual choices, identity, and motivation. Similarly, emerging adulthood is considered the period of life that offers the most opportunity for identity explorations in the areas of love, work, and worldview. Consequently, emerging adults often pursue college education in a nonlinear way, frequently combined with work and punctuated by periods of nonattendance. In fact, some studies have found that transitions like *finishing education* are some of the least important criteria for the attainment of adulthood across racial groups (Arnett, 2000; 2003). By contrast, the two top criteria for the transition to adulthood in a variety of studies were *accepting responsibility for one's self* and *making independent decisions* – just as a third criterion, *becoming financially independent*, also ranks consistently near the top (Arnett, 1997; 1998). These trends may speak to the internal pressure and motivation students with basic needs insecurity experience, in that personal interests in being financially self-sufficient may work alongside difficulty accessing food or housing resources to (at times) negate the idea of continued college enrollment as a viable opportunity.

Some researchers have moved to understand how emerging adulthood varies across student characteristics. Katsiaficas (2017) found negative and statistically significant relationships between parent educational levels and personal attainment of adulthood status for students of color between the ages of 18 and 25. This suggests that first generation college students of color may perceive themselves as possessing a higher load of adult responsibilities, including the need to work. In addition, community college students of color were likely to report “balancing multiple responsibilities” as an indicator of reaching adulthood (Katsiaficas, 2017), a finding which may relay students’ non-academic goals. Thus, a disinterest in- or inability to turn to family members for financial support may make these students’ access to information and resources for combatting basic needs important factors in their decisions surrounding continued enrollment.

Collectively, these studies relay a number of student characteristics as tied to trends in employment and adult priorities, demonstrating some nuance in how research has come to understand working learners. For some, the need to work – in itself – is thought to dictate how students must manage their time (i.e., balance homework with employment) to make ends meet, presenting negative assumptions about working learners’ academic performance. However, as the sections that follow detail, the relationship between hours worked and academic performance is difficult to adequately capture. In addition, alongside differences in student characteristics, research has observed differences in available job opportunities, which present implications for students’ time management and related academic performance.

Work Hours as an Imperfect Predictor of GPA

Findings on the relationship between students’ amount of work hours and academic grades vary, and are subject to a number of methodological issues including statistical

assumptions, endogenous variables, and lack of attention to job characteristics (Riggert et al., 2006; Stinebrickner & Stinebrickner, 2003; Watts, 2002; Lyons, Krachenberg, Henke, 1986). Findings reveal that, first, although additional work hours are often assumed to negatively impact academics, student employment can be misleading and not reflect the true amount of hours worked. In addition, there are posing limitations on available employment data, including type of employment. Given these factors, there is little consensus among scholars about that the relationship between hours spent working for pay and student success (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Hay & Lindsay, 1969). Still, several factors underlie differences in academic performance across students' employment status, working limited hours, and taking on full-time employment.

Institutional supports, as well as alignment between students' jobs and educational interests play important roles in working learners' academic performance. Student engagement has the potential to mediate the effect of working 20 hours or less on students' grades, in that institutional characteristics (e.g. institutional culture, faculty interaction, learning application) influence the academic performance of part-time earners (Pike et al., 2008). Relatedly, students working part-time may have higher grades than unemployed students (Dundes & Marx, 2008; Hammes & Haller, 1983), particularly when their jobs are related to their field of study (Hammes & Haller, 1983). This may speak to the job's ability to keep students challenged and academically committed (Dallam & Hoyt, 1981), or to establish structure and discipline (Dundes & Marx, 2008). As a result, alignment between job characteristics and students' long-term interests may support motivation and reinforce students' perceptions of college as linked to career opportunities.

Still, research has identified a statistically significant, negative relationship between working more than 20 hours per week and student performance, as measured by grades (Kulm & Cramer, 2006; Pike, et al., 2008), even after controlling for students' characteristics and levels of engagement (Pike et al., 2008). Given that hours worked are associated with costs of attendance (Kalenkoski & Pabilonia, 2008), multiple circumstances are thought to underlie students' decision to work additional hours, making it difficult for them to simply cut back when faced with challenges prioritizing coursework. Horn and Berktold (1998), note a distinction between "students who work" and "employees who study." For some students, financial responsibilities may be more imminent and influence their mental health, which can – in turn –also shape their long-term educational outcomes.

Measures of Working Learners' Academic Performance

Grading practices across instructors and colleges, as well as the use of self-reported grades in survey research, contribute to discrepancies across studies measuring the relationship between hours worked with GPA. In one such study, Ehrenberg and Sherman (1985) found no statistically significant relationship between working part-time (i.e. 25 or fewer) and self-reported GPA among male college students, when other student characteristics and institution type are left unexplored. Though, the use of self-reported data may present response bias, which could have influenced these results. Elling and Elling (2000) found that university students who work at least 30 hours a week reported being less involved with campus activities, negative influences on academic progress, and a lower likelihood of establishing "an important relationship" with faculty. However, findings are rooted in participants' perceived impacts of working. By contrast, community college students who experienced an increase of up to 10 weekly work hours in retail-based jobs were thought to experience a very small negative effects

on GPA between their fall and winter academic terms (Dadgar, 2012). Using a nationally representative dataset, DeSimone (2008) similarly concludes that any reduction in GPA from additional weekly work hours may speak to unobserved heterogeneity in the relationship between paid employment and grades. Taken together, these findings underscore data and measurement considerations, along with diversity in institution type as key considerations for understanding the relationship between hours worked and academic performance.

Studies on the associations between student employment and relatively long-term student outcomes are more clear-cut than research focusing on working students' GPAs. Historically, advisors have not suggested lighter academic loads for working students (Dallam & Hoyt, 1981). This is likely due to expectations for on-time degree completion and requirements for financial aid eligibility. In any event, the nonlinear relationship between hours worked and grades also applies to persistence. Horn and Malizio (1998) found that working students with no more than 15 weekly hours were more likely to persist in school than unemployed learners and those with at least 16 weekly hours of employment. Yet, studies overwhelmingly show that students who allocate more time to work than school experience a lengthened time-to-degree and increased likelihood of dropping out (King, 2002; Horn & Malizio, 1998; Cuccaro-Alamin, 1997; Gleason, 1993; Stern & Nakata, 1991; Ehrenberg & Sherman, 1985). Anderson (1981) suggests that the level of academic supports at two-year colleges contributes to lower persistence rates for working students at community colleges. However, the ability for work to shape regular class attendance, time spent reviewing of class material, students' ability to shift focus, and sleep deprivation are important factors in student outcomes (Lammers et al., 2001). In the long term, the number of hours worked while in college does not directly affect post-college earnings (Ehrenberg & Sherman, 1985), but students with paid employment receive higher salaries

(Stephenson et al., 1991; Carnevale et al., 2015). Thus, obtaining work experience in college may be beneficial for students if they are able to find a balance with their academic coursework and obtain their degree.

On-Campus Employment.

While research on off-campus work and college student internships stretch back to the 1960's, studies that center on-campus employment are still fairly new. Relative to other forms of college student employment, part-time, on-campus employment is associated with the highest levels of academic achievement and degree attainment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Anderson, 1981). Recent quasi-experimental studies have sought to obtain more precise measures for the effect of federal work-study (FWS) and other forms of on-campus employment. Though work-study has mild negative effects on first year GPA (Scott-Clayton and Minaya, 2016; Kalenkoski & Pabilonia, 2008), it also has a positive effects on persistence, credit accumulation, and graduation rates (Soliz and Long, 2016). Though focused on FWS benefits for four-year college students, Scott-Clayton and Minaya (2016) find that the academic effects of work-study are driven by changes in job characteristics for students who would have worked without the FWS opportunity. That is, students may benefit from taking on administrative, clerical, and academic job descriptions in place of restaurant and retail positions. Researchers have also proposed that on-campus jobs free up time spent in transit, provides flexibility with students' course schedules, enables students to more fully integrate into their campus community, and provides jobs that more closely resembles their future work opportunities (Hossler et al., 2009; Scott-Clayton. 2011). However, because of the limited qualitative research on FWS, these perceived student benefits from work-study have been largely speculative.

Despite the benefits federal work-study provides, a number of logistical factors inhibit the ability for these primarily-on-campus job opportunities to reach many low-income students. Such limitations include the federal work-study funding formula, which privileges more expensive, four-year colleges for their higher tuition prices and histories of program participation (Baum, 2019; Kelchin, 2017). Consequently, a student at a private four-year college from the top 25 percent of the income distribution is more likely to receive the need-based aid opportunity (15 percent) than a student in the bottom 25 percent at a public four-year institution (13 percent) and three times as likely than that same student at a community college (5 percent) (Scott-Clayton & Zhou, 2017). This prevents basic needs insecure students who disproportionately attend two-year colleges from accessing a valuable resource with the potential to help them cover their non-tuition expenses. Further, limited participation in federal work-study programs within two-year colleges has resulted in a dearth of research in support of best practices for assisting students with covering living costs.

Still, several characteristics of the program suggest that federal work-study can be revamped to be even more beneficial for recipients. For example, the maximum award amount work-study recipients are granted may be quite low, relative to non-work-study jobs because the U.S. Department of Education only requires award values to match federal minimum wage (Federal Student Aid, n.d.). Further, those interested in taking up their work-study offer are not guaranteed full receipt of their award; upon receiving the opportunity, students must secure their own employment on-campus and work enough hours to earn the full award amount throughout the course of their academic term. Though some departments offering work-study may be able to continue employing students after their work-study award is depleted, the stated award value, lower wages, and lack of employment security may lead students to explore or maintain off-

campus job options. Taken together, work-study has proven beneficial to recipients, but the funding allocation process leads to more qualified students than available work-study awards, in addition to considerably low take-up rates among those offered the opportunity.

While work-study is not the only form of on-campus employment, the availability of non-federally subsidized opportunities varies with institutional resources, again contributing to fewer job prospects at two-year colleges which low-income students disproportionately attend. When non-work-study jobs are available, Bella and Huba (1982) find that there are no significant differences among end-of-year GPAs for students who obtained different types of part-time, on-campus employment and those who did not work at all. As a whole, these studies suggest that institutions with sufficient resources may be able to best support students with nontuition expenses and time management by creating additional on-campus jobs. In its entirety, differences in the availability of temporally flexible on-campus job options across students of varying family incomes and institutional types, contribute to differential experiences (i.e., prospective challenges) balancing coursework with non-academic responsibilities.

Gentrification

Gentrification, as a construct, may be helpful for examining how the social contexts of basic needs insecurity can make college students' housing challenges feel more or less immediate. Though definitions vary across studies, this research builds on Pearman's (2018) iteration of gentrification as a "physical, economic, and cultural transition in low-income urban neighborhoods in which disinvested, oftentimes minority neighborhoods subsequently experience an influx of wealthier households and increases in real property values" (p.127). Importantly, education research focused on gentrification has largely explored possibilities for K-12 schools' racial integration and resource distribution (see Mordechay & Ayscue, 2017;

Mordechay & Orfield, 2017; and Tegeler & Hilton, 2017 for a few examples). Specifically, gentrification and its accompanying “racial integration” are thought to have the potential for financially benefitting schools which were prior to gentrification predominately attended by low-income, students of color. This mix of students (by income and race) is also thought to bring mutual social and financial earnings benefits to communities and individuals in the long-term, if they are able to remain in the gentrifying region (Brummett & Reed, 2019). Yet, research has not considered gentrification as the larger context for college students’ decision-making (Pearman, 2018). In spite of this, gentrification has the ability to shape basic needs security and the living expenses that college students balance with their long-term educational goals, as well as the availability of community organizations available to support them.

Pearman (2018) conceptualizes four mechanisms that relay the relationship between gentrification and academic achievement: social ecology, institutional composition, environmental conditions, and residential instability. *Social ecology* includes changes to social networks and normative behaviors. Both the social ecology of school organizations and students’ neighborhoods are able to influence academic outcomes. *Institutional composition* refers to the evolving structure and function of local organizations in a community. In this regard, the type of services presented and their availability are important nuances. *Environmental conditions* encompass physical and environmental hazards, such as air pollution and lead exposure. In the long-term, close proximity to such hazards holds implications for students’ health and subsequent school performance. Lastly, *residential instability* entails the displacement of community members from their home. The first three mechanisms encompass the experiences of living in a gentrified region, and resulting in residential displacement.

In some settings, basic needs insecurity may be seen as an issue that results from gentrification. Since the Great Recession of 2008, colleges in California have served a larger share of students from out of state who are willing to pay more expensive tuition prices but may struggle to cover local cost of living and navigate the housing market upon arrival (California State Auditor, 2018). At the same time, increased demand for- and limited supply of affordable housing has led to increased rent across California. This makes cost of living and residential displacement growing challenges for resident students. As a result, gentrification of some communities has accelerated the need for community colleges to respond to two very different types of economic challenges experienced by their constituents. Their distinction presents important implications for the efficacy of supports offered. Though, conceivably, college students who are long-term residents of their respective region may be less likely to rely on college staff for housing resources and more inclined to connect with community resources and their own social networks. In any event, despite an emerging body of work on K-12 schools, studies considering the influence of gentrification on college student experiences are not yet published. This poses a gap in the field's understanding of the contexts in which college students' experiences with housing insecurity are taking place.

Mental Health

Research on mental health sheds light on students' responses to stress, as well as how their coping mechanisms can shape time management or their prioritization of responsibilities. As the previous sections detailed, students experiencing difficulties with their housing circumstances often balance coursework with employment to subsidize their costs of college attendance. The stress of holding multiple time commitments while undergoing housing insecurity and/or food challenges may strain students' mental health and lead to their

prioritization of work over academic obligations. Further, Ribeiro and colleagues (2018) note that college requires students to invest a great deal of time and financial resources without guarantees of a satisfactory return. Thus, in times of stress, the uncertainty of returns to a degree may also lead students to place coursework lower on their priority list or view college as a less viable opportunity.

The relationship between mental health and academic success has been long explored and holds implications for a large share of today's college students. A national survey of 30,084 students at 58 schools across the U.S. revealed that 19 percent of undergraduates had been diagnosed with depression and approximately 24 percent had previously been diagnosed with anxiety (American College Health Association, 2019). In comparison, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (2020) estimates that seven percent of adults experienced depression and 19 percent were diagnosed with an anxiety disorder within a 12-month span. In everyday interactions, depression and anxiety are often referred to as conditions or issues an individual can experience on-and-off over prolonged period of time. However, within psychological literature on mental health, the two are considered states that result from an individual's perception and reaction to stressors (Beck & Clark, 1997). Following this framing, within California, "current serious psychological distress" was reported by 19% of students, while 11% of students reported significant mental health-related academic impairment in the prior 12 months (Sontag-Padilla et al., 2016). These statistics provide evidence on the need for colleges to provide counseling services and other interpersonal support to assist today's college-going population with navigating stress.

While anxiety and depression are the most common forms of mental health issues among college students, many individuals experience eating disorders (9.5 percent), attention-

deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (up to 8 percent), and suicidal thoughts (6.7 percent), at some point in their postsecondary trajectory (Pedrelli et al., 2014). These issues have long been experienced by college students, but their prevalence and students' willingness to disclose these difficulties appear to be growing. Through a survey of college counselors, Gallagher (2014) reported that 94 percent of respondents state the number of students with severe psychological problems appears to be rising on their campus. While there have been movements across researchers and practitioners to normalize help-seeking behaviors, the extent to which these potential adjustments to social contexts influences the pervasiveness of these issues is unclear.

Several studies have considered the prevalence of mental health issues across student demographic markers. Within colleges, students who are undocumented (Teranishi et al., 2015), veterans (Ely, 2008; O'Herrin, 2011), and members of the LGBTQ community (Kress et al., 2015; Fink, 2014; Grant, et al., 2014; Kerr et al., 2013; Byrd & McKinney, 2012) are more likely to experience mental health issues. Studies exploring differences in depressive symptoms and self-injury across race and gender have produced mixed results (Miranda et al., 2015; Wester & Trepal, 2015; Kress et al., 2015). Higher education research has not explicitly explored whether experiences with mental health issues vary for low-income students. Yet, surveys have noted higher rates of mental health issues for college students undergoing basic needs insecurity (Bruening et al., 2018; Bruening et al., 2017; Payne-Sturges et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015) and lower perceptions of their own position in life (Ribeiro et al., 2018; Mahmoud et al., 2012). Literature in psychology has more clearly linked living in a poor or low-income household to increased risk for mental health problems in both children and adults that can persist across the life span (Hodgkinson et al., 2017). In addition, those of low socioeconomic status are at greater risk of social isolation (Hefner & Eisenberg, 2009) and students with lower

quality social support were more likely to experience mental health problems, including a six-fold risk of depressive symptoms (Hefner & Eisenberg, 2009). Importantly, the higher levels of mental health issues experienced by these groups may result from person-environment fit, as colleges struggle to adequately serve and support groups that have been historically underrepresented in their institution.

Relatedly, California's two-year students reported higher rates of impaired academic performance due to mental health issues than students in the state's public four-year colleges (Sontag-Padilla et al., 2016). At the same time, students in the California Community Colleges (CCC) system were half as likely to receive referrals for counseling or mental health services by a faculty member and were also less likely to receive on-campus services (Sontag-Padilla et al., 2016). Ramos-Yamamoto and Rose (2019) find that mental health services at the CCC appear to be less consistent than the CSU and UC, partly because community colleges typically have not offered their own health insurance plans and/or mental health services to students. The availability of healthcare and counseling services contribute towards students' help-seeking behaviors and perceptions of the supports their college is willing to provide. In this regard, a lack of counseling services to address students' mental health issues may communicate a disinterest or lack of awareness towards the personal issues students may be experiencing.

Access issues aside, there is a long-standing, robust body of literature detailing how stigma and other societal perceptions of mental health issues influence students' coping strategies. Unsurprisingly, there is a negative relationship between stigma and help-seeking behavior (Henderson et al., 2013). Thus, scholars have explored how stigma influences treatment receipt across population characteristics, primarily race, gender, and sexual orientation. There are a number of studies that have documented racial and ethnic minorities (Williston et al., 2019;

Sheu & Sedlacek, 2017; Vega et al. 1998; Zhang et al., 1998), men (Devonport & Lane, 2006; Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Kung et al., 2003), and members of the LGBTQ+ community (Baams et al., 2018; Corrigan & Miller, 2004) as underutilizing mental health services, even when resource constraints are not an issue. Corrigan (2004) explains that those who have experienced stereotypes, prejudice, and/or discrimination may prevent taking on additional stigma by not: disclosing mental health issues, disclosing treatment, or taking ownership of their group status (e.g. acknowledging mental health issues, openly identifying as gay). This theory speaks to considerable underutilization of mental health services among people of color and those who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community, but not those who identify as male. As a whole, these patterns reflect the demographics in which help-seeking have not been normalized and/or histories of mistrust, discrimination, or other disenfranchisement may take prevalence over one's interest in seeking treatment.

Like other groups, college students take on a variety of coping mechanisms. These include listening to music, socializing with friends/family, and sitting alone in a quiet place (Gallagher et al., 2019), but vary across characteristics and levels or types of stress. For example, relative to their peers, African American students are considered more likely to turn to religion and spirituality as coping mechanisms (Constantine et al., 2000; Constantine et al., 2002). Meanwhile, Asian Americans were more inclined to use social relations (e.g., talking with friends, parents, siblings) as coping sources rather than professional help (e.g., talking with counselors) (Maki & Kitano, 2002; Yeh & Wang, 2000). Because management of stress and other mental health issues is a highly individualized process, coping practices are broad in practice but typically sorted into two classifications: *adaptive* and *maladaptive*. Adaptive coping behaviors involve “defining the stressful situation, actively seeking support, reflecting on

possible solutions, and taking actions to resolve the situation” (Mahmoud et al., 2012). By contrast, maladaptive coping behaviors “include efforts to withdraw from the stressful situation or avoid seeking solutions” (Mahmoud et al., 2012, p. 150). These behaviors have also been framed as *problem-solving* and *emotion-focused* or *positive* and *negative* coping strategies, respectively. In both senses, the latter is thought to more commonly result in failure to resolve the stressful situation and can sometimes be harmful in the long-run. Thus, students who self-identified as managing their stress effectively commonly report an ability to think proactively, in order to identify and eliminate triggers before they get out of hand (Peer et al., 2015). Similarly, unsuccessful self-management efforts often happened when the trigger was unexpected and the student was not equipped to effectively manage the issue. This implies that finances, social, and emotional stressors, which are less stable than academic responsibilities like coursework, may be more difficult for students to anticipate and manage.

When left untreated, students’ mental health issues can have negative short- and long-term consequences. Through an analysis of survey data, Deasy and colleagues (2015) found that students who reported high levels of psychological stress were more likely to cope negatively with the use of tobacco, physical inactivity, and poor diet, including an increase in the consumption of convenience foods. In the long-term, those are unable to find treatment or healthy coping mechanisms have a decreased likelihood of academic success (Eyong, 2013) and can experience life dissatisfaction (Newman & Newman, 2008). Consequently, college marks an important period in which students must learn or adjust their adaptive coping behaviors. These efforts must be met with institutional and personal support.

Because the circumstances underlying mental health issues are often multifaceted and long-term, there is no quick, easy, or cheap solution for improving students’ circumstances or

responses to stress. Scholars argue that interventions must be tailored to the unique problems of the developmental stage, environment college students are in, and students' unique coping behaviors (Pedrelli et al., 2015; Moon et al., 2012). With a more concrete approach, Mahmoud and colleagues (2012) propose that reducing maladaptive coping behaviors (e.g. withdrawing from the stressful situation, avoiding seeking solutions) may have the most positive impact on reducing depression, anxiety, and stress among young adult college students. While the latter aims to provide a more sustainable approach, it fails to account for the ways in which students' limited resources may inform or restrict their coping strategies. In fact, many psychological studies focus on the experiences of traditionally-aged students attending four-year colleges. Their findings may have limited application to experiences undergone by the more diverse set of learners served by two-year institutions, which typically have fewer resources and higher counseling caseloads where services are available. These institutions can work to combat stigma and normalize help-seeking behavior, but would need to make counseling referrals to local agencies that have the resources to assist students.

As a whole, these studies urge policymakers and practitioners to understand that mental health challenges are increasingly prevalent among today's college students – particularly those experiencing difficulty meeting their basic needs. The chaos of residential insecurity and constantly living at the brink of crisis can result in trauma and other long-term stress (Hallett & Freas, 2017). On top of the personal issues caused these mental health challenges, students without healthy coping mechanisms and support may understandably experience an inability to focus on coursework, manage their time, and maintain academic motivation. Colleges must work to reinforce or instill students' healthy self-care practices. Despite their adult status, institutions

must work to wholly support students' well-being for their continued enrollment, sense of belonging, and broader success.

Research Methodology

This research explores how Black community college students in Oakland are balancing their coursework with non-academic responsibilities, amid housing challenges and an increasing cost of living. As a result, topics of college persistence and housing insecurity are situated in an understanding of students' local economy. Many aspects of this study's research design pull from Paris and Winn's (2014) *Humanizing Research Methods*, wherein a number of scholars provide guidance on conducting research for justice with youth and communities who are marginalized by systems of inequality based on race, citizenship status, gender, and other categories of difference. Under this research stance, experiences with housing insecurity are explored through processes of human relationship, respect, and care that are not only "ethically necessary but also increases the validity of the truths we gain through research" (Paris, 2011). This humanizing approach simultaneously: 1) extends Gupton's (2017) work on resilience among homeless students through application to the broader set of housing insecure students, and 2) provide depth to a mainstream perception of younger college students as simply self-interested and undergoing personal exploration.

Nationwide, there is limited variation in hunger and homelessness across urbanicity and the proportion of Pell recipients in a given region, but there are higher rates of housing challenges in the West and Northeast parts of the United States (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017). That is, housing challenges are not particularly prominent in urban or rural regions, but there are noticeable differences in rates across states. Given this, it is not surprising that much of the research on housing insecure and homeless college students has taken place in California,

highlighting the highest levels of need in both the fairly urban Greater Sacramento area and rural Central Valley (Crutchfield, 2016; University of California, 2017; Wood et al., 2017; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015; California Student Aid Commission, 2019a; 2019b). As the state looks to find ways of supporting students with the entire cost of college attendance, there is much to be learned in terms of why patterns vary across regions and segments. Both nationally and within California, there is no clear or consistent relationship between cost of living and rates of housing insecurity and homelessness (Goldrick Rab et al., 2017; Goldrick Rab et al., 2019; California Student Aid Commission, 2019a). While public assistance is underutilized among college students (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al. 2019), there appears to be a relationship between services take-up and the prevalence of basic needs insecurity across California regions (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019b). This trend is helpful for understanding why students across the state have similar perceptions of their ability to afford housing (California Student Aid Commission, 2019a), but also highlights the importance of understanding the social contexts that influence basic needs insecurity.

The research methods in itself are informed by Creswell and Creswell's (2018) guidance on qualitative approaches, to obtain the meaning participants hold about their opportunities through basic needs insecurity, rather than have the meaning prescribed by the researcher. Using a case study strategy, my inquiry is bound by time, location, and shared housing challenges, while reporting "multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in a situation, and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges" (p. 39). In doing so, I provide insight on the aspirations of housing insecure community college students in the East Bay and share considerations for informing support services.

Setting

Application of Iloh's (2018) framework leads this study to "understand evolution and variation in college decisions and trajectories by way of intentional focus on each context and their relationship to each other" (p. 239). Oakland serves as a prime setting for this regional research, as it is home to rich dialogue around color-conscious policy issues and pervasive systemic inequalities that shape local resources. This study focuses on the perceptions of Oakland residents, who have withstood rapid gentrification and housing shifts in the past several years, while experiencing an influx of individuals relocating to the Bay Area for its tech boom and postsecondary programs. Scott and Kirst (2017) describe East Bay colleges as least benefitting from the Bay Area growth in tech jobs and resources. Consequently, community colleges in cities like Oakland have not received the same level of programmatic support or funding as those closer to Silicon Valley or in San Francisco. At the same time, Bay Area college students take on the highest living and housing costs, relative to students in other California regions (California Student Aid Commission, 2019a). Relatedly, Oakland is a place in which 4,000 people recently applied for the 28 new affordable housing rental units. Oakland has also been accused by the United Nations as blatantly dehumanizing and criminalizing its thousands of homeless individuals – many of whom are displaced long-term residents. These practices go hand-in-hand with soft bigotry, best exemplified by a high-profiled event in which a relatively new, White resident called the police on two, Oakland-born African American men for using a charcoal grill in "her" neighborhood by Lake Merritt (Wood, 2019).

In addition to its focus on a geographic region, this study is also bound by time. All interviews took place after the release of research on racial disparities in students' housing insecurity rates. In addition, data collection concluded at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic,

prior to the summer of 2020's protests and calls for racial justice that have been ongoing. These phenomena mark important shifts in the attention and care college staff have paid in understanding basic needs insecurity among Black students. Thus, this study documents the "business-as-usual" services and treatment Black students received before California Community Colleges were incentivized (at least by calls from the system office, popular media and students themselves) to make their campus climate more inclusive.

Sample

My sample is comprised of Black community college students who live in Oakland or are enrolled in a community college that serves Oakland residents. These criteria allow for the inclusion of students whose families have experienced residential displacement and may have been forced to relocate. I interviewed 17 community college students. Most are younger than 28 years old, though one interviewee was in their forties. Only two participants identify as women. When asked about their studies, many described themselves as still figuring out their plans. Among those with committed educational and career goals, two were interested in business, three were interested in health-related fields, three relayed plans of becoming professional athletes, and seven communicated at least some broad interest in transferring to a four-year college. All but two participants had previously taken time off from pursuing a college degree, though the length of time unenrolled varied and sometimes occurred at multiple points in their educational trajectory. One identified as transitioning out of foster care and living in a group home, one lived in government-assisted affordable housing, two described themselves as living in short-term and unregulated housing conditions, and five were temporarily living with extended family or friends. The remaining participants explained that they were staying in homes

beyond the intended capacity with friends or individuals they met through resources like Craigslist or Facebook.

Data collection concluded at the commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic. While time limited the amount of interviews conducted, data gathered from the 17 students provide rich insights for informing college supports. In addition, this study's narrow focus on students' experiences balancing academic coursework with housing insecurity enabled me to reach a point "when no new information is forthcoming from new sample units" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), making redundancy an additional criterion.

Given the diversity of students served in community colleges, a snowball or network sampling method best enabled me to "select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016, p. 96). In line with Merriam and Tisdale (2016), I began the study by having educators refer me to participants who met the aforementioned criteria. I then asked each interviewee to refer me to other participants. Through a snowball recruitment method, I was able to build "relationships of care and dignity and dialogue consciousness raising" (Paris & Winn, 2014, p. xvi) between myself, as the researcher, and participants. In this respect, the snowball referral process perceivably increased participation rates, relative to random sample invitees. It is worth noting Small's (2009) assertion that a snowball approach holds no more bias than the non-response bias that may come from a random sample of participants.

Further, a snowball method speaks to Winn and Ubiles's (2011) four steps for worthy witnessing in research within urban regions, which are part of the selected humanizing framework: 1) Admission, 2) Declaration, 3) Revelation, and 4) Confidentiality. Through relationship-building with college staff and attending on-campus events (e.g. job fairs, resource fairs, housing teach-ins), I was able to build rapport with students on campus. Through students'

agreement to participate in interviews and make referrals to their peers, I reached *admission*. My introduction to participants and the informed consent process enabled a *declaration* of myself and my research ideas. By focusing on housing challenges as a demonstration of adult responsibilities and acknowledging interviewees' identities outside of their student role, I strove for an equilibrium of acceptance through bonds of mutual respect, and thus *revelation*.

Unfortunately, because of the institutional and life shifts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, difficulty re-establishing contact with study participants prevented the ability to conduct member checks.⁶ However, through clear communication with all participants and anonymized responses, I exercised caution towards oversharing participants' stories and maintained *confidentiality*.

Positionality

This study pulls from *Humanizing Research Methods*, which leads me to “engage education as a social process that calls into question what we know and do not know about other people, about ourselves, and about our relationships” (Paris & Winn, 2014, p. 29). Similarly, Creswell and Creswell (2018) assert that researchers’ “experiences hold potential for shaping their interpretations, such as the themes they advance and the meaning they ascribe to the data” (p. 39). A number of my identities shape my investment in this work, including my status as: a lifelong Californian, a person of color, and an individual who has balanced housing insecurity with educational pursuit. Prior to beginning my postsecondary career, my family resided in fourteen different apartments and more than six hotels. These experiences spoke to my need for

⁶ At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, most college course offerings were moved to online instruction as a means for preventing viral transmissions. Varying access to reliable internet, financial instability, and increased mental health challenges made for challenging circumstances both in education and across the globe. Member checks would have been an undue additional burden to participants who were generous enough to donate their time towards the initial interviews.

financial self-sufficiency and ability to find balance between academic and non-academic responsibilities as an undergraduate. Despite my present status as a resident of Oakland, I acknowledge myself as an outsider from the communities featured in this work.

Given these experiences, I have opted to contrast the trauma-centered approaches more commonly used in basic needs research. Instead, I aim to share students' aspirations and complicate common perceptions of housing insecure students as lacking capital.

All necessary steps were taken to avoid potential harm to community members and those participating in this research by obtaining Institutional Review Board approval for the study. This review process entailed external consideration of study rationale, research design, recruitment methods, interview protocols, analysis techniques, and potential deliverables. Appendix B provides copies of the initial IRB project approval letter and the modification review letter, which approves changes to the study design that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Collection

Contrasting the traditional use of surveys in basic needs research, a qualitative design lends itself to the study's focus on how people interpret their experiences and the meaning that they attribute to their experiences, with respect to their situation and surroundings. Moreover, through interviews, I was able to "listen—closely and carefully—to what young people are saying, and how and for what reasons they are saying it" (Kinloch & San Pedro, 2014), providing a level of depth and richness in my data that has been otherwise unavailable. A semi-structured protocol enabled me to accomplish this through flexibility with questions and follow-up to more thoughtfully explore participants' world-views. I constructed my interview guide to understand how individual and contextual factors (i.e., college resources, and local conditions) influence students' balance between their responsibilities and ability to navigate institutional

supports. In doing so, I extend themes prevalent in existing research (including housing insecurity, work responsibilities, family obligations, institutional support), and invited participants to discuss their housing challenges as reflective of their adult responsibilities and many identities outside of the student role.

The focus on opportunity and factors that shape it allow me to explore “desire and complexity instead of damage” (Tuck, 2009), in hopes of moving away from pain-centered research that depicts participants as broken. As part of this work, conversations with students will address assumptions of responsibility, cohesiveness, ignorance, and paralysis (Tuck, 2009, p. 417) that are commonly (albeit passively) incorporated in existing postsecondary studies. This effort includes continuous, deliberate attempts against conflating persistence and success, stopping-out with struggle, and nonacademic responsibilities with burdens in both protocol development and data interpretation. The goal here is not to rely on pain for researcher and policymaker advancement; rather, the goal is to draw on students’ wisdom and experiences to inform effective strategies for supporting students with obtaining their desires. While this intention was salient across the study, the approach and framing developed through feedback from dissertation committee members, college practitioners, and students. To better define the study parameters, I shared the interview protocol across these stakeholders and began data collection with exploratory interviews across community college staff, nonprofit staff, and students. With each wave of subsequent interviews and rudimentary analysis, I was better equipped to articulate the study focus and to tweak the framing of my interview protocol. I was also inspired to dive into different bodies of college student persistence and basic needs literature (e.g. research on working college students, studies on college students’ mental health). As a

whole, this iterative process enabled my research question and approach to more thoughtfully explore students' perspectives while contributing to gaps in existing literature.

Interview Procedures.

Consistent with Creswell and Creswell (2018), interviews contained between five and 10 questions and were consistently used in all interviews. Appendix A provides a copy of the interview protocol. Though semi-structured, each interview typically lasted between 30 minutes to one hour in duration. Even among shorter interviews, I found the transcript in itself to be data-rich, in that the interviewee provided relevant responses to the series of questions that were nicely organized by theme and generally did not lead to a particular response. A voice recorder captured interviews with participants who consented, while detailed notes were taken during all interviews. Interviews were held in a location of the participants' choosing. At the end of each interview day, I wrote short memos which capture "reflections, tentative themes, hunches, ideas, and things to pursue that are derived from [the day's] set of data" (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016, p. 196). Pulling from *Humanizing Research Methods*, daily notes and preliminary analyses will also consider "utterances, voices, vulnerabilities, body language, lived conditions, backgrounds, and ways of being in the world" (Paris & Winn, 2014, p. 26), making for much richer analyses. Through my reliance on qualitative methods literature, I was still able to produce "short-hand designation to various aspects of the data [to] easily retrieve specific pieces of the data" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 199), despite my outsider status.

Analysis

Multiple rounds of preliminary analyses supported data reading and rereading, which helped guide the next set of interviews. Transcription services helped with the flow of this work. Given the volume of planned interviews, transcription services functioned as practical resources,

but their use lost the “rudimentary analysis” that comes with the transcription process. Instead, detailed notes taken during the interview helped identify leads for future data-collection sessions, with critical thinking about what was experienced during each interview; how the respondent demographics speak to their reported experience; and topics related to methodological, theoretical, or substantive issues (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016, p. 198). As an emerging qualitative researcher, this process also enabled me to strengthen my interview technique and make more deliberate, informed choice across data collection rounds. For instance, given the sensitive nature surrounding conversations of housing insecurity, comparing the quality of my interview notes and transcripts helped me strike a balance between taking detailed accounts of body language and other nonverbal communication, and authentically engaging with participants in the moment and relaying mutual respect in how I listen to students’ stories.

After the first data collection period, four initial themes were selected for coding across transcripts in Dedoose, a qualitative data analysis software program. Relative to other software programs, Dedoose features a fairly simple interface, straightforward data import process, and monthly subscription plan for users. Collectively, these features make the platform an appealing choice for relatively new researchers working under a fixed data analysis period. In addition, Dedoose enables users to add descriptions for codes. This ability to store pertinent information for the analysis process is both convenient and a useful tool for supporting data reliability (as described below). Also worth noting is Dedoose’s cloud-based memory, which is appealing to researchers who may work from a number of devices or with team members, but arguably poses data security concerns among skeptics of online data storage. However, the Dedoose platform incorporates encryption technologies, files uploaded to Dedoose did not contain any personal identifiers, and data incorporated interviewee pseudonyms – all of which work to ensure

participant confidentiality. For reference, Appendix C provides a visual of the Dedoose platform and snippet of the demo coding page.

The amount of codes to be used for writing the analysis was derived from the idea that the initial number should be manageable (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016, p. 214; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research question, framework, and standpoint were used to identify selective (or inductive) codes that were necessary for centering what I, the researcher, initially viewed as “important to [the] study” (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016, p. 204). That is, amongst the captivating student stories and compelling staff assertions, these elements of the study design re-centered my focus on students’ experiences and goals, as well as the ways in which institutions can work to support them. Subsequently, four codes were formed: 1) time, 2) issue experienced, 3) student interest, and 4) resources. However, as I was completing my first pass, I considered that the codes *seemed* on par with the study’s line of inquiry but they did not fully capture the nuances and theme interactions that were presented in the interviewee’s responses. This spoke to Merriam and Tisdale’s (2016) assertion that “multiple levels of coding are possible for the same unit of information” (p. 210) and not all statements could be neatly packaged into the existing codes. For example, one participant explained “I’m applying to be a tutor ‘cause I needed to take off work so I can focus more on school because I’m actually studying a hard – very hard – subject right now and that takes a lot of time.” As the student explains her planned use of on-campus job opportunities (i.e. resources) to assist her with making ends meet, she is also relaying her prioritization of academic coursework over non-academic responsibilities (i.e. time). Further, she is providing some insight on why she made the decision to prioritize school, rather than simply expressing an interest in focusing more time on studying. This pushed me to formalize distinctions within increasingly-high frequency codes by making categories “fleshed

out” (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 209) and “more robust by searching through the data for more and better units of information” (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 209). Thus, the code *time* was divided into two distinct codes: obligations/responsibilities and prioritizing. In addition, as predicted by Merriam and Tisdell (2016), some original codes eventually required the creation of sub-codes. Sub-codes functioned as different shades or aspects of overarching codes and aided in further reducing the data. Thus, my *issues* code led to sub-codes of “academic”, “job/work”, and “personal”; *interests* became divided across “financial”, “goal (career or academic)”, and “personal/other”; *prioritizing* relayed a distinction between whether students were discussing the “priority itself” or the “reason” for their priority decision-making; and codes under *resources* came to differentiate between what was “needed” for students to feel supported and the resources they ultimately “used”. In addition, student demographics (e.g. race, age, gender, family dynamics) served as distinct, additional codes on each set of interview notes and transcripts, so that excerpts that are associated with a particular code could be analyzed separately for each demographic sub-group. This allows for an understanding of how experiences and perceptions may vary by participant characteristics. Table 2 provide definitions and frequency counts for each code.

Table 2.

Student Interview Transcript Codes

Code	Definition	Sub-codes	Frequency
Obligations/ responsibilities	Interview implies something they "need" or "have to" do in their day-to-day life.		23
Issue	Issue associated with needs insecurity or non-tuition expenses.	Academic	17
		Job/Work	9
		Personal	43
Interest	An academic interest, personal interest, or goal is noted. Can be perceived as attainable or ideal.	Final	14
		Goal (Career or Academic)	29
		Personal/Other	53
Prioritizing	Interviewee touches on their time management or priorities.	Priority itself	17
Resources	Explicitly or implicitly touches on a resource that could be helpful for guiding them towards success.	Reason	2
		Needed	21
		Used	31

After completing the first round of coding, coded segments were reviewed and used to identify emergent themes. Data were also recoded because more accurate words or phrases were discovered for the original codes. Using an axial coding method, the second cycle coding process then determined which codes were dominant and which were less important. Through second cycle coding, I was also able to reorganize the dataset to consolidate synonyms and redundant codes.

Validity.

Two strategies were used for addressing study validity: clarifying bias and presenting discrepant information. In sharing and continuously revisiting my positionality statement during the analyses, I clarified the bias I bring to the study. This self-reflection “creates an open and honest narrative” and acknowledges reflexivity as a core characteristic of qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 202). In addition, my findings present negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes, as real life is composed of different perspectives that do not always coalesce. Aside from broader methodological concerns of validity, providing discrepant information supports to the study’s interest in humanizing research analyses, which allow “room for conflict, complications, silences, and pauses to exist between and among people as they learn to listen to each other in the spaces between language and silences, language and action” (Paris & Winn, 2014, p. 29). Thus, while evidence and codes often support a theme, I also present information and quotes that contradict the general perspective of the theme, providing a more realistic and more valid account. In this regard, the study is supportive of divergent perspectives and does not seek to essentialize perspectives voiced by a select group of community members.

Notably, challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic inhibited my ability to reconnect with participants and conduct member checks. However, preliminary findings were shared with college student leaders at the California Higher Education Basic Needs Alliance 2020 summit. This enabled me to get feedback from students who identified as experiencing housing insecurity.

Reliability.

The analysis process addresses reliability concerns through transcript review and code monitoring. Each interview was transcribed and inspected to ensure they did not contain obvious mistakes made during transcription. In addition, codes were reviewed throughout the analysis period to make sure that there was not a drift in the definition of codes across the process of coding. That is, I continually compared data with the codes and wrote memos about the codes and their definitions.

Limitations

While this study is the among the first to qualitatively explore the experiences of housing insecure community college students, the size and demographics of participants limit the ability to make generalizations about the broader population of housing insecure students. Research may seek to explore the perceptions and aspirations of students who face housing challenges while maintaining parent roles, navigating their status as former foster youth, or attempting to shift career fields. As this is but one study on the experiences of Black housing insecure students in Oakland, research may seek to further examine these perceptions with a larger sample size or ethnographic approach. There is also a need to conduct similar studies with students in other regions and centered on those who identify with other racial/ethnic groups.

In addition, the snowball recruitment method resulted in an overrepresentation of housing insecure individuals who utilize their community college campus as a place for completing homework or partaking in extracurricular activities.

Findings

Day by day, students experiencing housing insecurity are balancing school with work and other non-academic responsibilities, out of faith that the stress they are undergoing is short-term

and will lead to sustainable improvements in their financial position. As a result, three interrelated themes of balancing commitments, collectivism, and faith in upward mobility were salient across interviews as participants described their continued college enrollment. The sections that follow provide more detailed student perspectives, alongside participant insight on faculty and staff members' roles in their degree progress.

A Balancing Act

Because of their financial commitments (e.g., need to pay at least partial housing costs), students generally noted intentions of planning their work hours and other non-academic responsibilities around course schedules, but ultimately needed to prioritize work when experiencing day-to-day time conflicts. Similarly, the act of balancing these responsibilities and meeting immediate financial need often led to limited energy for completing course readings and other homework or reviewing lecture notes. One student who described himself as undergoing this process is Calvin, an interviewee who transferred back to a community college after having enrolled in a four-year institution. Calvin was in his early twenties and working towards a short-term degree that would make him eligible for one of the growing jobs at the nearby Kaiser Hospital. In detailing his experience, Calvin shared:

I had two jobs and it was hard. I would have to rush from school, go straight to work, get off work late at night, go home, probably not study, go to sleep, wake up, go back to school. Um. The days I didn't have school, I had to work my second job. So, it was... it was difficult, in a sense that I didn't have time to study as much as I liked. A lot of my energy went towards making sure I was able to pay my bills and get to school.

Despite an understanding of this pattern, Calvin – like many other interviewees – stated there were no hard-and-fast guidelines for how he managed his time. When asked about their

strategy for balancing these obligations, students instead explained that they were making the most logical decisions in real time and mentioned faith or hope as guiding them. Those who perceived their work and non-academic time commitments as pulling them too far off balance were searching for alternative work opportunities, college support services, or community resources that could assist them with creating long-term solutions. Cheryl, a hospital employee near her mid-twenties who – similar to Calvin – returned to school to meet the local growing demand for nurses noted:

I can't – it's getting harder and harder for me to work... I'm applying to be a tutor 'cause I needed to take off work so I can focus more on school because I'm actually studying a hard – very hard subject right now and that takes a lot of my time. So.. I'm in microbiology. And so I haven't really been able to study because I have to go to work. I haven't been able to study like I need to be studying in order to get the grade that I need to get into nursing school. So I've cut my hours at work. I don't know. I need housing. I don't know what's going to happen but I'm just trying to make up for it here at school. Hopefully I can get some hours and get some extra cash.

Cheryl went on to share that she was currently residing in nearby low-income housing. Though she was in the process of applying for an on-campus job, she was uncertain of how this would influence her rent and ability to cover expenses. Still, she knew that her current off-campus job and living situation were not sustainable, which was pushing her to remain in coursework and explore job options that may pose additional financial hardships. In noting that she anticipated finishing her transfer-level coursework within the next academic term, she described the risk of taking a pay cut as one that would ideally pay off in the near future.

Several other interviewees relayed Cheryl's interest in finding on-campus work after struggling to navigate transportation and/or difficult work hours with off-campus job opportunities. One of these students was John, a 19-year old taking transfer coursework and figuring out his long-term career goals:

I was a teacher[...] I did resign like last week, just because the hours got too hectic. Like, I needed some time to focus on school and now I'm in the process of looking for a new job, which might be something on campus, which I think will give me more time to like do homework and stuff on campus, which I think would be better[...] When your environment isn't super ideal you have to work around the hiccups like dropping kids off in the morning and having your classes a little bit later. 'Cause at one point I was like – this is when I didn't have a car – I would get [to campus] around 10. I would have like a 30 minute break between my classes and then I would have like a two-hour class. I would get out at like 12:30 and then from like one to two, I would have student council meeting, and then right after or like at around 1:30 or 1:45, I would have to go get on BART and take BART all the way back to [my job] to try to make it to work on time... and all of that was just so hectic and so terrible.

John described himself as the oldest sibling and son of a single mother. As such, his decision to enroll in a community college and ideally transfer was balanced with the time and financial commitments of helping his family. This is not to say that his mother did not support John's college enrollment. Rather, John's love and commitment to his family motivated him to play a caretaker role and at least partially relieve his mother from the responsibilities she had solely taken on for so long. Because he had limited job experience, John was interested in part-time and immediate employment that would help him figure out his career interests. Given his own varied

experiences in the education system, John decided to take on a teaching aid role. However, because of his limited qualifications, he found himself working at one of the less-resourced high schools located in a part of Oakland that was fairly distant from his primary college of enrollment. Eventually, given the job's fairly low pay, the financial and temporal costs of commuting led him to re-evaluate his options so he could better focus on coursework and account for the time commitments of helping his siblings while still contributing to rent payments.

Thus, while on-campus work positions were widely-understood as having lower hourly wages than off-campus employment, interviewees focused on the benefits of more flexible work hours, reduced transit time, and lower transportation costs. In describing the challenges of balancing off-campus work, personal responsibilities, and coursework, interviewees believed on-campus employment would bring a different type of stress because of the somewhat smaller earnings. However, this difficulty was thought to be more stable and manageable, relative to the varying, everyday challenges they otherwise experienced while maintaining off-campus jobs.

Collectivism

The students interviewed did not meet common or “mainstream” assumptions associated with being housing insecure, in that participants were not entirely independent or homeless and – instead – often centered their family's well-being in making their life decisions. Those who were living independently were working enough to cover the bulk of their living expenses, but received some form of support (e.g., food, financial) – albeit typically infrequently – from family members. Those who were living with relatives described their family's low-income status as enabling participants *just enough* resources to pursue a college degree. Consequently, their focus on tuition costs and financial aid availability in making the decision to pursue college led them to

experience difficulty with non-tuition expenses. Regardless of their specific living circumstances and relations to family members, these forms of support were considered personal investments from relatives – no matter how (in)frequent. These investments were viewed as tokens of encouragement and motivators for students, often leading interviewees to attribute their decisions of enrolling and persisting in college to the prospective benefits that their degree could bring their families and communities.

Alvin, a student athlete from the South, shared that his move to the Bay Area for sports entailed greater issues covering food and housing costs than he anticipated. In having to pick up a job to cover his living expenses, he relayed exhaustion from balancing work, athletics, and coursework. Still, he felt inclined to keep going because of the struggles his parents were also taking on to help him stay afloat, sharing:

My mother and father have worked really hard and are still working hard to make sure that they could send me here and tell me to just focus on what I need to do here, so that when I get to the end result it will be better for everybody. And like they... keep telling me ‘don’t worry about us down here’ and ‘just focus on what you need to focus on so you can help in the future.’

Another student athlete, Jimmy, expressed similar circumstances. The personal hardships experienced by Jimmy’s family as he was enrolled in school and gambling on a future in sports brought feelings of guilt and uncertainty. However, their willingness to manage financial difficulties so he could progress in both coursework and sports also served as motivation to persist and return the investment. Jimmy noted:

I got like six brothers. They all younger than me, you know. Right now, they not livin’ too good. So everything I do now is like, so I can help, so I can like be able to set it up so

before they graduate high school they can be... they can be able to acclimate, so they get in the right stuff to stay on track and so they get into college, too.

Two additional participants who identified as financially independent from their families also described relatives as motivating their decisions to persist in school, though for somewhat different reasons. For one student, this motivation came through interest in “paying back” family who previously provided them with a place to stay. For both interviewees, the geographic location of more extended relatives helped determine the colleges to which both students planned on transferring, in that they were considering relocating to more “livable” cities where their loved ones reside. Notably, these interviewees were not the only participants considering relocating. However, because these participants viewed family as forms of personal (e.g., emotional) or other non-financial support (e.g., food), they were less optimistic about their continued ability to cover living expenses. Thus, relative to other participants, these students described greater urgency in developing contingency plans and less certainty in how long they could continue to maintain their current housing situation. As one explained:

I mean I don't know how much [my mom] could help me. My grandmother – she could pray for me. That's about it. I don't really have anybody to go to for financial support besides financial aid and that's definitely not enough.

Understandably, both individuals acknowledged a need to relocate somewhere more affordable and in proximity to extended family members, even if something were to prevent them from completing their transfer coursework. In this sense, their family's collective financial status influenced the students' ability to comfortably pursue a college degree, as well as their broader perceptions of their long-term life prospects in the Bay Area. Another interviewee, Alex, a student transitioning out of a group foster home, expressed:

I don't think I would live in the Bay Area anymore. 'Cause that's like, that's really where all the main stuff is – all the gentrification is really in the Bay Area... So it's like, you gotta go with the best option. You can go on somewhere, like in the valley or something. That doesn't sound too bad to me or too out of reach.

While identifying as a transitioning foster youth, Alex relayed disinterest in relocating outside of California because they hoped to remain relatively close to extended family members who – although unable to provide primary care – still offer a sense of community. As someone who had never travelled out of state and did not know anyone outside of California, Alex described these family members their primary source of information on alternatively places to live that were considerably affordable.

Trust in the Pay-Off

Students' continued ability to see college as the path to upward mobility underlies their tendency to see day-to-day challenges as relatively minor and temporary setbacks. While acknowledging the stress and fatigue that came with balancing housing insecurity with coursework, all students noted an improved lifestyle as motivating them to persist in college. In explaining this, John shared:

I challenge myself to be a full-time student, but I know, like, I don't have “full-time student” time because also I have to work, I have to pay bills. I don't live by myself. I live with my mom, but I [financially] contribute to the bills. So having to pay bills, monthly support – like with food and stuff for my siblings – it's a little bit hard and a bit stressful, but you know it has to be done and you do all this stuff in hopes that one day you won't have to do it anymore.

Again, this hope for progress was considered beneficial to students themselves, as well as their family members and communities. William, a new college enrollee and dad in his forties, discussed his experiences crashing on his mother's couch. Despite some harm to his pride, William spoke of his determination to pave the way for his daughters' educational success. As his mother was also undergoing challenges with increased rent, William viewed this point in his life as a time to help her cover expenses while saving up for a home that would enable his daughters to grow up in the same city where he was raised:

And you will realize that you're adding value in the community or at school and everything else. You're actually building yourself up to be more valuable to your family – the saying 'readers are leaders.'

Worth noting is that the financial challenges and job insecurity of master's degree-carrying adjunct instructors at one institution appeared to send some students mixed messages about the prospective return-on-investment for their future degrees. At this particular college, faculty shared the food pantry with students – a policy intended to help reduce stigma surrounding food insecurity. However – at times – adjunct faculty also sought out student support and advocacy on the college's course-offering decisions, which were described as influencing adjuncts' continued employment. Given that faculty typically had higher levels of formal educational attainment than those in participants' social networks, for a few interviewees, these tendencies collectively communicated a lack of job security and subsequent financial uncertainty for those who hold even advanced degrees. This may influence students' continued ability to see college as a route for upward mobility. One such instance occurred at the conclusion of a "housing teach-in," an event focused on Oakland's housing crisis, which prefaced a few of the interviews included in this study. Following the teach-in, one student

interviewee explained faculty's job insecurity as resonating with him and his recent uncertainty towards whether he was making the "right" decision to stay in school, sharing that in the week preceding he "literally almost dropped out."

The Role of College Staff and Supports

Because housing resources are considered informal elements of each college's support services, interviewees who accessed a staff member on campus who was able to provide them with housing supports typically viewed themselves as exceptions or unique, relative to the rest of the student population. These students also acknowledged the staff member as going above and beyond their job description. That is, the staff member's work and support did not reflect an intentional, collegewide interest in helping students with issues outside of the classroom. When asked who else students could contact if they had trouble with food or housing, most students typically said "no one" or replied that "no," there wasn't another person on campus who could assist them. Two students added "They don't really care about us."

For some interviewees, the disinclination for their college to acknowledge and address their housing issues reinforced their perceptions about the types of assistance and long-term educational options they would have in the area. One student, Sam, shared that their difficulty getting support was contributing to their decision to move somewhere more affordable when transferring to a four-year institution:

Um, and like I said, out of state is cheaper. I mean, you might have out-of-state fees, but cost of living – cost of living is cheaper. Everything is cheaper out there. So like, if I save money or even if I took out loans just to go there to live, it'll be – it'll be affordable, you know? I can do that. But here, no. It's not. Even if I took out loans to cover my rent and everything it's still not going to be enough for me to be surviving.

Notably, William – the oldest of interviewees – was the only student able to name community or local resources outside of his former high school and express comfort utilizing these external supports to meet his basic needs. Relatedly, William expressed the greatest certainty about his continued ability to live in the Bay Area, even after completing his coursework.

When asked what form of supports would be most helpful, students most often requested a counselor with the capacity to understand their many commitments and challenges, and who could suggest time management tips, coping strategies, and relevant resources. A few interviewees acknowledged the tendency for students to sleep in parked cars in their college's lots. This led them to request formalized, emergency shelter on campus for all those who need it. Despite the presences of local shelters, these students implied their circumstances were distinct from those of housing shelter constituents and indicated an interest in options that were more “comfortable.”

Lastly, colleges' lack of publicized efforts to address students' housing challenges limited students' ability to see basic needs as issues that impacted the larger student body, relative to those in their families and neighborhood. At the same time, these students typically felt isolated in their efforts to balance coursework with housing challenges, when compared to those in their social networks who were experiencing housing challenges while not enrolled in college. Though these personal contacts were described as more easily able to spend additional hours at work, many interviewees described a feeling of relative privilege for their ability to enroll and persist in coursework. These facets seemed to place participants in a liminal space, in that they feel less privileged than their college peers but more likely to experience upward mobility than those in their home neighborhoods (whether in Oakland or another city). While interviewees were wary of meeting other students experiencing housing challenges and disinterested in

sharing their personal circumstances with academic peers, they were still interested in learning more about how other students were navigating the numerous pressures surrounding basic needs.

Discussion

The perspectives of Black community college students experiencing housing insecurity reinforce a few claims in existing research on homeless students. For example, students who are housing insecure and those who are homeless can both experience academic struggles, long work hours, and negative impacts on mental and physical health (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Crutchfield, 2016). As students in either living situation work to cover living expenses and face difficulties finding jobs with accommodating schedules, these issues – academic challenges, work hours, and negative impacts on health – were interrelated. Without employment, students would not have a means for contributing to rent or cover other living expenses. Yet, with a job, students experienced difficult work hours and logistical considerations (e.g., transit time), which reduced their time and energy to study. Collectively, these issues surrounding time (or lack thereof) posed mental stress and sometimes physical exhaustion.

In addition, several contextual aspects underpinning participants' worldviews underscore Hallett and Crutchfield's (2019) assertion of basic needs issues as symptoms of greater economic inequality. For instance, housing challenges sent messages to students about the practicality of their geographic location; local gentrification and subsequent increases in the cost of living pushed students to consider college and career opportunities in relatively affordable settings. Their insight on the livability of other cities and regions often came from relatives, who were familiar with their financial challenges. Relatedly, many students were experiencing a need to navigate financial pressures in their younger years of adulthood, as extensions of their family's

limited financial resources. Taken together, these tendencies speak to increasing levels of segregation in the United States.

Insights gleaned from housing insecure students also add new dimension to the field's understanding of homeless college enrollees' experiences. Homeless college students reportedly deal with negative peer relationships, family trauma, barriers to financial aid, and a lack of access to technology or a consistent address, but enroll in community college to attain stability through short-term class schedules and long-term returns to their degree (Gupton, 2017). While interviews did not touch on peer relationships, technology access, or address changes, findings relay some differences for Black students undergoing the broader range of "housing insecure" issues. The most apparent variation is that participants' motivation to persist in coursework is rooted in collectivism. As such, interests in upward mobility are a shared end goal between homeless and housing insecure students. However, this study's participants described being motivated by both their current personal circumstances and understanding of the financial difficulties undergone by their family members. In participants' interviews, their academic success and steps towards financial self-sufficiency were seen as gains for their family and communities.

Also worth noting is the perceived (dis)inclination among the staff to provide equitably supports and messages about their college "options" and transmission of an overall sense of belonging on campus. That is, the limited availability of housing or other emergency resources, coupled with participants' perceptions that they were the only ones grappling with housing challenges, facilitated self-doubt and feelings of isolation from their institution. Both researchers and policymakers have called for colleges to create single points of contact for students experiencing basic needs issues (Hallet & Freas, 2017; Crutchfield, 2016). While this is intended

to create one stop shops that can distribute timely and consistent information, participant perspectives suggest that these singular contacts may also benefit students through informal supports (e.g., affirming comments) and as a symbolic gesture from the college.

To be sure, housing insecurity is indeed a stressful experience that should be met with adequate college and community resources. While some students seemed to use interviews as a sounding board for their frustrations with meeting their basic needs, many noted hopes that their story would result in more thoughtful responses from their college. With this, a humanizing framework –which acknowledged the students as experiencing challenges, not defined by them – paved way for interviews to serve as conversations on how participants were navigating housing as an adult responsibility, rather than simply suffering through it or seeking pity. In this sense, a humanizing research approach truly enabled interviewer-participant relationships grounded in mutual respect and greater sensitivity towards the stigma which usually accompanies topics of basic needs challenges. Arguably, both researcher and practitioner efforts stand to benefit from this approach.

Given the amount of campus disengagement noted in research on students experiencing basic needs insecurity, future research may seek to provide a more community-oriented approach. This could entail a heavier emphasis on housing providers and their constituents. Alternatively, studies may seek to conduct ethnographies in communities where rent increases commonly take place and job offerings are influx. However, because research notes housing insecure students as relying on informal forms of financial support – such as staying with a family member or friend (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019a, 2019b) – such studies may result in recruitment difficulties. Further, research would need to practice caution over reinforcing basic needs insecurity stigma and acknowledge that the process of living with extended or large

numbers of family members may be normalized in some communities – particularly among those considered emerging adults.

Conclusion

True consideration of the systemic barriers experienced by Black college students cannot occur in research that divorces them from the contexts of their families and communities. Higher education must move towards application of ecological frameworks to situate these students as privy to local economic conditions and resources, rather than posing them as exceptions to these contexts because of their status as college enrollees. In this instance, an ecological approach relayed that housing insecure students perceived their basic needs challenges as adult responsibilities, which were typically related to their families' limited financial resources and local housing conditions. As a whole, students' insights shed new light on an under-considered dimension of educational patterns commonly touched on in California's higher education policy space.

Traditional Approaches to Understanding College Trajectories

Policy research detailing the educational trajectories of Black students note several patterns from high school through bachelor's degree completion. Research has depicted Black students in California as disproportionately attending high schools with lower completion of college eligibility coursework (Gao, 2017), less access to Advanced Placement (AP) and other college preparatory classes (Education Trust-West, 2015; Campaign for College Opportunity, 2015), and/or tracked into classes that conflict with their school's college eligibility offerings (Chen & Hanhel, 2017). These tendencies are in addition to the disproportionate disciplinary rates of African American students in California, which limit Black students' take-up of course instructional hours and influence Black students' perceptions of educational and career

opportunities. Taking the 2016-2017 school year as an example, Black students experienced a statewide average of 186 suspensions and 2 expulsions per day (Wood et al., 2018). Taken together, these factors led over 16,000 (65 percent) of California's Black public high school graduates to be ineligible for admission to a CSU and UC campus in 2017 alone (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2019). The UC's Scout program is intended to combat such inequalities by providing free online access to college preparatory coursework for California's public high school students who use it under the direction of a teacher. However, instructors at these institutions are often overworked and understaffed, requiring interested students to take A-G courses with an accredited UC Scout instructor for the sticker price of \$299.

As Goldrick-Rab and Kinsley (2013) have asserted, K-12 problems "resulting from neighborhood segregation and the concentration of poverty are simply transferred up the educational pipeline" (p. 132). This is largely due to the state's tendency to insufficiently compensate institutions for their lower local funding (Melguizo & Kosiewicz, 2013). As a result, racially-diverse community colleges with their "far fewer" resources, have higher student-staff ratios and are less likely to have academic offerings, relative to comparable two-year institutions with a higher proportion of white students (Melguizo & Kosiewicz, 2013, p. 124). Relatedly, research by the Century Foundation (2013) has found that two-year colleges with higher shares of low-income and working class students are "focused more and more on a vocational curriculum leading to certificates rather than a liberal arts curriculum preparing students to transfer to four-year institutions" (p. 30). Because the state's new funding formula allocates more funding based on the number of associate degrees and certificates conferred than the number of students who successfully transfer to a four-year institution, it is unclear how or if course offerings will change.

Alongside unequal access to classes needed for college eligibility, Iloh and Toldson (2013) assert that a growing economic gap between Black and White families and the rising cost of higher education create barriers for Black students who have difficulty affording higher education. On a socio-emotional level, Carter (2013) has also asserted that the opportunities available to Black students provide them with less opportunities to identify college or career interests and instead become more likely to develop negative views towards school. These factors have expanded the role of community colleges and for-profit colleges for African Americans – whether for short-term, flexible program offerings or intentions of transfer.

Simultaneously, access to the University of California and California State University systems has decreased for Black students over time. In 2016, the California State Auditor reported that the system “relaxed”⁷ its admission standard for nonresidents⁸ in 2011 and has since “denied admission to an increasing proportion of qualified residents at the campus to which they applied” as a result of reduced state aid. In its entirety, this shift in student demographics has coincided with service to a resident population that is more reflective of California’s racial composition. However, African American resident students remain persistently underrepresented and generally experience lower admission rates than any other group (University of California Infocenter, 2019). Thus, California’s transition away from its Eligibility in the Local Context admissions policy and status as an education system sustaining itself on financially-stable (i.e.

⁷ According to the Master Plan for Higher Education in California, the UC should only admit nonresidents who possess academic qualifications that are equivalent to those of the upper half of residents who are eligible for admission. However, in 2011 the university relaxed this admission standard to state that nonresidents need only to “compare favorably” to residents.

⁸ Students who are exempt from paying Nonresident Supplemental Tuition by Regental policy (e.g., AB 540 students) are not considered to be nonresident students for purposes of this policy (University of California Office of the President, 2017).

out-of-state, basic needs secure) students, has effectively pushed away low-income, Black resident students. These students are then left to experience higher costs-of-living from growing housing demands and a limited supply in their region.

Added Value of an Ecological Framework

The ecological approach leveraged for these student interviews provide valuable insight on students' short- and long-term decision-making, which ultimately build-off the aforementioned trends. Students' perspectives provide new ways of viewing the transition from community college to a four-year institution and expand research on basic needs insecurity. Importantly, an ecological approach enabled this study to frame the interviewees as actors attending a college situated within a rapidly-developing region and social context. Each day, these students are making the most practical "adult choices" with limited resources and a varying set of priorities.

In particular, Iloh's model of college going trajectories relays housing challenges as the context for basic needs-insecure students' perceptions of familial financial stability and upward mobility as opportunities presented by a college degree. Similarly, college and housing resources are crucial pieces of information students consider in both their decision to persist towards a degree and selection of a four-year institution to which they plan to transfer. Within this study, time was examined through two facets, which differently shaped students' perceptions of their educational options. Students' short-term balance between coursework and non-academic responsibilities (e.g. work) sent messages about the feasibility of persisting in college. Meanwhile, gentrification and its respective housing challenges were felt across students' communities and families, making basic needs difficulties more or less apparent across time, and relaying geographic limitations for students' futures. All of these elements were actively shaping

students' educational planning. As a whole, students were committed to continuing their education, in order to obtain long-term financial stability. However, the local cost-of-living and disinclination of their college to provide formalized supports shaped their perceptions of both personal "fit" with the institution and their ability to remain in the geographic area.

Undoubtedly, as researchers continue to explore topics of college access for Black students, access to necessary coursework and gatekeeper policies must continue to be explored and improved. However, contextual factors, such as housing resources and other student support services must be documented and investigated for their contributions to students' "choice" processes. Reliance on informal housing resources are insufficient for improving Black students' sense of belonging and perceptions of care on campus. Interviewees' inclination to view themselves as unique and lucky for their ability to receive help is indicative of the messages the larger student body receives about the educational system and who it is intended to serve. While one older student was able to list community resources that could assist with his housing challenges, the majority of participants were younger students who were more instead inclined to seek out future institutions and regions that could offer greater "fit" and stability.

In its entirety, this dissertation provides a case study that in many ways reflects broader statewide college access and retention issues. Research and media have extensively covered Black students' limited four-year college access, pressure to relocate to attend a four-year college, and difficulty accessing transfer-eligible coursework while enrolled in community colleges. This dissertation adds depth to the field's understanding of Black students' college access by contributing insight on how cost of living has differently influenced the experiences and priorities of those attending community colleges in rapidly-developing regions. In doing so, this research encourages the use of ecological frameworks to better understand contextual

factors, including greater patterns of residential instability and students' difficulty accessing necessary supports. Findings relay a number of implications for practice and research.

Implications for Practice

These interviews present important takeaways from the experiences African American students undergo while navigating housing insecurity. To support college persistence and success, colleges must:

- **Make counseling, on-campus job opportunities, and emergency supports available to students' through a one-stop shop.** Challenges stemming from limited high school support, college course advising, complicated degree plans, academic-work balance, and identifying a career path can make housing difficulties feel particularly overwhelming for students and diminish motivation to persist in college. Counseling services have the power to help students with managing their personal circumstances, time commitments, and motivation. Meanwhile, on-campus job opportunities provide students with a source of income they can more easily balance with their course schedule. Emergency aid can then offset difficulties that arise with health, employment, or life transitions. Providing these resources in a one-stop shop would improve accessibility and reduce students' informational hurdles.
- **Have a dedicated staff member in charge of locating housing resources, formalizing partnerships, and publicizing supports.** Across the three colleges where this research took place, these duties were taken on informally by staff who either saw a need among students or were charged with organizing other student services. As a result, college staff are not prompted to strategize around equitable student outreach or develop housing supports. Further, because community housing providers and colleges maintain different

criteria for assessing housing needs, students seeking external supports were left to navigate resource gatekeeping on their own.

- **Ensure housing resources are accurate and available, both online and in print.** This makes materials accessible for students who are uncomfortable or unable to seek in-person guidance. In some cases, students needed to make an appointment with a counselor to inquire about any local supports college staff may recommend. Even with this guidance, the lack of formalized housing partnerships and the competitive nature of community housing options creates a level of uncertainty in whether students can actually receive assistance. This can serve as added stress for students who have limited time and bandwidth.

Implications for Research

While practitioners have looked to expand mental health services for basic needs-insecure students, less information on mental health and well-being was shared in interviews. Though students provided some thoughts on stress and coping mechanisms, this limitation presents opportunity for future ethnographic research. The long-term contact permitted in ethnography would enable researchers to build stronger rapport with students and further explore the role of mental health in their decision-making and every day experiences. In addition, an ecological approach would encourage researchers to consider how coping mechanisms and stigmas surrounding mental health may partially result from regional cultures.

Scholarship must also extend research investigating the links between education and housing across sectors to better relay these issues as systemic. In doing so, higher education must look to expand the use of ecological frameworks and hold institutions accountable for their service to- and impact on their surrounding communities. While California's Prop 209 placed a

ban on affirmative action and race-based resource allocation, this dissertation's findings note that colleges have not been incentivized to learn of- and understand the implications of lower basic needs security rates among African American students. Black students in California deserve genuine investment and opportunities, through intersegmental supports, articulation agreements, a return to Eligibility in the Local Context policies, and equity-oriented leadership.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, an exhaustive amount of studies identified lifestyle differences between people with a high school diploma and those with a bachelor's degree. The California Budget and Policy Center (2018) explains that Californians with a bachelor's degree can expect more than double the average annual earnings of those with only a high school diploma. Those with a bachelor's degree are also more likely to be stably employed in a job with benefits, which feeds into racial gaps in home ownership and access to affordable housing (California Budget and Policy Center, 2018). In these regards, reduced college access, lower wages, and limited availability of affordable housing not only play important roles in the state's declining Black population – they set the stage for dramatized disparities from the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 and Racial Equity Implications

This research documents Black students' experiences in college while navigating housing challenges, before COVID-19 and amplified calls for racial justice across the nation. As a whole, participants' perspectives relay a limited sense of belonging, care, and support from the institutions they attended. Yet, since the conclusion of this dissertation's data collection, Black communities across the country have seen higher rates of unemployment, housing challenges, and COVID-19 exposure, while also experiencing lower rates of college enrollment and retention (Center for Disease Control, 2020; National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty,

2020; National Student Clearinghouse, 2020; Williams, 2020). As the California Community Colleges - and state as a whole - attempts to make good on their promise of “equity for all,” the insights gleaned from these student and staff interviews serve as documentation of the system’s initial practices and starting points for improvement.

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Appendix A. Student Interview Protocol

Weather:

Time/Day:

Background/Setting:

Research questions (restated): How are Oakland’s housing challenges shaping Black community college students’ educational experiences?

Introductory questions (“Relatively neutral, descriptive information at the beginning” [Merriam & Tisdale, 2016, p. 124])

1. How would you describe your ideal life three years from now?
2. Some people would say that going to college is about getting a better life, not a degree. What would you say to them?

Context

3. Tell me more about the priorities you had when you were deciding what to do after high school.

Probes:

- To what extent did location influence your decisions to be here?
- Tell me more about your family’s role in your plans after high school.
- Tell me more about the role of school staff in formulating your plans.

4. **Many college students balance family responsibilities, housing or other financial responsibilities, and school. How would you describe this process?**

Probes:

- **What resources could you use if you were experiencing issues with your living situations?**
- **What resources could you use if you were experiencing issues getting food?**

5. How would you describe the differences between some of the community colleges in the East Bay?
6. How would you describe the campus culture at each of the community colleges you’ve attended?

Probe: Where do you prefer to take classes? Why?

Opportunity/Futures

7. What would you say are the main local career opportunities?

8. How might these options relate to your academic or job options?

Probes:

- How is [college name] preparing you for these job options?
- What resources could [college name] offer to help students along their college career?

9. How often, if ever, do you think about moving to another city or state?

Probe: How might opportunities outside of California compare to the local ones?

Information

10. For those planning to transfer to a four-year college: What factors shape your transfer destination goals?

11. What do you know about for-profit colleges?

Conclusion: Are there any other thoughts you would like to share?

Appendix B. IRB Approval Letters

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

BERKELEY • DAVIS • IRVINE • LOS ANGELES • MERCED • RIVERSIDE • SAN DIEGO • SAN FRANCISCO



SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

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SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95817

June 13, 2019

Anna Marie Ramos,
Department: School of Education
Phone: 858-213-4066
Email: Amiramos@ucdavis.edu

Dear Ms. Ramos:

On **June 13, 2019** the UC Davis IRB Administration reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Amendment/Modification
Title:	Community College Perceptions and Plans
Investigator:	Ramos, Anna Marie,
IRB ID:	1371558-2
Funding:	Department
Documents Submitted:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment/Modification - HRP-213-FORM-Modification copy.docx • Consent Form - HRP-502-TEMPLATE-CONSENT-Exempt-Research Clean 6.02.docx • Consent Form - HRP-502-TEMPLATE-CONSENT-Exempt-Research Tracked.docx • Protocol - HRP-503 TRACKED 6.02.docx • Protocol - HRP-503 CLEAN 6.13.docx • Questionnaire/Survey - P1 Interview Protocol CLEAN.docx • Questionnaire/Survey - P1 Interview Protocol TRACKED.docx • UC Davis - Initial Review Application
Determination:	Exempt [<i>2- Minor Modifications</i>]
Comments/Conditions:	<p>This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are being considered and there are questions about whether IRB review is needed, please submit a modification request to the IRB for another determination.</p> <p>In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).</p>

This Assurance, on file with the Department of Health and Human Services, covers this determination:

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June 10, 2020

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On June 10, 2020 the UC Davis IRB Administration reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Amendment/Modification
Title:	Community College Perceptions and Plans
Investigator:	Ramos, Anna Marie,
IRB ID:	1371558-3
Funding:	Departmental
Grant ID and Title:	None
IND, IDE or HDE:	None
Documents Submitted:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendment/Modification - HRP-213-FORM-Modification copy.docx • Amendment/Modification - HRP-503 TRACK CHANGES.docx • Amendment/Modification - HRP-503 TRACK CLEAN.docx • Questionnaire/Survey - Staff Protocol NEW.docx • UC Davis - Initial Review Application

Determination:	Exempt [<i>Minor Modifications</i>]
Comments/Conditions:	<p>This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are being considered and there are questions about whether IRB review is needed, please submit a modification request to the IRB for another determination.</p> <p>In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).</p>

This Assurance, on file with the Department of Health and Human Services, covers this determination:

FWA No: 00004557
 Expiration Date: January 05, 2024
 IORG: 0000251

Appendix C. Images of Dedoose Platform

Sample Dedoose homepage

The screenshot shows the Dedoose homepage for 'aaami's Demo Project'. The interface includes a top navigation bar with 'Logout' and 'Account' links, and a secondary navigation bar with icons for Home, Codes, Media, Excerpts, Descriptors, Analyze, Memos, Training, Security, Data Set, Back, and Projects. The main content area is divided into several panels:

- Project Summary:** Shows statistics for Users (1), Media (98), Descriptors (58), Excerpts (425), Codes (13), and Code Applications (447). It includes 'Import Data' and 'Export Data' buttons.
- Media Table:** A table with columns 'Type', 'Title', and 'Added'. It lists various media items such as '21.08 Pre', '11.04 Pre', '10.26 Pre', etc., with their respective dates.
- Codes x Descriptor:** A panel for analyzing codes and descriptors. It shows a 'Set: Community Character...' and a 'Field: Population Density'. It contains two bar charts: 'Reading by Mother' and 'Duration', both showing percentages for categories like 'High 5 or more', 'Low 1-2 persons per', and 'Moderate 3-4'.
- Codes List:** A sidebar menu listing various code categories such as 'Reading by Mother', 'Duration', 'Routine', 'Frequency', 'Reading by Others', 'Pre-Writing Activities', 'Letter Recognition', 'Parent - Child Talking', 'School Prep Beliefs', and 'Great Quotes'.
- Excerpts:** A section showing a list of excerpts with their source ('Bruce at MNRS Meeting 201'), added date ('03/11/2017'), and number of codes ('# Codes').
- Descriptor Ratios Multi Chart:** A pie chart showing the distribution of codes across different descriptor categories: 'L-1, M-2', 'Moderate', and 'High 5 or more'.

Coded demo transcript

The screenshot shows a 'Document: 11.04 Pre' in the Dedoose platform. The document text is displayed on the left, with various segments highlighted in red and blue, indicating they have been coded. The right side of the interface features a 'Selection Info' panel and a 'Codes' sidebar menu. The 'Codes' sidebar is expanded to show 'Reading by Mother', 'Duration', 'Routine', and 'Frequency'. The document text includes several paragraphs, such as:

- TC spends 6 hours at school. TC goes to school at two different schools and has a break in b/w both. When he gets home he changes and PC gives him some food. She has TC read his little brother a book and then he is allowed to play. He watches some TV and then goes to his other school. He does the same routine when he gets home from his other school. PC has the most fun w/?? (couldn't hear). Everyone eats dinner together and PC and SC don't let TC speak during dinner. After dinner, he will start telling them about what he did at school and his day. Before he goes to bed, TC knows to change, brush his teeth and get into bed. PC then comes over and gives him a kiss. If TC is not too tired, TC will read her a book. TC's favorite tv show/video tape is Spider man. TC's favorite book is Winnie the Pooh.
- PC reads to TC. Sometimes she reads to him at night, but not every night. But every Saturday she does read to him. PC will read to him b/c she knows that sometimes the teacher won't be able to teach him everything. Also, she realized that the teacher can't devote time to all the children, so she tries to help out by helping TC. PC reads to TC for about 1/2 an hour at a time. The books are in English, but PC will make up stories for them in Spanish. PC began to read to TC when he was about 1 yr. old. She did it b/c he enjoyed it and would come down. He also would point to things in the book. PC likes being read about to and PC does it so TC can repeat what she says and learn. Once in awhile reading occurs during bedtime. They read more than one book at a time ? (not heard). Reading will end b/c TC loses interest hardly ever. TC asks to be read to about 3x a week. Everyday he looks at books by himself. PC and TC do not go to the library together and they have not participated in any reading programs. However, PC says at the HS they have a special reading program teaching parents how to encourage and teach reading to their children. PC goes to this and says it is a very good program b/c she sees how kids definitely improve due to the program. PC's difficulties in reading were not on the tape.
- no one else reads to TC
- PC and SC tell stories to TC, for example made up stories about why you should eat. She tells stories about 3 x a week.
- TC and other children do play with books. Sometimes the neighbor boy and TC get together to play and TC says, "okay we are going to read and I will be the teacher." Then TC will proceed to tell the other child, "come to the front of the class, why won't you read the book...it's a beautiful story." When TC and the others play with books it's about once a week. TC helps other children read, but other children do not really help TC.
- TC does like to do pre-writing activities in the home. When PC is ready to paint he grabs his book and says he's not going to leave. He likes to paint spiders. PC enjoys that TC likes to do these activities b/c he is learning. She notices him playing as if it were school and realizes all that he is learning. TC does these activities about once a week, but does do writing everyday. TC is really interested in these activities. In the last two months, TC has done pre-writing every single day except for Sunday. TC will do these activities for 15 minutes at a time. PC will do these activities with TC because she knows it entertains him and will help him in the future. There are not really any difficulties in doing these activities. She tries to schedule time w/TC and his activities. TC tries to write words everyday and sometimes does about 2 pages. TC and other children do have pre-writing play. In the last two months, this has happened about once a week. They pretend it's school. There are times that TC and other children help each other. They will tell