

**CAPITAL GATEKEEPING OR COMMUNITY ADVOCACY:
A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF DIVERSITY COLLEGE ADMISSION
PROFESSIONALS' PERSEPECTIVES OF
COLLEGE ACCESS IN A LOCAL URBAN CONTEXT**

by

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Kathryn A. Bethea, PhD

University of Pittsburgh, 2016"

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cultural capital and racialization in higher education. Through sharing the DCAPs' recommendations for improving college access, I discuss ways to develop policy, programming, and praxis to promote college access and institutional diversity initiatives. The implications of the current research study will further inform how college admission impacts the college access gap.

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PREFACE

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1. INTRODUCTION

In light of the Black Lives Matter movement and the recent Fisher v. Texas affirmative action cases, we are quickly approaching the 2028 date that Justice Sandra Day O'Connor marked as the suggested end of affirmative action policies in college admissions. However, we are no closer to eliminating the access, attrition, and persistence gaps of underserved students of color with their privileged peers (Aud, Fox, & Kewal Ramani, 2010; Perna, 2006; Spellings, 2006; Venezia, Kirst, & Antonio, 2003). At the same time, considering race/ethnicity in college admissions is important. The National Admission Counselors in Admission Counseling's Admission Trends Survey found that among colleges/universities that do consider race/ethnicity as a factor in the admission decision, 82 percent credited this policy with boosting the number of racial/ethnic minority students represented in the student body (Hawkins & Lautz, 2003). Also, 74 percent of colleges and universities include in their mission statement a commitment to diversity (Hawkins & Lautz, 2003). Diversity is still a compelling reason; yet, pressures exist that are limiting the use of race-conscious policies and practices on college campuses. Overall, colleges/universities continue to promote diversity and recruit underrepresented students of color and, yet, the college access gap still exists. The concurrent issues constitute the current reality of diversity recruitment and race-conscious admission policies.

Without addressing the gap, colleges/universities continue to struggle to promote diversity in all areas of the institution. Researchers have found that there are substantial barriers

contributing to the college access gap such as the lack of college knowledge, insufficient college readiness counseling, and K-12 and higher education disjuncture theory (McClafferty & McDonough, 2000; McClafferty, McDonough, Nunez, 2002; McDonough, 1997; Perna, 2006; Perna, Rowan-Kenyon, Thomas, Bell, Anderson, & Li, 2008; Roderick, Nagaoka, Coca, & Moeller, 2008, 2009; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Venezia, et al., 2003). In Breland, Maxey, Gernand, Cumming, and Trapani's (2002) quantitative report on college admissions, they found that application, acceptance, and enrollment rates did differ depending on race and ethnicity. Furthermore the 30-percentage point gap between underrepresented African American, Latina/o, and Native American and White American students has not lessened in the 50+ years after the federal government's college-for-all initiatives (Gladieux & Swail, 2000).

Within the field of higher education there is growing concern over the educational inequality in college access. To change accordingly with the demographic shifts of the country, legal cases, political pressures, economic demands, and national expectations, educators will find it necessary to address the educational opportunities of students of color. Most K-12 systems and colleges/universities have to address the persistent social inequities in education that result in the low numbers of matriculation, persistence, and graduation for students from underrepresented groups. One important area to study the college access gap is to analyze higher education's role in college access.

Most research has studied access from the prospective of students, parents, and guidance counselors (Freeman, 1997, 1999, 2005; McClafferty et al., 2002; McDonough, 1997, 1998; Perna, 2000, 2006; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Roderick, et al. 2008, 2009; Venezia, et al., 2004). While studies have looked at the role of higher education in affirmative action policies (Chapa & Horn, 2007; Orfield, Marin, & Horn, 2005; Saenz, Osguera, & Hurtado, 2007), few studies have

looked at higher education's role in the college access dilemma of urban underrepresented students of color (Young, 2006). Moreover, fewer have interviewed college admission professionals about the link between an urban school district's college access and local diversity recruitment and community outreach. Therefore, it is important to study college admission professionals' views of an urban school district's college access in conjunction with the enrollment strategies of local colleges/universities.

The focus of this study is on college admissions, and particularly diversity college admissions professionals (DCAPs) who are responsible for promoting college access and diversity (i.e., creating and maintaining a diverse institutional student body). While previous studies have analyzed race/ethnicity and culture as risk and protective factors in different departments of higher education (Chang, 1999; Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002), few have studied diversity college admission professionals responsible for diversity recruitment in college admissions (Young, 2006). The ethical imperative for colleges/universities is to study race/ethnicity and social context as well as racialization in the college admissions process. This could offer insight on the low number of students of color enrolled in college. Another important reason to study DCAPs is that they operate in both P-12 and higher education cultures (McDonough, 1997, 1998; McClafferty et al., 2002; Perna, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009; Venezia et al., 2003). Overall, this study is an exploration of higher education topics such as race-conscious admission policies, diversity recruitment, and college access outreach that have not been thoroughly examined in order to get a holistic understanding of the college access opportunities for underrepresented students of color.

It is important to gauge DCAPs use of enrollment strategies for increasing student diversity on campuses. One strategy is to employ race-conscious admission policies in order to

enroll underrepresented students of color. Race-conscious admission policies are utilized to consider a student's racial/cultural context in the application process. DCAPs consider factors such as cultural background, special talents, nonacademic factors, interpersonal skills, athletic ability, and hardships in life in the college application. Unfortunately, college admissions' reliance on academic achievement and merit may serve as a hindrance to properly use race-conscious admission policies as well as the enrollment of underrepresented students of color. Therefore, DCAPs are aware of the cultural capital and sociocultural context that influences the college admission process.

This introductory chapter begins with an overview of the college access problems that have led colleges/universities to implement race-conscious admission policies to increase college access for underrepresented students of color. Second, I discuss the present study's purpose and research questions. Third, I provide an overview of the cultural capital and critical race theoretical framework with definitions of the key terminology. Fourth, this chapter also includes a discussion of the research design as well as the researcher's perspective and assumptions. Fifth, I discuss the proposed rationale and significance of this research study. Sixth, the chapter concludes with an overview of the following chapters in the dissertation.

The current study seeks to explore the role of race/ethnicity, cultural capital, and race-conscious admission policies on college access through the perspective of DCAPs. It is anticipated that the knowledge generated from this inquiry will afford new insights to inform higher education practice in college admissions and diversity initiatives.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many urban school districts are struggling to prepare their students for college (Bangs, Davis, Ness, Elliott, & Henry, 2011; Berger, Smith, & Coelen, 2004; Gill & Engberg, 2004; Engberg & Gill, 2006; Gonzalez, Bozick, Tharp-Taylor, & Phillips, 2011; Iriti, Bickel, & Nelson, 2009; Iriti, Bickel, Kaufman, 2012). The research study shows that urban metro areas face many challenges to college access such as racial segregation, gridlocked academic performance, and racial disparities in academic achievement. For example, African American students are one of the largest underrepresented racial/ethnic minority groups, yet make up 61 percent of high school students in the large urban school district where this study takes place (A+ Schools, 2015). Among every 100 African American students in the local urban school district, 78 want to go to college (A+ Schools, 2011; A+ Schools, 2015). In actuality, only 59 of those 100 students graduate from high school (A+ Schools, 2011). Of these, just 33 (or 57%) are considered college-ready with a 2.5 GPA or higher (A+ Schools, 2011; A+ Schools, 2015). This is in stark contrast to the White American students where 87 percent are college-ready (A+ Schools, 2011; A+ Schools, 2015). The low level of college readiness for African American and low-income students is in stark contrast to the students' aspirations to go to college. Overall, students want to go to college but lack adequate preparation. This example of the gap in college access between White and Black students is the greater phenomenon that was examined in this study.

Colleges/universities face challenges in recruiting urban racial/ethnic minority students due to the lack of academic preparation or college readiness (Freeman, 2005; Perna, 2000, 2006; Venezia, et al., 2003). In addition, most colleges/universities require rigorous academic performance and standardized testing for admission (Grotsky, 2007; Grotsky & Kalogrides,

2008; Roksa, Grodsky, Arum, & Gamoranet, 2007). Higher education institutions have made attempts to engage communities and students using creative and innovative tactics, such as college fairs and workshops at neighborhood centers, in order to recruit underrepresented students of color. Yet, these efforts are not fully addressing the issues surrounding the college access gap of African American students in an urban metro area.

1.2 OVERVIEW OF STUDY

The present research is a qualitative study of diversity college admission professionals' (DCAPs), role in promoting college access. It is an exploratory study of DCAPs to chronicle higher education's efforts to address racial disparities such as the college access gap and expand educational opportunities. Guided by the following research questions, the purpose of my study is to study the socio-racial, cultural, and community context surrounding college access of a large urban school district through the viewpoints of DCAPs:

1. In what ways are DCAPs an authority on college access and describe the higher education context within Perna's (2006) integrated college access model?
2. Through the DCAPs' perspective of LCSD's P-12 and community context, how do DCAPs describe college access for local and underrepresented students of color?
3. What is the narrative and cultural habitus of DCAPs in relation to personal and professional beliefs concerning college access?
4. From the DCAPs' narrative, how does diversity recruitment conform to the capitalistic and racialized system of P-16 college access?

The DCAPs influence college access through their work in local diversity recruitment and college access outreach (Perna, 2006). The DCAPs are able to give their perspective of the higher education context as well as the local urban school district' college-going culture. The DCAPs are experts on college admissions and diversity recruitment so, they are be able to offer a

perspective, possible barriers, and, more importantly, recommendations needed to bridge the college-going expectations of P-12 and higher education for racial/ethnic minority students.

A descriptive design is the most fitting qualitative methodology for this study since I am conducting an in-depth inquiry of DCAPs' perspective of college access through narrative analysis (Bassey, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). In the current study, I examined college access as well as the recruitment activities of DCAPs involving multiple data methods such as demographic questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews.

The DCAPs participating in the study are recruited because of their involvement in the College Success 101 (CS101) college preparatory program, local recruitment, and experience recruiting urban underrepresented students of color. I go into further details of the research site and context by giving accounts of the DCAPs' profiles and a description of College Success 101 program in Chapter 3 and Appendix A. I am able to interact with this group since I am Chair of the CS101 program. Eight different colleges/universities are represented in this group: two public research universities, one private research university, one regional satellite branch, one community college, and three liberal arts colleges/universities. Based on the membership of the College Success 101 Collaborative, the research subjects include 14 DCAPs participating in the study.

This study was conducted in three phases between 2013 and 2015. In the first phase, I collected demographic information about the study participants. The second phase consisted of focus groups with the participating college admission professionals to understand their knowledge and attitudes on about college access. In the third phase, I conducted interviews with the same college admission professionals who participated in the focus groups.

1.3 ASSUMPTIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

1.3.1 Assumptions

Based on the researcher's experience and background as a diversity college admissions professional (DCAP) for nine years, four primary assumptions were made regarding this study:

- Race/ethnicity is a factor in college admissions and college admission includes race-conscious recruitment policies, strategies, and activities.
- Diversity college admission professionals (DCAPs) are an authority and have a unique perspective on the college access gap that is similar and different from other stakeholders (i.e. students, guidance counselors, community organizations).
- DCAPs are knowledgeable and adept in administering the diversity recruitment practices and policies of their respective higher education institutions.
- DCAPs that are part of the College Success 101 program are interested in community outreach to address the college access gap for the local urban school district that is the setting for this study.

1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.4.1 College Access

David Conley (2010, p. 57), explains college access as, " a systematic understanding of the postsecondary educational system, combined with specific knowledge of the norms, values, and conventions of interactions in the college context and the human relations skills necessary to cope within this system." College access is the ability to attain information or college knowledge in order to enter college. Due to the complexities of the P-16 educational system, gaining access is also influenced by one's race/ethnicity and cultural capital (Freeman, 2005; Perna, 2000, 2006;

Venezia, et al., 2003).

1.4.2 College-going Culture

College-going culture is creating a school environment that guides students' attitudes toward college (College Board, 2006). It is a place where opportunities to attend college is expected and encouraged for everyone. Such culture helps all students set future plans, achieve high goals, and generate other important values such as appreciation of academics, desire to succeed, and drive to attend college to become a lifelong learner (College Board, 2006).

1.4.3 College Readiness

College readiness is, "a process to develop postsecondary aspirations and expectations, gain awareness of one's interests and abilities, and receive support and information for college access and success." (Savitz-Romer, 2012, p. 99). In other words, it is the preparation to enter college ranging from rigorous course-taking and academic excellence to good study habits and interpersonal skills.

1.4.4 College Access Gap

One form of the educational gap is African American, Latino/a, and Native American students lag behind White American and some Asian American peers in college-going rates. Some indicators of college access include high school, high school curriculum rigor, SAT/ACT scores, high school grade point average (GPA), number of college applications, acceptance and

enrollment rates, graduation rates, etc. (Freeman, 2005; Perna, 2000, 2006; Venezia, et al., 2003).

1.4.5 Cultural Capital

Perna (2006) explains that, “Cultural capital refers to the system of attributes, such as language skills, cultural knowledge, and mannerisms” (p. 110). This system is derived, in part, from one’s parents and family background, which defines an individual’s socio-class status (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Perna, 2006). In this study cultural capital is often represented in college knowledge.

1.4.6 Diversity College Admissions Professionals (DCAPs)

Higher education administrators whose job is to recruit and counsel urban racial/ethnic minority students as they make choices about pursuing postsecondary education. They are also representatives of the college/university.

1.4.7 Local City School District (LCSD)

Local public school district of a major northeastern city.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Using a sociological lens sheds light on the practices of postsecondary institutions to uphold the racial/ethnic disparities in the college access gap. The best approach to studying the DCAPs' role in college access is coupling the concept of higher education as cultural capital with critical race theory to explain the centrality of race to college admissions. For example, college admissions is affected by racial stratification in education, race-conscious admission policies, and college access outreach. These factors inevitably effect how institutions expand the social context of choice for underrepresented students of color. The literature review results in a conceptual framework that expands our understanding of diversity recruitment to promote college access.

Most importantly, the effects of socio-racial stratification on education have impeded the college access of underrepresented students of color, largely due to their limited cultural capital. I explore cultural capital theory in relation to the college access research of Perna (2000, 2006). Then, I also analyze the DCAPs' perspective through a critical race theory lens from the renowned works of Solorzano's (1997) tenets and Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995). Finally, I explain how cultural capital and critical race theory can shed light on expanding the socio-racial context of college choice and college access.

1.5.1 Race and Cultural Capital in College Access Research

One way to explain the enrollment gaps among racial/ethnic groups and between low and high-income families is to look at the socio-racial stratification of cultural capital. Overall, students from low-income families and whose parents have not attended college, as well as those

of African American and Hispanic descent are less likely to enroll in college (Thomas & Perna, 2004). College choice theory discusses how cultural systems influence one's life and major life decisions such as college choice (Freeman, 2005; Perna, 2006; McDonough, 1997). Often, schools are segregated and stratified by race, and/or ethnicity, which affect the school's resources such as college preparatory curriculum and college counseling (Anderson, 2012; Thomas & Perna, 2004). Also, college access varies greatly depending on race/ethnicity, residency, socio-economic status, and the highest level of their parents' education. Underrepresented students of color are less likely to be academically prepared to attend and graduate from college because of discriminatory school practices (e.g., ability grouping, curricular tracking) and because of differences across schools in the availability of resources (Oakes, Rogers, Lipton, & Morrell, 2002; Perna, 2004).

Therefore, the ability to acquire such capital is challenged by socio-racial stratification resulting from institutional racism and discrimination plus the lack of culturally relevant approaches to college access. This, ultimately, leads to barriers to the social and economic gains of college access. Since higher education is viewed as cultural capital, it is important that students of color receive the support and information needed to enroll and succeed in college (Aud, et al., 2010; Gladieux & Swail, 2000; Tierney & Hagerdon, 2002; Perna, 2004; Thomas & Perna, 2000, 2006; Tierney, 1999; Tierney & Jun, 2001). However, many racial/ethnic and low socio-economic minority students do not have access (i.e. means, preparation, and choice) to go to college.

Freeman's (1997, 1999, 2005) qualitative study looked at the impact of race/ethnicity on student college choice. By interviewing African American high school students about how race/ethnicity influences college participation, she was able to find that race/ethnicity affected

how students perceived his/her and others' decision to go to college. She presents a similar argument with cultural capital theory that college aspirations and high school academic capital grow out of the cultural and social capital of families; therefore, college aspirations and choice are based on culture and not just societal (elitist) values.

Another study that considers race in college access is Perna's (2006) integrated college access conceptual model. She assumes that students' educational decisions are determined by their habitus, or the cultural capital system of values and beliefs that shapes an individual's views and interpretations. Drawing from a variety of perspectives from previous studies including her study on the differences in the decision to attend college among African Americans, Latino/as, and White Americans, she argues that culture, race, ethnicity, and SES impact a student's habitus. In other words, race matters (Perna, 2000). For example, measures of cultural and social capital played a relatively more important role in explaining the college enrollment decisions of African-Americans and Latino/as than White American students (Perna, 2000).

Perna's (2006) conceptual model assumes that an individual's college choice decisions are shaped by four contextual layers: (a) the individual's habitus; (b) school and community context; (c) the higher education context; and (d) the broader social, economic, and policy context. The proposed conceptual model recognizes differences across students in the resources that shape college choice and reflect an individual's background and characteristics, particularly gender, race/ethnicity, and SES, as well as cultural and social capital (Perna, 2006). By drawing on constructs from both human capital and sociological approaches, Perna's (2006) conceptual model generates a more comprehensive understanding of the socio-ecological layers that impact students' college choice, especially urban, low-income, first-generation, and/or racial/ethnic minority students.

In this study, I mainly focus on the higher education contextual layer. I investigate the role of these factors from the perspective of the DCAPs. As suggested by Perna's (2006) conceptual model, the higher education contextual layer recognizes the role that higher education institutions play in shaping a student's college access. Since DCAPs are a part of the higher education context in the greater system influencing students' college access, I plan to analyze some of the factors relating to students of colors' access to college. For example, institutions of higher education are a source of information to students and their families about postsecondary enrollment options through their location and geographic proximity to students' homes (Perna, 2006). Furthermore, research points to the factors of institutional location, identity, and selectivity on college access (Gladieux & Swail, 2000; McDonough, Antonio, & Trent, 1997; Perna, 2006; Turley, 2009).

1.5.2 Critical Race Theory in College Access Research

I explore college access as cultural capital through a critical race theory perspective. The college access gap affects how and where underrepresented students of color access postsecondary education. Currently, this is especially evident in the competitive selection of applicants based on merit (excellence) as opposed to access (equity). Issues like socio-racial stratification, meritocracy, and race-conscious admission practices are discussed throughout this study. In essence, this study elucidates higher education's challenges and benefits to address college access and readiness for underrepresented racial/ethnic minority students.

Bell (1992) and Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) have found that the concept of individual rights to college access is directly connected to property rights. Race/ethnicity continues to be a significant factor in cultural capital and college access. Furthermore, the

intersection of race/ethnicity and capitalism creates an analytic tool through which we can understand educational opportunities and inequities such as college access.

There are a limited number of studies that apply CRT tenets to research college admissions. Yet, three articles: Jayakumar, Vue, and Allen (2013), Muhammad (2008), and Teranishi and Briscoe (2008) have used CRT in their analysis of college choice and access. They argue that the traditional theory of cultural capital used in college access theory is limited when analyzing underrepresented students of color. Two factors are often unacknowledged: 1) institutional racism impedes college access and 2) the college admissions process does not account for cultural differences such as community funds of knowledge and capital. Ultimately, college access research has not addressed how to best serve students of color. I further extend CRT to research higher education since the majority of these studies focus on P-12 education's role in socio-racial stratification and cultural capital gatekeeping.

The current study's literature review analyzes previous research to illuminate how race/ethnicity may impact college admissions. The conceptual framework for this study addresses higher education's efforts to promote college access through diversity recruitment and race-conscious admission policies. This perspective for studying college access furthers previous analysis on college access to acknowledge the impact of higher education, college admissions and DCAPs in the P-16 educational system. In other words, college access is not only the student's choice but is affected by the higher education contextual layer, including college admissions and DCAPs. Again, this is another layer of the student's educational ecological system. Using the theoretical lens of cultural capital and critical race theory (CRT), I establish that race/ethnicity and sociocultural context is central in the analysis of college access.

1.6 THE RESEARCHER

For nine years and at the time of conducting this study, I have worked as a DCAP to recruit urban underrepresented students of color. Thus, I enhance the inquiry process with my practical experience of the college admission process as a working professional in college admissions. I interviewed the DCAPs as a colleague and observed/participated in local events, meetings, recruitment, and the college admission process. I plan to facilitate the DCAPs' viewpoints and meaning-making in order to give voice to a unique group. This research study serves to be a catalyst in producing passionate participants to enact change for social justice. Since I relate with the participants, I plan to use a critical constructivist approach in my methods and analysis to effectively portray the college admission professionals' stories.

I acknowledge that the same experiences that are valuable in providing insight could also be a liability and bias in my research design and interpretation of findings. In addition to my assumptions and theoretical orientation being made explicit at the outset of the study, I am committed to engage in ongoing critical self-reflection by way of journaling and dialogue with professional colleagues and advisors. Moreover, to address my subjectivity and strengthen the credibility of the research, various procedural safeguards such as triangulation with data and reliability checks with professional colleagues.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE

The rationale for this study comes from the researcher's desire to uncover ways DCAPs assist students' access to postsecondary education. Day after day, they help urban, low-income,

racial/ethnic underrepresented students go to college. Yet, there are college/university enrollment practices and policies that impact college access. With a better understanding of higher education's role in the college access process, colleges/universities, admissions, and DCAPs may attain resources and support to promote access to college.

Qualitative research methods are increasingly being used in researching college access (Farmer-Hinton, 2011; Farmer-Hinton & Adams, 2006; Holland, 2010; Jayakumar, Vue, & Allen, 2013; Yamamura, Martinez, & Saenz, 2010). Again, fewer studies have interviewed DCAPs about their perspective of an urban school district's college access, diversity recruitment, and outreach. Therefore, it is important to study DCAPs' knowledge and attitudes concerning college access since they are one of the key players to impact a student's decision to go to college (Perna, 2006; Tierney, 2005; Venezia et al., 2003).

This study examines specific characteristics of urban college access to inform theory, policies, and best practices. The racial disparities and shortage of resources for urban students of color are problems that cities are facing all over the country. District-wide efforts such as scholarship programs and other initiatives to promote college access are practical reasons for researching urban public school districts. This creates useful insights into the challenges of promoting college access among students of color. Many studies such as Perna (2006) and Moses (2001) find that higher education is a crucial part of the college choice model and that expanding the socio-racial context of choice for underrepresented students of color is key to narrowing the college access gap. The current study builds upon college access research to inform practices and policies as well as local diversity recruitment and community outreach efforts.

1.8 PROJECTED RESULTS

The research questions focus on higher education's role in increasing college access. I also gauge the DCAPs' views of race/ethnicity in college admissions, cultural capital, and college access. The findings contribute to understanding the significance of race/ethnicity in college admissions. DCAPs are informed stakeholders that play a significant role in the P-16 educational process; therefore, it is important to understand the extent to which their views are aligned with college access theory (Freeman, 2005; Perna, 2006). The research also explores ways that higher education characteristics (i.e. type, identity, and mission), DCAPs' roles and duties, and college access outreach influences their views and vice versa.

Through this research, the DCAPs share their views on college access, race-conscious admissions policies, and gauge their outreach efforts. There are five focus areas of the research: (a) higher education's contextual layer and role in college access; (b) DCAPs' views of college access; (c) institutional efforts to increase college access such as race-conscious admission policies and practices; (d) interactions and relationship between local colleges/universities' and urban school districts; and (e) local college access outreach. The results are analyzed by the research questions to form emerging themes. In addition, responses are disaggregated to understand the views of the DCAPs by institution type, diversity, and community outreach participation.

1.9 DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

The rest of the chapters are as follows: Chapter 2 provides the literature review to understand the major studies concerning college access and conceptual frameworks that informs this research study. Chapter 3 provides the research design including the methodological theory, sampling, research site, data collection methods, data analysis plan, measures to assure data quality, and timeline. I explain my role as the researcher and emic stance in this study. I also provide the DCAPs profiles, institutional profiles, as well as description of College Success 101 program. Chapter 4 addresses research question 1 through a narrative analysis of the DCAPs' role/duties, institutional college admissions, and diversity recruitment. Chapter 5 chronicles the DCAPs' views of the local city school districts' college-going culture to answer research question 2. In Chapter 6, I address research question 3 by discussing the cultural habitus of the DCAPs as critical gatekeeping advocates. Chapter 7 is a discussion of the study's results and answers research question 4 in relation to cultural capital theory and CRT. I conclude with Chapter 8 by giving an overview of the DCAPs narrative as well as the implications, limitations, and future directions of the current study.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The current study explores the DCAPs' role in the socio-racial context of college access in order to understand how higher education, specifically college admissions and diversity college admission professionals (DCAPs), influence college access and diversity recruitment of urban underrepresented students of color. This chapter reviews previous research that has studied the race/ethnicity, the college access gap, and socio-racial stratification in college choice. Four major areas of literature were reviewed: (a) social and cultural capital theory; (b) college access theory; (c) critical race theory; and (d) race-conscious admission policies.

I am utilizing two theories as the theoretical framework: 1) cultural capital to explain the benefits of higher education and disparities in college access and 2) critical race theory to explain the centrality of race in college admissions. Cultural capital theory is a major theoretical lens for understanding access to higher education in the U.S. I briefly discuss the disparities and on-going debate on educating African American students in the U.S. Then, I explore the progression of cultural capital theory in college access through the renowned works of Kassie Freeman (1995, 1997, 2005) and Laura Perna (2000, 2006). Since this study is within the genre of college access research, it is important to provide a contemporary overview to clarify the role of college admissions on college access. Furthermore, I review critical race theory literature to show the

centrality of race in college access and college admissions. I also incorporate research on race-conscious admission policies and diversity recruitment to show the effectiveness of both theories in this research study. Then, I discuss the implications of racial stratification for higher education enrollment systems. This study furthers research and theory on race-conscious admission policies and diversity recruitment to promote educational opportunities for underrepresented students of color.

Lastly, this literature review develops a conceptual framework for the present research that elucidates the higher education contextual layer and its role in college access. I use the theoretical lens of cultural capital and critical race theory in my analysis of race/ethnicity as a central factor in college access. Throughout the review, I attempt to point out the important concepts in the literature that can explain the DCAPs' perspectives. In addition, relevant contested areas or issues are identified and discussed.

2.2 RACIAL/ETHNIC ACHIEVEMENT GAP

In many urban cities throughout the U.S., there are disparities in college access due to socio-racial stratification. The deeper problems of the educational system are the disparities among the high schools, which is a result of race/ethnicity and family income. For example, African American students aspire to go to college at the same rate as White American students. However, they do not academically achieve at the same rates. Also, many urban public high schools that are largely populated by African American students often have the lowest college-going culture (A+ Schools, 2011; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009).

Although college admissions may make concessions such as a compensatory sponsorship (Grotsky, 2007) for students of color, this may not be enough to weather the continued debates concerning the college access. In other words, race-conscious admissions policies such as affirmative action and attempts to promote critical masses of diversity on college campuses cannot address the institutional racism that currently plagues our P-16 educational system (Chang, 1999; Gurin, et al., 2002; Orfield, 2007). Such analysis is important to understand how race/ethnicity impacts educational opportunities such as college access.

2.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RACE/ETHNICITY IN P-16 EDUCATION

The following section offers insight on race and institutional racism in the P-16 educational system. Most African American students do not have social attainment, social mobility, and high SES status similar to their White American peers (Aud, et al., 2010; Breland, et al., 2002; Perna, 2000; Venezia, et al., 2003). This explains why some students of color who attend college open houses or talk with DCAPs possess cultural capital to gain admission to college. However, the majority, who lack access to DCAPs and college information, do not (Aud, et al., 2010; Breland, et al., 2002; Perna, 2000; Venezia, et al., 2003). When the ability to acquire such capital is obstructed by institutional racism and discrimination; then, there are barriers to social and economic empowerment. This is due to the inherent racial/ethnic discrimination and lack of cultural awareness in education. It's not enough to look at the statistics; but, it is more important to research the P-16 educational system for possible causes of the college access gap caused by institutions of higher education and college admissions. By looking at the critical works of Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), Ogbu (2004), Carter (2005),

and Delpit (1995), I outline the college access gap, which is a problem that stems from the achievement gap. Overall, they are opportunity gaps in our P-16 educational system.

Again, race/ethnicity is a central factor in college admissions. Bell (1992) and Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) have found that the concept of individual rights to access college is directly connected to property rights. Thus, despite decades of civil rights gains, most African Americans remain disadvantaged and deprived because of racial discrimination and stratification. The ability to define, possess, and own intellectual property, academic capital, and college information has been a central feature of educational power in America. In other words, social benefits such as opportunities to learn based on state-of-the-art technologies, well-prepared teachers, good college counseling, abundant resources, and academically rigorous curriculum accrue largely to White American privileged students (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). For example, schools that serve poor students of color are unlikely to have access to resources and, consequently, students will have little or no opportunity for postsecondary education, despite the attempt to mandate standards. Furthermore, the current discussions of affirmative action is a result of the tensions and struggles of capitalism and who has the cultural capital to go to college (Ancheta & Edley, 2004; Chang, 1999; Gurin, et al., 2002; Gurin, 2004; Orfield, 2001; Roksa et al., 2007).

Race/ethnicity continues to be a significant factor in attaining cultural capital (Freeman, 1995, 1997, 2005; Jayakumar, et al., 2013; Muhammad, 2008; Perna, 2000, 2006). In addition, there is institutional and structural racism that has created subordinated positions for underrepresented students of color. Some examples include: the victimization of people of color; the construction of whiteness as the ultimate valuable property and capital; and laissez-faire racism that maintains the status quo of racial relations (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings & Tate,

1995; Wellman, 2007). These and other forms of institutional racism only further promotes the cultural practices of White Americans and the culture of power (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

2.3.1 Socio-racial Stratification and Segregation

As discussed in the previous section, one reason for the disparities in education is the influence of discrimination and the hierarchy of power in the U.S. (Carter, 2005; Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ogbu, 2004). The socio-historical context of America has shaped the world that we live in today. Omi and Winant (1993) explain:

As a result of slavery, white supremacy, urban migration, Jim Crow laws, the sharecropping system, segregation and ineffective integration policies, criminalization, ghettoization, the debates over welfare, high unemployment rates, racial politics and other factors that have influenced the power hierarchy within the U.S., African Americans are marginalized.

Every study in the current literature review also referenced the historical and social policies that have influenced the politics of the U.S. Previous studies also show the aftermath and effects of discriminatory policies and laws in segregating communities in the U.S.' current power structures (Chapa & Horn, 2007; Orfield, Marin, & Horn, 2005; Saenz, Osguera, & Hurtado, 2007). There is still labor market racism and underprivileged students are tracked to solely vocational education (Roksa et al., 2007). In addition, there are sociocultural differences in the rates of college enrollment, types of institutions attended, majors, and persistence, and graduation among racial/ethnic groups. This illustrates the racial and socio-economic hierarchies in the U.S. P-16 educational system that benefit privileged White Americans and successfully assimilated persons.

In light of the discrimination that still exists today, African Americans are often not rewarded or accepted as equals when they have successfully accumulated cultural capital as

White Americans or have obtained stipulated educational qualification (Ogbu, 1994). Despite the current post-racial sentiments, current events shows the impact of race in the U.S. Case in point, renowned scholar Dr. Henry Louis Gate, Jr.'s arrest at his own home in 2009 (one year after President Barack Obama's inauguration), marches supporting the Deferred Action for Child Arrivals (DACA) legislation, the media coverage of the death of Trayvon Martin, and the recent #BlackLivesMatter campus demonstrations. Underrepresented students of color such as African Americans have always aspired to succeed in a white supremacist patriarchal society; yet, have always been aware of the obstacles of being African American and the "burden of acting White" (Ogbu, 1978, 1994). In a vicious socio-historical cycle that traces back to the 1800s, the relationship between the racial identity of African Americans and that of the White dominant group, determines to some degree the difficulty African Americans have in crossing social, cultural and educational boundaries or learning for economic opportunity or social mobility (Ogbu, 1994).

2.3.2 Challenges of Racial Stratification in Higher Education

By studying current socio-racial stratification, researchers have analyzed the educational inequities that result in the college access gap. Whether it's based on college readiness and development, academic achievement, nonacademic factors, precollege variables, and/or socio-cultural factors, socio-racial stratification affects college access for underrepresented students of color. Research studies have found that higher education may impede college access for racial/ethnic minority students due to the organizational culture, social stratification and discrimination, bureaucratic systems of power, and/or lack of diversity (Grotsky, 2007; Grotsky & Kalogrides, 2008; Roksa, et al., 2007).

In Roksa, Grodsky, Arum, and Gamoran's (2007) book chapter, "United States: Changes in Higher Education and Social Stratification," the biggest factor on racial/ethnic stratification is not only historical inequality, but also socio-political climate and labor market changes. First, the intentional laws and policies to grant equity and diversify campuses led to narrowing the college gap for racial/ethnic minorities (Roksa et al., 2007). Then, the reverse of these trends in the last two decades comes from the increasing financial strain of colleges/universities, privatization and booming industry of college counseling, and challenges to affirmative action. In addition, the great demographic changes, the expansion of enrollment in nonselective universities and community colleges, and the federal government initiatives such as the Federal Direct Loan program, has led to the current socio-racial stratification in higher education (Roksa et al., 2007). This has led to the persistent inequality and socio-racial stratification in access to higher education.

The college access gap is a reflection of the discrimination and racism in the P-16 educational system. Underrepresented students of color such as African Americans face the same debate about education, historically, due to their collective identity and membership in their marginalized community. It becomes important to educate about the perceptions of race, ethnicity, and culture in America and to acknowledge the existence of socio-racial stratification within the U.S. P-16 educational system.

2.4 RACE AND CULTURAL CAPITAL IN COLLEGE ACCESS

Social and cultural capital theories of education explain higher education as the means for social attainment. One important concept that has helped to maintain higher education's role in

U.S. markets is the view that a postsecondary degree leads to higher socio-economic status and, therefore, a better lifestyle. Schultz's (1961) human capital, Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) cultural capital, and Coleman's (1988) social capital theory led to the idea that the individual citizen could influence his/her social status by acquiring postsecondary education. These capital theories assume that an individual's decision to invest in higher education is based on a rational choice to invest in education equals as investment in his/her economic productivity. Thus, education from the implementation of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to the present has become the goal of human, social, cultural, and economical capital.

This is especially true for students of color as well as low-income students trying to gain access to higher education. Since higher education is viewed as the primary means of reducing poverty and achieving a middle-class life, it is particularly important that marginalized students receive the support, information, and financial aid needed to enroll and succeed in college (Aud et al., 2010; Bangs, R., Davis, L., Ness, E., Elliott, W., & Henry, C., 2011; Gladieux & Swail, 2000; Perna, 2004; Thomas & Perna, 2004; Tierney, 1999; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002).

Perna (2000, 2006), Cabrera et al. (1999), and Cabrera and La Nasa (2001) use Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) theory of cultural capital to explain how underrepresented students of color and low-income students come from environments that lack the resources, knowledge, practices, and policies needed to navigate the college access process. In other words, these same disadvantaged students "lack" cultural capital. Other researchers have also applied cultural capital to understand the disparities in college access among students of color and low-income students. Perna (2000, p. 21) explains, "Like human capital and physical capital, cultural capital are resources that may be invested to enhance profitability, productivity, and facilitate upward

mobility.” As members of a minority class, African American students often “lack” the required cultural capital to attend college or see equal academic returns in employment and housing compared to their White American peers.

Many of the first studies investigated college choice on an individual-level to better understand a student’s decision to go to college. They used cultural capital as framework to analyze the process of student college choice. Perna (2006, p. 110) again explains Bourdieu’s (1986) theory that, “Cultural capital refers to the system of attributes, such as language skills, cultural knowledge, and mannerisms, that is derived, in part, from one’s parents and that defines an individual’s class status.” In this argument higher education becomes a social status marker. Furthermore, Delpit (1995) discusses “cultural capital” where students with middle class values or some understanding of the culture of power in schools are at an advantage if the school system maintains the status quo. She defines the culture of power as the codes of knowledge that are enacted between the teacher/administrator and the student/parent for participating in power. Often, the codes are a reflection of the dominant culture of power’s rules. Therefore, middle- and upper-class individuals possess the most valued educational forms of cultural capital such as college information, college campus visits, and support in the college application process (McDonough, 1997). Perna (2000) explains that individuals who lack the required cultural capital may: (a) lower their educational aspirations or self-select out of particular situations (e.g., not enroll in higher education) because they do not know the particular cultural norms; (b) overperform to compensate for their less-valued cultural resources; or (c) receive fewer rewards for their educational investment (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Delpit, 1995; Perna, 2006; Lamont & Lareau, 1988). One of the few studies that researched race as a component in college choice is Freeman’s (1997) study of African American high school student college choice.

Important college choice research such as Hossler, Braxton, and Coopersmith (1989), Hossler, Schmit, and Vesper (1999), McDonough (1997), and Paulsen and St. John (2002) focused on some of the social factors that influence the college decision-making process using social educational attainment and social/cultural capital theories. Many of the studies explored difference and inequality; yet, they did not research students' racial/ethnic identity in order to analyze the complexities and intersectionality of race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, urban residence, and first-generation status on college access. Therefore, they did not consider how these models work in the socio-historical, socio-political, and socio-cultural context of race and ethnicity. In other words, these studies did not look at how a student's racial/ethnic identity might impact the decision and behaviors to go to college.

Because my focus is on the college access of urban underrepresented students of color, I limited my research to current college access studies that focused on race/ethnicity as a socio-cultural construct that impacts student's college decision-making process. Therefore, I did not focus on theories that did not include race/ethnicity as central principles in their work. Overall, there are a few studies that researched college access among different racial/ethnic groups. Hence, there are relatively few articles that research the impact of race/ethnicity on the college admissions process.

2.4.1 Freeman's (1997, 1999, 2005) Study of African American College Choice

Freeman's (1999) qualitative study looked at the impact of race/ethnicity on student college choice. By interviewing African American high school students about how race influences college participation, she was able to find that race affected the way the students perceived his/her and others' decision to go to college. Freeman's (1997) study serves as a basis

for considering race in college access research. Her findings show the themes within college choice for racial/ethnic minority students. She found that African American students' views of the college admission process cuts across class lines, suggesting that cultural views (that is, behaviors, values, and frames of reference) outweigh class differences.

Freeman (1997) presents a similar argument with cultural capital theory that college aspirations and high school academic capital grow out of the cultural and social capital of families; therefore, college aspirations and choice are based on sociocultural factors such as race/ethnicity. For example, students at the top of their class in an inner-city school are less likely than their counterparts in a suburban school to have had access to DCAPs, are less likely to have visited a college campus, and are less likely to access basic information necessary for college choice (Freeman, 1999).

Freeman's (1999) group interviews found that African-American high school students believe that both economic and sociocultural factors restrict the college enrollment of African-Americans. Specifically, interviewees also explained the influence of structural barriers (e.g., poor physical conditions of the school); social capital (lack of high expectations and assistance from staff and African-American role models); and cultural capital (e.g., considering postsecondary education as a realistic option and culturally-relevant curriculum).

Freeman (1999) found a number of themes that students saw as psychological barriers: college is not considered an option, loss of hope, and the intimidation factor. First, many African American students thought that the reason for a decline in the number of African American students attending higher education is that college is often not considered an option. Secondly, students suggested that African American students might not have the passion or recognize the benefit of college so there is a loss of hope. Thirdly, students who attended predominately

multiracial and/or inner-city high schools were intimidated either by the lack of diversity and/or the vast differences in culture on the college campus than their high school environment.

One rationale from the study is that the failure of current college preparatory models and programs to increase African Americans' participation in higher education could be a lack of understanding the effects of race/ethnicity and culture on the college admission process. Again, race/ethnicity matters in that students of color live in a world dominated by race/ethnicity and must deal with overt and implicit forms of institutional racism, stereotypes, discrimination, and marginalization due to their status as minorities. Furthermore, researchers have framed the argument that the lack of cultural capital at urban high schools often limit the college access of underrepresented students of color (Aud et al., 2010; Roderick et al, 2008, 2009). Also, Freeman (1999) emphasized the importance of increasing cultural awareness as a way to motivate more African Americans to attend higher education. Most of the students felt that it was important to address how schools are equipped, the teaching staff and administrators, teaching methods, and curriculum as it relates to the students' culture (Freeman, 1999, p. 540).

2.4.2 Perna's (2006) Integrated College Access Model

Venezia, Kirst, and Antonio's (2003) K-12 and higher education disjuncture theory and Perna's (2006) integrated model of college access theory explore how P-12 and higher education interconnect further as part of the conceptual framework. Such studies have conducted field analyses to acknowledge the interchange between education sectors and stakeholders in the educational system. The multi-layered approach to research college access greatly informs the sociological approach of studying college access. Yet, college access is not only the student's choice but it is influenced by the P-16 educational system. Few research studies have analyzed

college access among varied stakeholders, such as colleges/universities. Furthermore, studies utilizing cultural capital theory also fail to research college access through the lens of race/ethnicity as a socio-cultural construct.

Studies like Perna's (2000) illustrate the importance of examining differences among racial/ethnic groups that may influence college enrollment decisions. This builds upon previous research and measures of cultural capital as proxies for social networking, resources, assets, engagement, expectations, preferences, and challenges for African American and Latino/a students. In other words, cultural capital maintained by institutions of higher education are as important as a student's academic ability when looking at college transition.

Perna's (2006) conceptual model recognizes differences across students' cultural capital that shapes college access. An individual's habitus regarding college choice is expected to reflect an individual's values and beliefs as well as socio-cultural factors such as gender, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, urban residence, and parent's level of education. The school and community context reflects the notion of "organizational habitus," and recognizes the ways in which social structures, networks, and resources facilitate or impede student college choice.

The key strength of Perna's (2006) integrated conceptual model is the assumption that the pattern of educational attainment is not universal but varies across racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, and other variables. This approach addresses the concern raised by some scholars that policy interventions will not effectively close gaps in student college choice without recognizing the cultural differences and social stratification of racial/ethnic groups (Freeman, 1997; Tierney, 1999; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney & Hagerdon, 2002). Perna (2000) found that it was important for the theory of cultural capital to improve the explanatory power of the traditional economic models of college choice. The theories were extended to analyze how race/ethnicity,

educational levels, and financial resources impact academic preparation and achievement. Moreover, cultural capital theories played an important role in explaining the college enrollment decisions of underrepresented students of color such as African-American and Latino/a students (Perna, 2000). Perna (2000, 2006) illustrated that African-American and Latino/a students may be disadvantaged if they are unable to obtain relevant information and cultural capital from their immediate family, school, or community context.

In summary, by drawing on constructs from cultural capital and sociological approaches, Perna's (2006) model and Freeman's (1997, 1999, 2006) research generates a more comprehensive understanding of urban, low-income, first-generation, and/or racial/ethnic minority student's college choice. Freeman's (1997, 1999, 2006) landmark study conceived the role of family and community in African American student's college choice. Yet, it does not address African American community cultural capital in the college admissions process. Also, these theories do not directly address the institutional racism and stratification in the P-16 educational system. However, through Perna's (2006) conception of the multiple layers of context, future research can properly situate the context of higher education in the college-choice process.

2.5 CRITICAL RACE THEORY IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Although most college access research uses a cultural capital theoretical framework, the theory does not fully address the effects of sociocultural factors such as race/ethnicity and racial disparities in college access. Research that has analyzed race as a socio-cultural principle, collective identity development, and community cultural wealth theory challenges traditional

notions of cultural capital theories that have a cultural deficit view. For example, Yosso (2005, p. 75) states, that race/ethnicity is, "often coded as 'cultural difference' in schools and culture influences how society is organized, how school curriculum is developed and how pedagogy and policy are implemented." College access research using a cultural deficit view places value judgments on communities of color that often do not have access to White American, middle or upper class resources (Delpit, 1995; Freeman, 1997, 1999, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2005). Yet, communities of color are places with multiple strengths such as community cultural wealth, multicultural experiences, and community organizing. As the debate on how to educate African American students better continues, cultural capital theory is not enough to address the racial/ethnic complexity of college access of underrepresented students of color. Reviewing the various social and cultural contexts of race and racism in college access may help to promote educational opportunity for students of color.

Overall, whether implicit or explicit, permissible or prohibited, race/ethnicity is a factor in college access. Race/ethnicity in college admission is often a reflection of disparities due to racial stratification in the U.S. educational system (Grotsky, 2007; Grotsky & Kalogrides, 2008). The gaps in college access has spurred researchers to look at ways in which to promote diversity in a way that benefits both underrepresented students of color and majority students. One perspective that is gaining credibility in the discussion on college access is critical race theory (Jayakumar, Vue, and Allen, 2013; Muhammad, 2008; and Teranishi and Briscoe, 2008).

I use critical race theory (CRT) as a lens to analyze race/ethnicity as culture, institutional racism, and dominant power in college admissions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). CRT has become a major theoretical framework, stemming from legal studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) and Solorzano (1997) expanded the implementation of

CRT in educational research as a critical analysis of race and ethnicity as a significant factor in educational opportunities and disparities.

In this study, I concentrate on the first and second tenets of the five tenets developed by Solorzano (1997): (1) the centrality and intersectionality of race and racism, and (2) the importance of challenging the dominant ideology and social structures. I particularly review studies that analyze racism in the P-16 educational system. I explore higher education's ideology as a cultural capital marker as well as institutional efforts to promote the enrollment of students of color. These two tenets help to further the discussion on college access by highlighting the importance of race and ethnicity.

Also, in using the CRT lens, I focus on the racial disparities and culture of urban underrepresented students of color such as African American students. Again, this is to address the large urban school district population that serves as the context of this study. It is largely composed of African Americans and is the largest racial/ethnic minority group in this school district.

2.5.1 Centrality of Race and Racism in Education

Using Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995)'s critical race theory model, I conceptualize a tool to understand the college access gap in urban school districts. I use a set of criteria about race and cultural capital similar to Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995):

1. Race continues to be a significant factor in attaining cultural capital such as college access
 - This is easily documented in statistical and demographic data of schools in relation to city's racial and socio-economic distribution (which I discuss further in Chapter 5).
2. College access is based on capitalism
 - There is structural inequality of college access or capitalism between urban

Black/African American and White/White American students

- Lack of college access is an example of the effects of capitalism on those who are relegated to its lowest ranks and under-sourced (i.e. the high percentages of underrepresented students of color in nonselective colleges/universities)
 - There still exists a tension between property (merit) and human rights (access) that is seen in the college admissions process
3. The intersection of race and capitalism creates an analytic tool through which we can understand college access as a social and educational inequity
- There is institutional and structural racism that has created subordinated positions for communities of color
 - There is socio-racial segregation and victimization of communities of color
 - There is the construction of whiteness as the ultimate valuable property and privilege, which only promotes the cultural practices of affluent White Americans (i.e. lasses-fair racism) (Bobo & Smith, 1998)
 - White Americans are able to continue to accumulate capital, wealth, and power while communities of color continue to “disaccumulate” and lack resources to overcome marginalization and disenfranchisement (Wellman, 2007)

Using Ladson-Billings and Tate’s (1995) criteria to analyze the racial disparities in the educational system, shows the institutional racism that affects college access for not only underrepresented students of color but White American students as well. It shows the depth and all-encompassing effects of the sociocultural context of race/ethnicity on educational opportunities such as college access. Capital accumulation, marginalization of power, racial segregation, and white privilege as property are all socio-economic principles that underlie our educational system. Therefore, it is a systematic failure of education and not individual students, parents, and/or school staff. It will take systematic efforts to address racial disparities as well as promote college access.

2.5.2 Challenging the Dominant Ideology and Social Structures

As discussed earlier in the paper, there is a dominant ideology surrounding higher

education and college admissions as white privilege. I explore this tenet in order to challenge the status quo concerning institutional diversity initiatives and, more specifically, the use of race/ethnicity in college admissions. Moses (2001, p. 26) states that, "Because higher education is a privilege that one must earn, rather than a right that everyone has, qualifications matter." Furthermore, qualifications are impacted by race/ethnicity and other social factors. Therefore, race/ethnicity and diversity matters in college admissions. For example, the variances of college admissions criteria and policies produce widely disparate racial stratification (Chapa & Horn, 2007; Moses, 2001; Saenz et. al, 2007). The racial disparities and literature on the college access gap suggest that no admission policies, programming, and strategies are race neutral. Therefore, another tenet of CRT is to devise ways in which to challenge dominant ideology. There are significant policy changes that could equally distribute the trend and privilege of White American students in terms of access and representation for underrepresented students of color (Moses, 2001). For example, college enrollment shifts should reflect demographic shifts in the population. Also, colleges/universities should take into consideration the ability of urban underrepresented students to overcome hardships in the admission decision.

Instead of preserving the status quo and conserving resources in de facto segregation and laissez-faire racism, higher education should be viewed as a means to promote college access and cultural capital for underrepresented students of color (St. John, Paulsen, & Carter, 2005; Tierney & Hagerdorn, 2002; Tierney & Jun, 2001). Race-conscious admission policies can become an important tool for reallocating resources to students who need it the most (Tierney & Jun, 2001). Although high academic standards are a clear indicator for college enrollment, these and other standards can become framed in meaningful ways to underrepresented students of color. For example, scholars found that students feel motivated or achieve, if policies/programs

meet their specific cultural needs and/or they feel the programs are designed for them (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tierney, 1999; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002; Tierney & Jun, 2001).

Policies that consider race/ethnicity to make college access more equitable result in a more racially and ethnically diverse student body. Most colleges/universities have juxtaposed that student diversity is essential to their educational mission. A diverse student body contributes to the robust exchange of ideas and intellectual stimulation on campus and the world; therefore, race/ethnicity is important. Race/ethnicity is relevant because racial diversity serves the university's multicultural mission and educating future professionals for a global market (Moses, 2001). Students of color have much to contribute and are the future of higher education.

Understanding that communities of color possess cultural assets and wealth as a result of the socio-cultural context of race/ethnicity is important to challenge the dominant ideology. For example, Franklin (2002, p. 177) describes African American cultural capital as “the sense of group consciousness and collective identity whose purpose is the advancement of an entire group.” His research indicates that underrepresented students of color such as African Americans are willing to contribute their resources to support educational institutions because they understand the importance of advancement for African Americans as a group (Franklin, 2002).

Therefore, African American cultural capital is manifested in the African American community's ability to mobilize efforts to create access and equity to promote education (Carter, 2005; Franklin, 2002; Morris, 2004). Such work also demonstrates that the forms of capital comprising community cultural capital are engendered from within the context of a legacy of racism and are thus tied to a larger social and racial justice (Franklin, 2002; Omi & Winant, 1994; Morris, 2004; Yosso, 2005). Morris (2004, p. 102) asserts, “It is important that social

capital theory also consider the agency and sustenance that are characteristic of African American people, culture and institutions—apart from and in response to oppressive forces.” Again, it is important for college access research to showcase the nature of African American cultural capital that is often not shared in most research of cultural capital and/or college access.

African American students have cultural capital, but instead of economic gain, they maintain group identity and distinctive cultural boundaries between the dominant (high-status cultural knowledge and skills) and non-dominant (authentic funds of knowledge and cultural community status) cultures to signify their cultural identity within schools (Carter, 2005; Ogbu, 1994, 2004). Instead of misconstruing African American youth’s strategies to surviving in an oppressive educational system, we have to understand how important navigating communities of color’ community capital and the dominant culture of power is to students of color.

Race/ethnicity matters when students of color show different college-going behaviors and have different college choices. Overall, the centrality of race is important to understand why African American students are not accessing higher education. Instead of only researching African American student’s strategies to survive in an oppressive P-16 educational system, research has begun to explicitly analyze the interplay of community cultural capital and the dominant culture of power (Engberg & Wolniak, 2009; Farmer-Hinton, 2008, Jayakumar, Vue, Allen, 2013; Martinez, 2011, 2013; Nunez & Olivia, 2009). Ultimately, it is the student’s cultural identity that is being affected and the results are underachievement and failure to access the cultural capital of higher education.

Therefore, researching college access could further shed light on community cultural capital and how it impacts college access to higher education. For example, An African American student’s race and culture are risk as well as protective factors in the college admission

process. Yet, there are few studies to look at this phenomenon (Jayakumar et al., 2013; Muhammad, 2008; Teranishi & Briscoe, 2008). One way for researchers to study the college access gap, is analyzing the factors such as the interactions and relationships with local colleges/universities that affect underrepresented students or color. Research could also promote culturally relevant research to effectively analyze students of color' postsecondary opportunities (Fisher, 2007; Rumberger & Thomas, 2000; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999).

A student's cultural background is already considered a risk; however, it could become an asset in college admissions. The theories of collective identity and community cultural wealth could change the social and cultural dynamics of educational opportunity such as college access. The inequities illustrated here should serve as a catalyst for new ideas for promoting college access through college admissions. Colleges/universities are seen as an important part of our democracy. This could lead to widespread shifts in public understanding of merit, racial/ethnic diversity, and college access. More importantly, ideas to sustain community cultural wealth stem from the ground up, rather than top-down. Using this approach engages multiple constituencies to reexamine the racial stratification in education and the meaning of college access.

CRT seems to complement the cultural capital theory. The concept of community cultural wealth can be seen as expanding Freeman's (1997, 1999, 2005) theory that educational policies should implement cultural awareness to college access. CRT has emerged as a way to challenge dominant social structures in higher education that constrain educational opportunities for racial/ethnic minority students. Although the use of CRT in higher education is increasing, few studies have used it as a theoretical framework for research on college admissions and higher education's role in college access.

2.6 RACE AND CULTURAL CAPITAL FACTORS IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

2.6.1 Higher Education's Role in College Access

To the extent that colleges choose students, it is important to research the relationship between race/ethnicity, sociocultural context, and diversity recruitment. Again, this requires developing a sociological framework on inequality from the side of institutions of higher education, which is largely influenced by the racial/ethnic, sociocultural background, and socioeconomic composition of their incoming undergraduate classes.

One of the major foci of the sociology of higher education is educational inequality in college access. The study of inequality seeks to analyze differential rates of educational access, achievement, and attainment by race/ethnicity, class, and gender. By assessing factors such as race/ethnicity and race-conscious college admissions policies, practices, and programs, we can better understand how socio-racial stratification affects college access for urban underrepresented students of color. Analysis leads to understanding the inequities of where and how students of color access higher education.

Perna (2006) found that various characteristics of the higher education context influence a student's ability to access college. One example is the composition of a state's higher education system (e.g., availability of different types of colleges and universities) contributes to the distribution of students at different types of colleges and universities (Gladieux & Swail, 2000; Perna et al., 2005; Perna & Titus, 2004). In addition, the capacity of a state's higher education system also matters, as some research discovered that enrollment rates increase with the shares of students enrolled in public two-year institutions (Gladieux & Swail, 2000; St. John, 2003).

First, studies have speculated that such forces as population growth, demographic

changes, and improved academic preparation for college may increase the demand for higher education beyond the available supply of enrollment slots at traditional colleges and universities (Bauman, Bustillos, Bensimon, Brown & Bartee, 2005; Bensimon, et al., 2004; Hurtado et al., 1998, 1999; Milem et al., 2005; McClellan & Larimore, 2011; Perna et al., 2005; Williams et al., 2005). An excess demand for higher education may cause increased tuition and/or increased competition for available slots. These actions more than likely have the greatest negative impact on students from urban public schools, low-income families, first-generation, and/or underrepresented students of color (Bauman et al., 2005; Bensimon, et al., 2004; Hurtado et al., 1998, 1999; Milem et al., 2005; McClellan & Larimore, 2011; Perna et al., 2005; Williams et al., 2005).

Two, colleges/universities use “merit” criteria in college admissions to attract the most academically able students. However, higher education must also maintain the appearance of equality; where even the most elite private institutions in America must “appear” to be open to all. Pressures from within and without the university are powerful influences that shape an institution’s diversity strategies and objectives of admission (Williams et al., 2005). From multiple stakeholders, postsecondary institutions are under pressure to recruit African-American, Native American, and Latino/a students as well as socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Postsecondary institutions do not exist in a vacuum. They are embedded in a complex web of social relationships with students, faculty, staff, alumni, trustees/regents, donors, state or federal government entities, and the general public. Postsecondary institutions derive resources from a range of actors that influences its college enrollment strategies, besides potential applicants and their families.

Thirdly, institutions of higher education influence student college access through their ability to select applicants for enrollment. Due to the institutional type and identity of a college/university, student's college choice often hinges on institutional characteristics such as selectivity of admissions and tuition as well as student activities, research, and employment outcomes. Research suggests that students' consider institutional admissions decisions in their college-choice behaviors, as students tend to self-select institutions with SAT scores similar to their own (Roderick et al., 2008, 2009). Overall, institutions of higher education influence student college access through the availability of college information and enrollment slots (Gladieux & Swail, 2000; Perna, 2006).

2.6.2 Demographic Changes in College Enrollment

As stated by Antonio and Muniz (2007), when discussing diversity in higher education, there are some assumptions that most scholars acknowledge such as demographic shifts have created new challenges associated with racial/ethnic diversity. Changes in the characteristics of high school graduates have an affect on higher education and the campus climate of colleges/universities nationwide. Yet, McClellan and Larimore (2009, p. 271-272) states, "It is anticipated as many as 80 percent of the roughly 2.6 million new students enrolled in American colleges/universities will be students from historically underrepresented groups" (AASCU, 2005; McClellan & Larimore, 2009; Snyder & Dillow, 2010). African Americans are projected to make up 13 percent of enrollment, Asian Americans 8.5 percent, and Latino/as 15.5 percent (Broido, 2004; McClellan & Larimore, 2009). Students from lower-income family backgrounds are projected to make up an increasing proportion of college-going students in the years to come as well (Schuh, 2009). Yet, the rate is not as fast growing compared to White American student

numbers (Snyder & Dillow, 2010). This has a great affect on the composition of college/universities and also diversity recruitment.

The rapid demographic change has brought attention to the structural failings and racial/ethnic stratification of higher education with regard to equitable access and other educational outcomes (Antonio & Muniz, 2007). For example, studies of educational inequality in higher education have found differential rates of educational access, achievement, and attainment by race, class, and gender (Antonio & Muniz, 2007). The demographic changes translate into new challenges for higher education such as equitable access to higher education for multiple racial/ethnic groups. Colleges/universities make continual efforts to compose a racially/ethnically diverse student body. Race and ethnicity become central constructs in an analysis of higher education's role in college access. Therefore, examining the sociocultural challenges in higher education is necessary to address the inequalities within education and reexamine the larger sociological problems in higher education.

2.6.3 Academic Excellence and Equity Debate in Merit Admission Criteria

Many scholars view education as one of the solutions for solving some of the major societal issues in the U.S (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Bowen, Kurzweil, Tobin, & Pichler, 2006; Coleman, 1988; Perna, 2000; Perna, 2006; Schultz, 1961; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002; Tierney et al., 2005). The social attainment theory concludes that, in order for productivity to increase, higher education has to be accessible. In other words, going to college has huge value in increasing capital such as high status occupations, middle class income, and privileged lifestyle. Yet, there are important discussions about ways to be equitable in the college admission process. In other words, higher education has to constantly struggle with the issues of

educating the brightest students (excellence) with educating the most students possible (equity). Bowen, Kurzweil, Tobin, and Pichler (2006) look at this tension between excellence and equity.

The social construct of merit is directly related to the political and economic structures of U.S. society. Oakes, Rogers, Lipton, and Morrell (2002) further explain that social constructions such as excellence or merit shape and reinforce the current stratified racial structures in education. These conceptions are reinforced in higher education and reflected in how staff/faculty organize teaching and learning as well as college admissions, student services, and civic engagement. Thus, higher education has the potential to educate more students, especially students of color, in order to meet the U.S.' capitalistic and participatory democracy objectives.

Cultural capital was discussed in a previous section as a main theory of college access research. The theory explains that education is shaped by social and academic choices through a student's cultural traditions, parental guidance, and school environment. Yet, college admission also reflects the social and academic choices shaped by the dominant culture of power definition of "merit", the conventional measures of merit, and the relevance of merit to success in the university. Therefore, the racial/ethnic stratification theory also explains how disparities persist in college admissions.

One example of racial stratification is members of privileged racial groups employing the social construct of "merit" to leverage and maintain their competitive advantage in college admission, i.e. accumulating wealth (Oakes et al., 2002). In other words, privileged students access educational opportunities since they have attained prior achievement in traditional academic curriculum and conventional measures such as AP scores, GPA, SAT scores, class rankings, etc. Therefore, eligibility is not based on a socio-culturally or socio-politically neutral standards of academic excellence. Rather, it is operationalized through racially and politically

biased measures.

The privileged advantages and privatization of college preparation and knowledge has created competition for capital in the form of college/university admissions (McDonough, Ventresca, & Outcalt, 2000). To be competitive and gain access to elite and selective colleges and universities, affluent and privileged college applicants and parents (who have the economic, social, and cultural capital to position their children for competitive eligibility) are hiring academic tutors, SAT coaches, and private counselors to manage the student's college application and admissions process (McDonough, 2004; McDonough, Antonio, Walpole, & Perez, 1998). With this type of purchasing power and capital, affluent families, who can continue to develop new strategies for ensuring that their children gain access to the "best" colleges. For first-generation, low-income, and/or racial/ethnic minority students, it becomes much more difficult with fewer opportunities to garner cultural capital and be competitive in the college admissions process.

Again, merit is a social construct and students with capital are deemed more deserving of college admission. Furthermore, the dominant culture of power in each level of education decides the measures of merit. This ideology of merit gives advantage to students that possess cultural capital of the dominant culture of power. It also perpetuates the socio-racial stratification and structural inequalities, such as the uneven distributions of resources and knowledge among P-12 school districts (Oakes, et al., 2002; Hagedorn & Tierney, 2002; Gandara & Bial, 2001; Knight & Oesterreich, 2002). Colleges/universities continually decide who is worthy of admission based on criteria that gives advantage to a privileged class and dominant culture of power.

For example, higher education integrates the ideology of merit by placing academic

achievement as the most important criteria for college admission. The White, high socio-economic status, and privileged “ways of knowing” are instituted at various levels of education as measures of cognitive ability. Merit is explained through scientific testing of analytical intelligence rather than as a function of cultural capital and privilege. This is evident in the use of psychometric SAT testing to assess a student's analytical intelligence as one of the few ways to measure intelligence and merit. Due to the biased nature of the SATs linked to race/ethnicity, this leads to barriers in college access preventing low-income and underrepresented students of color to attend college (Freedle, 2003; Freele & Kostin, 1997; Walpole, McDonough, Bauer, Gibson, Kanyi, & Toliver, 2005).

So what is the benefit of admitting students with academic “merit” and cultural capital? One reason is for colleges/universities to act as gatekeepers and uphold the socio-racial stratification in admission for wealth and prestige. Colleges and universities derive prestige and rankings from student achievements in academic, athletic, and artistic spheres, (Grodsky & Kalogrides, 2008). In addition, they receive press through the professional and public achievements of their students, faculty, and alumni. The argument is that colleges/universities are looking for the best and the brightest because they will bring prestige from their accomplishments as well as wealth in the form of future donations, grants, and other funding.

Any effort to democratize access is seen as jeopardizing the opportunities of privileged children and institutional efforts towards prestige. Due to the increasing competition, families employ the full range of resources, knowledge, and associations at their disposal to enhance their children's chances of capturing the “coveted” college acceptances. This includes tutoring, enrichment programs, SAT prep, private college counseling. It is an ever-escalating standard for eligibility. Furthermore, efforts to mold urban, low-income Latino and African American

students into applicants that fit the university's narrow constructions of admission eligibility are not likely to make a profound impact on diversity on college campuses.

Since there is no plan to increase campus sizes, college admissions is a zero-sum game (Grodsky & Kalogrides, 2008). At the same time, colleges/universities must cultivate favor with the general public, K-12 school systems, and government officials. This is a tricky position at best.

2.6.4 Institutional Type and College Access Stratification

The educational hierarchy of elite and mass forms of education is also seen as an important constraining factor in student opportunities (Meyer, Ramirez, Frank, & Schofer, 2008). A tiny proportion of racial/ethnic minority and economically disadvantaged college students are enrolled in America's most selective universities; whereas, public universities, the community college system, and for-profit institutions serve most of these students (Aud et al., 2010; Attewell & Lavin, 2007; Antonio & Muniz, 2007). Attewell et al. (2007) found that the overwhelming share of the burgeoning enrollment of poorer and minority students has occurred in less selective institutions, mainly state colleges/universities.

Grodsky and Kalogrides (2008) found that public institutions are substantially more responsive than private institutions to differences between the percentage of students of color that enroll and the percentage of 18- to 25-year-olds in the state who are African American. Yet, more prestigious institutions are more likely to claim preferences for underrepresented students of color than are institutions with lower test scores and fees. Therefore, several characteristics of postsecondary institutions influence their propensity to consider race/ethnicity in college admission decisions. In other words, public and private institutions may differ in the degree to

which they are committed to matriculating a racially and ethnically diverse student body.

Scholars explain that institutions of higher education that have succeeded in expanding access, such as community colleges and open-admissions four-year institutions, are often assumed to have a low level of institutional quality (Bowen et al., 2006; Gladieux & Swail, 2000; Perna, 2006; Swail & Perna, 2002; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002; Tierney et al., 2005; Williams et al., 2005). Meyer et al. (2008) states that: (1) the elite colleges/universities focus on awarding academic credentials; while (2) lower tier institutions provide vocational training (Meyer et al., 2008, p. 169). This leads to a highly stratified system of U.S. postsecondary education where urban, lower socioeconomic and/or underrepresented students of color access the lower tiers and thus receive more vocational training. Moreover, there is persistent inequality where students attend college and declare majors based upon socioeconomic background and race/ethnicity. Therefore, while the overall educational level of the population has risen, the gap in educational attainment has also increased.

At the same time, selective colleges/universities that focus on traditional college admission indicators, such as standardized test scores, college preparatory curriculum, grades, high school postsecondary admittance rates, risk overlooking good candidates from historically underrepresented and underserved populations (Gladieux & Swail, 2000; Perna, 2006; Swail & Perna, 2002; Williams et al., 2005). Another consequence of this model is the continued investment of cultural capital in these traditional indicators, resulting in an American postsecondary system that reproduces the dominant patterns of socio-historical stratification (Bauman et al., 2005; Gurin 1999, 2004; Hurtado, Inkelas, Briggs, & Rhee, 1997; Hurtado, Carter, & Kadia, 1998; Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999; Milem et al., 2005; Williams, et al., 2005).

As a result, too few people from historically underrepresented groups enter into higher education, and those who do may find that they have to assimilate into the socio-racial stratification and dominant organizational cultures of colleges and universities (Azmitia, Syed, & Radmacher, 2008; Bauman et al., 2005; Milem et al., 2005; Perez, 1993; Perna, 2006; Swanson, Spencer, Harpalani, & Spence, 2002; Williams et al., 2005). A college's likelihood of considering race/ethnicity in the admissions process may be shaped by the interplay of the colleges/universities' attributes. Postsecondary organizations, like each level of education, have their own objectives. They vary in mission, identity, and are constrained by a variety of political, historical, and contextual factors (Duffy & Goldberg, 1998; Morphew & Hartley, 2006; Pusser, 2006).

2.7 RACE IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

In this section, I review articles to further study the inequality in the P-16 educational. The research studies analyze differential rates of educational access, achievement, and attainment by race/ethnicity. In order to better understand how socio-racial stratification affects college access for underrepresented students of color, I assess the impact of race on:

1. Race-conscious admissions strategies;
2. Affirmative action;
3. Targeted diversity recruitment;
4. Diversity college admission professionals (DCAPs);
5. Diversity programming; and
6. College access outreach.

I extend the tenets of critical race theory (CRT) to discuss the ways in which colleges/universities consider race in college admissions.

2.7.2 Race-Conscious Admission Policies

Again, race in college admission is a reflection of the role of racial/ethnic stratification in teaching and learning disparities in the U.S. educational system (Grotsky, 2007; Grotsky & Kalogrides, 2008). Analyses of racial stratification in higher education enrollment practices have identified how race plays a part in the college admission process. These practices range from recruitment strategies and admission criteria to affirmative action policies and enrollment incentives. Also, researchers are concerned with how current social structures affect students' enrollment behavior (Antonio & Muniz, 2007). The consideration of race/ethnicity in admissions is one feature of a postsecondary structure shaped by the varying goals and practices of colleges/universities (diversity and access) and the contextual factors (racial stratification) that constrain their behavior.

Inequality of opportunity in primary and secondary education for underrepresented students of color leaves colleges/universities in the difficult position of judging students on the traditional measures of academic achievement (GPA, SATs, college preparatory curriculum, school rigor, etc.). Applications are reviewed as if admission is an unbiased competition that does not disadvantage underrepresented students of color (Grotsky, 2007; Grotsky & Kalogrides, 2008). Diversity college admission professionals (DCAPs) are not able to assess students in an equal educational system where all students had the same quality of education and came from homes with equal cultural capital. Faced with a pool of prospective students who have experienced educational inequalities, college/university admission offices try to craft new cohorts of students that resemble a vision of a more diverse and just society.

Admission to competitive colleges and universities in the U.S. more closely conforms to competition for social and educational attainment status (Grotsky, 2007). Admission and

recruitment personnel engage in race-conscious practices such as affirmative action to admit and enroll racial/ethnic minority students. Colleges/universities have autonomy in the kinds of students they recruit, admit, and enroll. Furthermore, colleges/universities have the capacity to reduce the effects of educational inequality on admission.

The consideration of race/ethnicity in college admissions is a widespread practice. Slightly over half of all comprehensive colleges, universities, and liberal arts colleges based on institutional self-reports colleges indicate that they at least consider a student's race/ethnicity in making their admissions decisions (Grotsky & Kalogrides, 2008). Grotsky and Kalogrides (2008) states that if we weight by enrollment, the distribution favors preferences for minority students, with over 60 percent of students matriculating at institutions that claim to consider minority status in admissions. Yet, in recent years, there has been a gradual decline in race-conscious admission since the Higher Education Act, which is evident among both public and private institutions across the U.S. (Grotsky & Kalogrides, 2008).

Grotsky (2007) uses the term of compensatory sponsorship to explain college admission professionals engaging in practices to work within the racial stratification of education in the U.S. In other words, DCAPs engage in race-conscious admission both to right perceived social and educational wrongs; but more importantly, to preserve the legitimacy of the "admission competition" and diversity (Grotsky & Kalogrides, 2008). Again, college admission offices use compensatory sponsorship because they are constrained by the socio-historical systems and socio-political stratification to recruit, admit, and fund potential students.

Grotsky and Kalogrides (2008) conducted a study to examine how race/ethnicity is used in college admission decisions. One major concern Grotsky and Kalogrides (2008) stated was the elimination of special consideration of race in admission and how this has affected

underrepresented racial/ethnic minority student college enrollment. Although alternative policies are being developed and implemented such as the percentage plans in Texas, Florida, and California, opportunities are becoming scarcer. For example, state-level variance in considering race/ethnicity is much greater in public than in private institutions, and public schools are substantially more sensitive to changes in policy and exhibit more temporal variation (Grodksy & Kalogrides, 2008; Perna & Titus, 2004). This may lead to colleges/universities deserting or repackaging their affirmative action policies to avoid scrutiny; more importantly, this could impact the broader efforts to attract diverse classes of students.

2.7.3 Affirmative Action Policies

Affirmative action is one of the most controversial topics in the U.S. concerning race and ethnicity of student applicants and university diversity policies. Over the years, legislation such as the Higher Education Act of 1965 and landmark court cases such as *Grutter vs. Bollinger* and *Gratz vs. Bollinger* in 2003 have set the socio-political climate concerning race/ethnicity and college admissions. Often, the cases serve as the basis for public debates and opinion about the responsibility institutions of higher education have in responding to racial and ethnic changes in the U.S. population (Aguirre & Martinez, 2007, p. 4). Then discussions on diversity in higher education became focused on how institutions of higher education responded to the admission of underrepresented students of color. For the sake of promoting diversity in higher education, racial/ethnic diversity is only one of many factors to be considered in college admission; especially, when it serves the purpose of achieving a diverse student body in the interest of the college/university.

Researchers have found that colleges/universities consider race/ethnicity in college admissions to gain a critical mass of racial/ethnic minority students. This upholds the institutional mission of promoting educational diversity. Gudeman (2001, p. 268) emphasizes the importance of “critical mass,” as “the need for students to feel safe and comfortable and serves as a counter to the lack of safety or comfort felt when one finds oneself a ‘solo’ or minority of one’.” Furthermore, critical mass implies that colleges/universities should strive for, “enough students to overcome the silencing effect of being isolated in the classroom by ethnicity, race, gender, [etc.]. Enough students to provide safety for expressing views” (Gudeman, 2001, p. 268). The understanding of “critical mass” is to recognize the harms that accrue from having only token numbers of minority students within its student body. Many researchers have found the dangers of tokenism as racial isolation, alienation, and stereotyping. Therefore, the college/university strives to admit enough students to represent varied viewpoints and perspectives within underrepresented groups.

Another argument as stated in Ancheta and Edley's Grutter Amicus Brief (2004) explains that, “Critical mass promotes the notion of intra-group diversity, which undermines the stereotype that all students within a group have identical experiences and possess identical viewpoints (p. 25).” Expert reports by researchers such as Patricia Gurin (2001), Gary Orfield (2001), Willam Bowen and Derek Bok (1999), Mitchell Chang (1999, 2002, 2003), and Sylvia Hurtado (2001) etc. documents the educational benefits of student body diversity is substantial and a compelling governmental interest without the use of quotas. In short, “Student body diversity can promote learning outcomes, democratic values and civic engagement, and preparation for a diverse society and workforce - goals that fall squarely within the basic mission of most universities” (Gurin, 2001, p. 10).

Research and court records also show that race-neutral policies are not as effective as race-conscious policies in promoting educational diversity. Colleges/universities have considered race-neutral alternatives such as not considering race/ethnicity in the admissions decision but it decreased the numbers of racial/ethnic minority students enrolled (Ancheta & Edley, 2004; Gudeman, 2001; Gurin, 2001; Kane, 1998; Long, 2008; Wightman, 1997). Also, other race-neutral alternatives, like considering class or economic disadvantage, fail to promote the same levels of educational diversity as race-conscious admission policies. As researchers and experts have reported, race-neutral alternatives substantially reduce the number of underrepresented minority students in the student body and increase the occurrence of segregated learning spaces and social settings (Ancheta & Edley, 2004; Gudeman, 2001; Gurin, 2001; Kane, 1998; Long, 2007; Wightman, 1997). Colleges/universities have implemented pre-admission and post-admission diversity recruitment events; yet, again they were found to be less effective as race-conscious admission policies. The Wightman' (1997, p. 39) study found that, "None of the models employing race-neutral factors, including socio-economic status were as effective as race-conscious admission policies." Studies have shown a negative impact of race-neutral admission policies on students of color enrollment in state colleges/universities where race-conscious admission policies were eliminated (Ancheta & Edley, 2004; Banks, 2007; Long, 2006, 2015). Also race-neutral policies also failed in states where there were previous race-conscious admission policies (Ancheta & Edley, 2004; Banks, 2007; Gudeman, 2001; Gurin, 2001; Kane, 1998; Long, 2007; Wightman, 1997).

2.7.4 Racial/Ethnic Targeted Recruitment

Race-conscious admission policies and practices are not confined to application decisions; it can take many forms over the course of the student's enrollment process. I want to discuss the racially/ethnically targeted recruitment that DCAPs coordinate in order to enlarge the applicant pool for diversity. For example, racial targeted recruitment entails off-campus travel to specific sites because of the diverse population at urban high schools or community organizations. One example, is traveling to New York City for a week to attend multiple college fairs and high school visits in the area. This particular type of travel takes researching trends such as the student of color population, percentage of students going to college, and number of past applicants/inquiries. It is also a logistic solution to be the most cost effective method of travel to recruit in different urban metro cities of the U.S.

Overall, there are many different forms from elaborate receptions and presentations to simple one-one meetings and emails. Other forms include using other staff of color and various multicultural departments in the campus community to recruit. Some colleges/universities may enlist current college students to host prospective high school students during diversity campus events or visit their high school alma maters. Another strategy is contacting alumni of color in metro areas to meet with prospective students in their area.

Colleges/universities shape their applicant pools by sending representatives to secondary schools and college fairs that serve targeted students of color; working directly with specific secondary schools through outreach programs; advertising pictures or messages that reflect campus diversity in print, video, and web, and social media outlets; and engaging in substantial direct mail campaigns based on race/ethnicity (Grotsky, 2007; Grotsky & Kalogrides, 2008). In other words, postsecondary institutions use targeted recruitment to shape the number of

underrepresented students of color in their applicant pools. Although, college admission counselors provide information, urban high schools are less likely to be visited than students who attend suburban schools (Freeman, 1999; McDonough & Fann, 2007). Conversely, without targeted recruitment, racial/ethnic minority students are less likely to contact a college/university to ask questions and/or visit a college campus (Freeman, 1999; McDonough & Fann, 2007).

2.7.5 Defining Admission Criteria by Race

Research shows that the socio-historical construct of race/ethnicity still matters in our assessments of ability such as SAT testing. Variables such as test scores, parental education and wealth, gender, race, socio-economic status, etc, still affect one's possibilities for college admission. These associations can help to explain the disparities and resiliency among racial/ethnic minority students to access college. For example, there are great differences in performance between White Americans and African Americans (Sternberg, 2010; Carnevale & Fry, 2000; Freedle & Kostin, 1997; Freedle, 2003). Researchers have applied social cognitive theory to better understand how a student's sociocultural background affects academic achievement, which leads to college access and college choice (Connell, Spencer, & Aber, 1994; Farkas, 2003a, 2003b; Hanson, 1994; Roderick et al., 2009; Trusty, Robinson, Plata, & Ng, 2000; Trusty & Niles, 2004; Trusty et al., 2003).

Research on admissions suggests that postsecondary institutions explicitly take advantage of their role in the educational market. They pursue their own objectives through the selection of potential applicants (Grotsky, 2007; Grotsky & Kalogrides, 2008; Perna, 2006; Venezia et al., 2003). Therefore, race-conscious admission policies, such as institutional admission criteria, have an effect on the patterns of not only application rates and admission decisions but also

students of color⁷/ethnicity postsecondary attendance. The admission decision is the culmination of a courtship where colleges/universities have the greatest amount of power to recruit and admit students. Applicants are divided depending on special admissions considerations such as racial/ethnic minority students, legacies, athletes, etc.

As Orfield (2001, p. 14) states, “Admission decisions are judgments about probabilities... We are making general assessments of students, estimating on the basis of probabilities what they will bring to the campus community.” It is worth considering race/ethnicity if the goal is to bring students with a broader range of experience and perspectives to campus. Affirmative action should be more than quotas and allow universities to promote the benefits of diversity within their campus communities. Current diversity recruitment strategies include race-conscious admission policies, targeted recruitment, and college access outreach.

In reviewing applications, DCAPs holistically examine a student’s academic and nonacademic achievements and potential. Most applications include the high school transcript with grades and grade point average (GPA), test scores (SAT I, II, and/or ACT scores), personal statement, and/or letters of recommendation. The most important criteria are: (1) the high school transcript followed by (2) the test scores. The high school transcript shows the trends of the student’s academic career such as GPA, academic ability, class rigor, academic interests, etc. Included with the transcript is the high school profile, which gives context to the student’s academic achievements to show how the student has challenged him/herself in their academic environment. The test scores are a way to compare students nationally and out of the context of their individual high school. In this way, the application can be rated using a national measure; since, each state and school district employs their own methods of educating students. Lastly, the personal statement and letters of recommendation are documents to give a better portrayal of the

student's character. It is seemingly objective based on numbers such as GPA and test scores. Yet, the admission decision is subjective since DCAPs have the discretion to admit or reject students based on any of the documents in the application folder.

There are also particular application trends among African American students. McDonough, Antonio, and Trent (1995) found that "African American students only apply to a small number of colleges (three or less) and that about three-quarters of them are accepted at their first-choice school." African American students get into their first-choice school less often than the national average. Only 55 percent of African American students are accepted at their first-choice schools and 59 percent are accepted at their first-choice HBCUs compared to the national average of 70 percent (McDonough, Antonio, & Trent, 1995).

Also, students of color, such as African American students, are impacted by variables such as the type of high school, the type of experiences within HS, institution type, and college campus climate (Freeman, 1997, 1999, 2005; McDonough et al., 1995; Teranishi & Briscoe, 2008). For example, McDonough, Antonio, and Trent (1995) explain that African American students choose HBCUs because of religion (Baptist), the school's reputation, and relatives' desires. They found that African American students choose PWIs because they are recruited by athletics, want to live near home, and/or due to the college's academic prestige. Yet, they also consider if the campus climate is welcoming to African American students (Teranishi & Briscoe, 2008).

Freeman (2005, p. 94) states that, "African American students generally take into account environmental issues such as their perceptions and expectations of what their experiences would be at the college to consider cultural factors." In other words, students question themselves about such issues as whether it is more advantageous to be in a mixed, predominately White, or

predominately Black college campus. In Freeman's (1997, 1999, 2005) study, students even suggested that college admission professionals at HBCUs could make better use of their alumni, teachers, and counselors at all high school types. They indicated the importance of establishing relationships at schools, especially concerning counselors and teachers. This assuages culture shock as well as maintains better early P-12 and college linkages for opportunities to interact in mixed settings (Freeman, 1997, 1999, 2005; Teranishi & Briscoe, 2008). Overall, it is important to better understand how colleges/universities factor in African American students' college admissions process.

2.7.6 Diversity College Admission Professionals (DCAPs)

Similar in thinking to recruiting student affairs professionals of color, admission offices hire specialized DCAPs to recruit underrepresented students of color and local students. These specialized diversity college admissions professionals (that I refer to as DCAPs) have titles such as Ethnic Minority Recruitment Coordinator. Some of the main duties include: hosting community groups on tours and visits; coordinating diversity on-campus programs; urban recruitment of underrepresented students of color. Most times, these duties are in addition to the general duties of recruitment, application review, coordinate events, and attend to emails, calls, and on-campus visits. Overall, DCAPs become the university's contact/liaison of diversity recruitment and college access.

2.7.7 Diversity Programming

In order to appear as an inclusive campus climate to diversity and underrepresented students, admissions sponsor on-campus diversity programs such as open houses and overnight visits. The office of admissions works with departments across the university to highlight the diversity of the college/university. One method is to involve the current students in order to show the current critical mass of students. Programs/departments such as the Multicultural/Diversity Office are one of the biggest partners for on-campus diversity programming. This is one way in which to include the campus community in race-conscious college admissions; however, they are a small effort and only occur a few times during the academic year.

2.7.8 College Access Outreach

Outreach and college preparatory programs are among the first policies that educators develop to cultivate a diverse student body (Gladieux & Swail, 2000; Milem et al., 2005; Swail & Perna, 2002; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002; Venezia et al., 2003). Outreach is an important tool for reallocating resources to students who need it the most (Tierney & Jun, 2001). Most colleges/universities do have programs such as Upward Bound and/or GEAR UP; however, these programs are often auxiliary to the university and may not foster community cultural wealth or culturally relevant pedagogy.

To supplement high school college-going efforts to increase college enrollment among students of color, college preparatory programs have been developed at all levels of education, nonprofits, and government sectors in collaboration with colleges/universities. The main purpose of these programs is to distribute and increase academic capital, college knowledge, and other

resources to address college access gaps. A variety of college preparation programs and services have been devised to influence college enrollment behavior by promoting: educational expectations and plans; academic ability and preparation; information about college options; availability of financial aid; and support from college/university sponsors. Important objectives of most programs are smoothing the transition from school to college, which includes improving study habits, increasing general academic readiness, and expanding academic options.

Tierney and Jun (2001) looked at multiple factors to evaluate college preparatory programs and recommends a culturally responsive model for college preparatory programs. They believe that the goal of college prep programs is to enable individuals to affirm their culture en route to acquiring the cultural capital necessary to succeed in college. Tierney and Jun (2001) explain that college preparatory programs connect students to social networks and try to develop the social and cultural capital that it takes to survive in what many working-class youths perceive college campuses as an alien and intimidating environment. In addition, it might focus on psychological and emotional support structures for adolescents who do not have an adult in their families who has college knowledge.

There are even some programs that incorporate sociocultural factors such as race/ethnicity in the teaching and learning. Tierney (1999) established the cultural integrity model in order to understand the impact of race/ethnicity, urban residence, socioeconomic status, and parental education level on the decision to attend college. The model assumes that a child's cultural background is a critical tool to be channeled for promoting success (Tierney, 1999; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002; Tierney & Jun, 2001). Tierney (1999) developed the cultural integrity model to offer further insight on the development of college readiness in college preparatory programs. Tierney's (1999) study of cultural integrity found similar results to Yosso

(2005) and Freeman (1997) where culture has the capacity to influence how student learning is organized, how curriculum develops, and how teaching methods are implemented. Therefore, an analysis of how culture pertains to various components of college preparation and college preparatory programs is integral to our understanding of how to improve college access.

2.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The preceding review and critique of the literature combined with the researchers' own experience and insights, created the current conceptual framework for the design and conduct of this study. The conceptual framework gives meaning and shapes the research process. It also helps to develop the methodological design and data collection. The conceptual framework becomes the lens to collect and store data as well as provides the basis various iterations of the coding scheme and analysis. As such, this framework provides an organizing structure both for the analysis and reporting the current study's findings. In this way, the conceptual framework is essentially my "working tool."

I explore higher education as a cultural capital through the critical race theory lens in order to analyze the college access gap that affects communities of color. By using both theories, I can build a solid argument for researching higher education's role in the structuring of local college access for urban underrepresented students of color. The inequalities of the college access gap impacts how and where underrepresented students of color access postsecondary education. Currently, this is especially evident in colleges/universities' competitive selection of applicants based on merit as opposed to access. Ultimately, I hope to elucidate the challenges and benefits of college access for underrepresented racial/ethnic minority students.

2.8.1 Extending Cultural Capital Theory

The current cultural capital theories of college access give insight on how college access as cultural capital is impacted by a student's race/ethnicity and sociocultural background.

Cultural capital of college access comprises of a student's access to resources, adequate college counseling, college knowledge, etc. Seemingly all of these factors affect college access.

Researchers like Cabrera et al. (2006), Freeman (1997, 1999), McDonough (1997, 1998), Perna (2000, 2006), St. John et al. (2011), and Tierney and Jun (2001) found that minority students lack the cultural capital needed for successful college access, readiness, and transition. Cultural capital theory give a general overview of the national socio-economic climate and policies that shapes college access for urban, low-income, and/or students of color.

Although most college access research studied the inequality of socio-economic status among students, few have analyzed the impact of race/ethnicity and student background on college choice (McDonough & Fann, 2007). Therefore, I used Perna's (2006) Integrated College Access Model and Freeman's (1997) study on African American college choice in order to understand African American students' perceptions and behaviors concerning college access. Both studies use research to show the themes within college choice for urban, low SES, and racial/ethnic minority students. The studies' used cultural capital as a sociological lens to understand the larger systematic barriers to college access. They also show the interplay between the different levels of education that perpetuates the racial/ethnic disparities in college access.

2.8.2 Complementing Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory serves as a second theoretical frame for examining race/ethnicity in college access research. Race/ethnicity matters in each level/sector of the P-16 educational system. It serves as a foundation for understanding how socio-cultural interactions helps facilitate the attainment, development, and exchange of cultural capital to access college. This can also be goods and services such as DCAP's high school visit, college information tutoring programs, recruitment brochures, professional development, networking, internships, and college counseling.

The racial stratification of education is built into the structure of U.S. society (Antonio & Muniz, 2007). It is often perpetuated by racial disparities in uneven distributions of resources and knowledge among K-12 school districts and post-secondary education. In addition, the reverse of college access policies in the last two decades comes from the increasing financial strain of colleges/universities, privatization of college counseling, and legal challenges to affirmative action. This has led to the persistent inequality and stratification in access to higher education. This is evident in the current demographic changes, the expansion of enrollment in nonselective universities and community colleges, and refashioning financial aid to expand non-need-based programs. Critical race theory is a lens to research the impact of sociocultural and community context on college access for urban, low-income, and/or students of color.

2.8.3 Conceptual Framework Utilized In Present Research

Again, most research agrees that there is a college access gap within most urban metro cities. Yet, there is ongoing tension about whether race/ethnicity should be used as a factor in

admissions as well as how and when. It is necessary to study the efforts college admission offices administer in order to recruit and enroll racial/ethnic underrepresented students. One issue could be the praxis of race-conscious admission policies and the roles of DCAPs in higher education. College admission offices are pressured from multiple departments to increase diversity among their applicant pools. Little research has been done to assess how diversity recruitment impacts underrepresented students of color.

The following reflect basic findings from the literature review that are applied in the current research study:

- Race matters in gaining access to college
- By matriculating to college, the college admissions process, including interactions with DCAPs, is a cultural capital to expand educational opportunity to racial/ethnic minority students
- Institutions have developed initiatives such as race-conscious admission policies to compensate for socio-racial stratification in education and expand educational opportunities

The literature review for this research study shows that there are many factors contributing to the college access and transition gap of underrepresented students of color. More importantly, there are complex dynamics such as race/ethnicity, racial stratification, academic preparation and achievement as college readiness, P-12 schooling and college-going culture, college admission criteria, race-conscious admission policies, and college preparation programs. All are inter-related. Therefore, it becomes important to devise ways in which to integrate ideas, theories, models, and concepts to enable researchers, policy analysts, practitioners, and others to promote college access.

The current study stems from the fact that sociocultural differences are explained by racial/ethnic differences as well as family background, capital and resources, and academic preparation for college (Swanson et al., 2002). Studies that argue race/ethnicity are risk and

protective factors would suggest that the poor outcomes of African Americans emerge from events and circumstances that occurs in the P-12 and higher education infrastructure, especially the college admissions process (Cabrera, et al., 1999; Fisher, 2007; Horvat & Lewis, 2003). It seems that race/ethnicity have a fundamental impact on how students access college. Therefore, the enrollment process cannot be assumed to be the same for majority students and underrepresented students of color.

The main focus of this research study is gauging the college admission efforts as reflected by the DCAPs' perspective. By talking with the DCAPs, I analyze the ways in which colleges/university's promote college access for local urban underrepresented students of color. I explore the extent DCAPs feel challenged or supported in their duties to recruit underrepresented students of color.

2.8.4 Conceptual Framework Utilized By Research Questions

The research questions align with the current literature in the following ways to assess: 1) DCAPs as an authority on college access; 2) DCAPs views of P-12, higher education, and community context in college access; 3) DCAPs' groupthink or cultural habitus; and 4) synthesis of the DCAPs narrative using cultural capital and CRT. Through analyzing DCAPs' role in local diversity recruitment, I document higher education's capabilities as well as the challenges to increase the enrollment underrepresented students of color. I gauge DCAPs' efforts and perceptions to promote college access at an urban metro school district.

2.8.4.1 Research question 1: DCAPs as authority on college access and higher education contextual layer

1. In what ways are DCAPs an authority on college access and describe the higher education context within Perna's (2006) integrated college access model?

Chapter 4 serves to describe the DCAPs and college admissions office within the university structure to promote diversity. Given the importance of postsecondary education to occupational outcomes for young adults today, college access practices in higher education should be a central concern to address socio-racial stratification in education. First, I gauge the higher education institution's diversity initiatives such as diversity recruitment. Then, I create a profile of race-conscious admission policies and practices. In this way I can understand the institutional efforts to promote diversity and college access.

Again, DCAPs impact students' college choice through their work in local diversity recruitment and outreach. The DCAPs are experts in college access, so they offered a unique perspective and possible challenges concerning college access for underrepresented students of color. They offered insight into how meritocracy, cultural capital, and socio-racial stratification play a role in college admissions. Also they gave their perspective on higher education's efforts to promote college access. This resulted in recommendations and implications.

2.8.4.2 Research question 2: DCAPs' views of P-12 and community contexts

2. Through the DCAPs' perspective of LCSD's P-12 and community context, how do DCAPs describe college access for local and underrepresented students of color?

My second question emerges from the plethora of college access research that has analyzed the P-12 education's role in a student's college choice. Many reported that partnerships between schools and colleges/universities would benefit urban underrepresented students of

color. Further research could explore how college access as cultural capital is accrued or socio-racially stratified through the P-16 educational system, especially between high school and postsecondary education. I examined the interrelationship where higher education's role impacts college access as well as P-12 education's influence on diversity recruitment.

2.8.4.3 Research question 3: DCAPs' cultural habitus

3. What is the narrative and cultural habitus of DCAPs in relation to personal and professional beliefs concerning college access?

My third question is a reflection of cultural capital theory but was organically developed from the DCAPs' narrative analysis. I examined the development of the DCAPs' identity, which combines professional expectations with personal beliefs concerning diversity and college access. Similar to Bourdieu's and Perna's (2006) concept of student's cultural habitus, there is a groupthink amongst the DCAPs that results in various hybrid forms of critical capital gatekeeping advocacy. There are three main combinations reported in the study: capital gatekeepers, critical advocates, and gatekeeper advocates.

2.8.4.4 Research question 4: Systemic racialization and cultural capital in college admissions

4. From the DCAPs' narrative, how does diversity recruitment conform to the capitalistic and racialized system of P-16 college access?

My fourth question stems from my review of cultural capital and critical race theory, I learned more about the impact of race/ethnicity on college admissions from the DCAPs' perspectives. I was interested in the impact of race/ethnicity on DCAPs' diversity recruitment as well as race-conscious admission policies. Because many of DCAPs are African American

themselves, they were likely to have had work experiences where race/ethnicity played a factor. Therefore, I encouraged the DCAPs to discuss the racialization of college admissions; specifically, how race/ethnicity has impacted their work and college admissions. Since higher education is viewed as a cultural capital, do DCAPs see themselves as maintaining cultural capital (i.e. gatekeeper) and institutional racism.

Colleges/universities' diversity initiatives, race-conscious admission policies, and outreach programs have the potential to undermine socio-racial stratification; however, only for the subset of disadvantaged students who persist through secondary school and enroll in college. My fourth research question stems from research on race in college admissions.

Due to the past Office of Civil Rights investigations, negative publicity, fear of litigation, and fear of personal liability, there are common concerns about researching the impact of race/ethnicity in college admission policies (Chapa & Horn, 2007; Banks, 2007; Moses, 2001). The limited research on college access from the perspective of diversity college admission professional is a critical concern. If education researchers do not push institutions to research their race-conscious admission policies and diversity recruitment, it becomes much more difficult to assess whether programs have become effective in promoting college access and diversify the student body.

2.9 SUMMARY

The theoretical framework for this paper has been developed from combining cultural capital and critical race theory to review the use of race in college access. Cultural capital theory is a component of the debate concerning social attainment and mobility, socio-economic status,

and power (Freeman, 1995, 1997, 2005; Perna, 2000, 2006). Critical race theory is also important to discuss due to the need to acknowledge the encompassing effect of race/ethnicity in education and the need to challenge dominant ideology and social structures (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano, 1997).

The literature review and theoretical framework are a clear argument for researching higher education's role in promoting or challenging postsecondary opportunities for urban underrepresented students of color. This serves to examine the impacts of a student's background such as race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, parent educational attainment, and urban residence on attaining the cultural capital of access to college. Again, all of these factors affect college access. In other words, race/ethnicity matters. The current study looks at the enterprise of college access through the lens of higher education, specifically college admissions and diversity DCAPs.

Overall, race/ethnicity is significant in higher education. The ongoing controversy regarding underrepresented minority students' access to colleges and universities will likely persist as long as race/ethnicity remains an important factor in American society (Moses, 2001). Socio-racial stratification is not only an issue of P-12 educational system but similarly, the American higher education system has become more stratified in terms of resources, student preparation, socioeconomic status, and racial representation (Chapa & Horn, 2007; Moses, 2001; Saenz et. al, 2007). Privilege still exists and does not produce genuine equity. It is evident in the differences of cultural capital among different races/ethnicities to go to college.

Furthermore, socio-racial stratification leads to racial disparities such as the college access gap. Not all students have equitable and equal access to college knowledge (Perna, 2006, 2007; Roderick, et al., 2008, 2009; Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012; Tierney & Jun, 2001;

Venezia, et al., 2003). The amount of knowledge that a student has about the college application process tends to vary by acquiring cultural capital; which is impacted by socio-racial/ethnic stratification (Bell, Rowan-Kenyon, Perna, 2009 Perna, 2006, 2007; Roderick, et al., 2008, 2009, 2011; Venezia, et al., 2003). Again, research shows that many prospective students of color are poorly informed about both the costs and benefits of an investment in higher education. Again, the lower enrollment rates of low-income students and racial/ethnic minority students may be attributable to this lack of college knowledge and information (Perna, 2006).

Most previous studies found differences in the college transition for underrepresented students of color and compelling reasons to promote diversity on college campuses through diversity recruitment (Bauman et al., 2005; Carter, Lockes, & Winkle-Wagner, 2013; Gurin 1999, 2004; Hurtado, et al., 1997, 1998, 1999; Milem et al., 2005; Williams, et al., 2005). Yet, many of the traditional values, norms, and structures found in higher education are barriers to realizing the benefits of inclusive excellence. It is important for efforts to become a sustainable reality on campuses (Bauman et al., 2005; Bensimon, et al., 2004; Hurtado, 1998, 1999; Milem et al., 2005; Williams, et al., 2005).

Given the importance of postsecondary education to occupational outcomes, college access practices in higher education should be a central concern to address socio-racial/ethnic stratification in education. More and more students of color are entering college; thus, changing the demographics of today's colleges/universities. Overall, colleges and universities are struggling to accommodate the unique needs of diverse populations; while also, maintaining structural diversity initiatives and campus climate. As a binary higher education preserves the cultural capital of power; while simultaneously promoting college access (Tierney & Hagerdorn, 2002).

Race/ethnicity is often a criteria for admission. Therefore, race/ethnicity is a factor in the social context of choice for underrepresented students of color. Therefore, Moses (2001) explains that, as an effective means to increase college access, race-conscious admission policies improves the cultural capital and college access of students of color such as African American students. Yet, it does not significantly diminish the college choice of White American students (Saenz, et al., 2007). As Moses (2001, p. 28) states, “College choice as a cultural capital can be contained or expanded by one's place within a dominant structural context and resulting life circumstances.” An individual's culture and community are important; as well as, acknowledging the essential role of people's cultural, racial/ethnic, and social contexts, which is also framed by the U.S. socio-political climate (Moses, 2001). Again, race, ethnicity, and cultural background are integral factors in the admissions process.

Similar to other areas of higher education there are “hidden” enrollment strategies that impact college access; so, that many of the DCAPs may either serve as cultural capital gatekeepers or community advocates. There are race-conscious admission strategies such as targeted diversity recruitment, meritocratic admission criteria, marketing and media, diversity programming, and outreach that impacts college access. Such Research analysis is most important to support special populations like racial/ethnic underrepresented students. The analysis of college admissions from the perspective of DCAPs could elucidate the dynamic of best practices, policies, and programs.

I have multiple dialogues with the diversity college admission professionals (DCAPs) about their roles in recruiting underrepresented students of color in a metro city. Conducting a study to collect data on diversity is very vital to the sustainability to higher education. With the shifts in student populations, colleges/universities have to change with the times and transform

for the better. Raising important questions and taking in various perspectives can initiate discussion and, more importantly, result in well-informed diversity initiatives. This can lead to success in the discussion of institutional investment in diversity as well as new directions of the institution.

It is important to develop strong arguments for race-conscious admission policies because, in a "postracial" society, individuals today do not feel responsible for the socio-historical wrongs of the past (Moses, 2001). They refuse to accept the blame and guilt that accompany the affirmative action argument. However, because most faculty and senior administrators are White American males, students receive, implicitly through the hidden curriculum of higher education, an education in racial and gender role stereotypes and power positions (Moses, 2001). Even though White Americans do not feel responsible for historical racism, all people should feel obligated to correct present wrongs. It becomes important to correct oppression such as the college access gap. A compelling justification relies on the idea that race-conscious admission policies further social justice goals both by helping underrepresented students of color expand their social context of college choice and by fighting oppression (Moses, 2001).

Often, opportunity is all but ruled out for increasing numbers of racial/ethnic underrepresented students at record rates. Therefore, it is important to analyze the relationship between race/ethnicity, cultural capital, and college access in order to build a better conceptual framework concerning urban, low-income, underrepresented students of color. Given the importance of postsecondary education to occupational outcomes for students, college access research on higher education should be a central concern to address the college access gap of underrepresented students of color and overall diversity in higher education. Higher education is

where recruitment, campus-wide social and cultural events, and community outreach can enact social change to address some of the deeper social issues and development of the students. Through college access initiatives, the campus community can come together to understand how they can educate the growing numbers of underrepresented students of color on college campuses.

In summary, due to a variety of factors such as socio-racial stratification, students of color are suffering academically and aren't achieving their full potential (Perna, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009; Venezia et al., 2003). The disparities in college access affirm the view that there are factors adversely affecting students of color. Students of color are a unique and multi-dimensional group that we cannot only offer one possible solution such as affirmative action, compensatory sponsorship, or college preparatory programs. College admissions utilize multiple policies, practices, and programs to address the multiple factors of the college access gap to promote educational opportunities. It is important for several key elements such as the student's identity or "self," family, school, community, and government to be incorporated in promoting better college preparation, recruitment, and transition to college.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

College access is a documented problem for low-income and students of color in urban cities and is a concern for higher education. The current study is a qualitative study to explore the views and perspectives of DCAPs. The research study takes place in a large urban northeastern city. The purpose is to gauge the DCAPs knowledge of specific factors that attribute to college access, colleges/universities' enrollment strategies, and race-conscious admission policies. While I refer to underrepresented students of color throughout this research study, the biggest racial/ethnic minority group in the local city school district is African American.

In my study, I am focusing on the DCAPs' narrative, as bicultural middle managers, to better understand college access for students of color. As I mentioned in the previous chapters, cultural capital and critical race theory serve as the theoretical lenses. I chose these two theories to develop the conceptual framework and model since DCAPs possess cultural capital in the form of college knowledge and primarily work with students and communities of color. These theories best help to explain the positionality of DCAPs within the P-16 educational system and college access. The DCAPs perspective has been one point of view missing from college access research and theory. Through gauging their view of the factors in college access, DCAPs might be able to inform policymaking and practical solutions to the college access gap. Being an

exploratory study, the current study examines the role of higher education in college access, the significance of race and social context in college admissions, and the interconnectivity between P-16 educational systems.

This chapter situates the study within the social constructivist and critical paradigm to elucidate the study's research methodology and design. I discuss the purpose of this design and the theoretical paradigm including: (a) the guiding research questions; (b) the research site as well as the participant sample and selection process; (c) the iterative research design with data collection methods, timeline, and resources; (d) narrative analysis and synthesis plan; (e) the role of the researcher; (f) the trustworthiness of the quality of this research; (g) the limits and delimitations of the study.

3.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

A descriptive research design is the most fitting qualitative methodology for this study. I engage in an in-depth description and inductive analysis (Bassey, 1999; Marshall & Rossman, 2011) of local admission policies and diversity recruitment among DCAPs in the College Success 101 program. The proposed research study is exploratory to investigate college access through the words and experiences of the DCAPs. Then, through analysis, the study conceptualizes the DCAPs' views of college access as well as illustrates the local diversity recruitment to show socio-racial inequities in college admissions. The implications serve to enlighten both secondary schools and higher education research, praxis, and policy.

A descriptive design provides a holistic understanding of the DCAPs perspective of college access. I study the views of the DCAPs as well as the recruitment activities by including

multiple data sources such as demographic questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews as well as the local city school district's (LCSD) college readiness statistics by race/ethnicity. The triangulation of data increases the validity of the study (Merriam, 1998, 2014).

The data collection methods include demographic questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews. The aim is to build understanding by addressing research questions and triangulating rich, thick descriptions. This study involves a description of college access and DCAPs with an iterative approach to narrative and thematic analysis of the data for themes, patterns, and issues (Creswell, 2007; Guest, MacQueen, Namey, 2011; Merriam, 1998, 2014; Wolcott, 1994). This provides rich description in order to understand the complexity of college access for underrepresented students in urban U.S. cities.

Through narrative analysis, I seek to inform theory about the sociocultural and community contexts of urban college access through a cross-case analysis of the DCAPs' understanding of college access. Chapter 6 consists of the cross-case analysis to produce the DCAPs' cultural habitus of critical gatekeeping advocacy. I also provide institutional as well as individual profiles to give context to the DCAPs' thick, rich quotes and descriptions. Overall, this approach to the research design and analysis has produced narratives that elucidate the higher education context and impact on college access. In essence, the study is juxtaposed to show how DCAPs and race-conscious admission strategies are utilized to recruit underrepresented students of color in urban U.S. cities.

3.2.1 Constructivist Paradigm

The basic tenet of constructivism is that reality is socially, culturally, and historically constructed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2000; Neuman & Blundo, 2000; Schwandt, 2007). In other

words, research should attempt to understand social phenomena from a context-specific perspective. Wolcott (1994) describes organizing and presenting data as a balance of description, analysis, and interpretation. In descriptive findings, the data presents itself and is the source for understanding the contexts under examination. The emphasis in this study is on description as well as conducting analysis to co-construct interpretations with the DCAPs. By co-constructing interpretations of their responses with the DCAPs, I ensure relevant analyses of their meanings. The analysis is comprised of describing the DCAPs' meaning and perspective of college access. The findings rely heavily on the voices of the college admission professionals in the study. The project uses a constructivist approach to conduct an in-depth study of local colleges/universities' college admissions and DCAPs. It is an interpretive approach that emphasizes the viewpoints of the participants to understand the meaning and nuances from their perspectives.

3.2.2 Critical Paradigm

The criticism needed in education is an analysis of social structures while also stating one's moral and political aims (West, 1993a, 1993b). Critics/Allies must, "Simultaneously position themselves within (or alongside) the mainstream while clearly being aligned with groups who vow to keep alive potent traditions of critique and resistance (West, 1993b, pg. 22)." There should be a capacity for and promotion for relentless criticism and self-criticism (West, 1993b).

I would best describe my views on the purpose of education closely fitting post-colonial critical theory. To uphold democratic education in the U.S., we need to use critical thinking to evaluate and re-evaluate what is right and wrong with education. It is an older position re-framed. Researchers like critical theorist McCarthy and Crichlow (1993) explain that minority

groups such as African, American, Native American, Latino, Asian American and other marginalized groups are striving to address issues surrounding the distribution of power and representation in the educational system and the status of minority cultures. Minorities are concerned about the lack of equity, difference, and equality in education. Therefore, as educators and cultural workers (Freire, 1972) we need to culturally critique our current systems and diversity programs within education. For example, affirmative action, race-conscious admission policies, diversity recruitment, and college access outreach need to be assessed and re-assessed.

I will define the terms of race, cultural capital, diversity, etc. in various ways because they are fluidic and dynamic terms that are lived everyday. They are ideological and interactional terms that shape who we are, how we live, where we come from, and what we do in different contexts, people, and situations. These terms are so important to our existence; yet, as educators, we often don't understand the causes and/or the effects. If developed as strategy to confront social inequities, specifically discrimination, education is a powerful instrument to promote diversity and multiculturalism. As educators, we have to build a systematic critique of dominant Western ideology to build and rebuild education.

3.2.3 Research Questions

Guided by the following research questions, the purpose of my study is to research the context surrounding college access through the viewpoints of college admission professionals (DCAPs). The project proposed is a qualitative study to explore local college/university admissions' impact on college access. The main research questions:

1. In what ways are DCAPs an authority on college access and describe the higher education context within Perna's (2006) integrated college access model?
2. Through the DCAPs' perspective of LCSD's P-12 and community context, how do

- DCAPs describe college access for local and underrepresented students of color?
3. What is the narrative and cultural habitus of DCAPs in relation to personal and professional beliefs concerning college access?
 4. From the DCAPs' narrative, how does diversity recruitment conform to the capitalistic and racialized system of P-16 college access?

3.2.4 Timeline

This study was conducted in three phases from 2013 to 2015. In the first phase, I administered a demographic questionnaire. The second phase consisted of focus groups with college admission professionals as a pilot study to understand their knowledge and attitudes on college access. In the third phase, I conduct interviews with the same college admission professionals who participated in the focus groups. The same codebook is used and expanded throughout the research study.

3.3 RESEARCH CONTEXT

The College Success 101 (CS101) program is a collaborative of DCAPs and community leaders who want to promote the college-going culture in a large urban northeastern city. The College Success 101 Conference is a one-day summit designed to aid in preparing high school students throughout the metro area for the college admission process. Each year, CS101 creates unique opportunities and provides an enriching experience for over 100 high school students by giving information on the college search process, admission criteria, financial aid and scholarships, and more. The college fair offers access to admission representatives from the local region. A complete description of the College Success 101 program is included in Chapter 4.

The CS101 organization was purposefully considered for this study for multiple reasons. First, this is a unique organization of college admission professionals (DCAPs) from different colleges/universities working together to promote college access. Secondly, most of the DCAPs have the duties of diversity recruitment, specifically in the neighboring large urban school district. Thirdly, the majority of the DCAPs are African American. I was able to access this site since I am the Chair of the organization.

College Success 101 is a collaborative among eight colleges/universities in the local area. It is a joint effort where diversity college admission professionals (DCAPs) are trying to promote college-going. The vision is to empower students to be college and career ready in order to succeed in today's global market. The purpose of the collaborative is to be a community forum to help students' college and career readiness, access, and success.

The CS101 collaborative believed that college readiness is not necessarily learned in school, which is solely focused on academic performance. Therefore, CS101's goal as a community-based organization is to ensure that urban public school students have a holistic education that includes interpersonal and college readiness skills to go to college.

Since it is a one-day conference, the strategic priority is to serve as a catalyst for students to consider their future options after high school. Students are encouraged to meet their aspirations by raising their expectations that they can go to college. CS101 and the DCAPs serve as a reference for students to take college tours, ask high school counselors and college counselors questions, use internet college searches, understand financial aid, learn to write resumes, etc.

The event is considered a catalyst for targeted populations of B or C students from urban areas and lower SES. When asked about the College Success 101 (CS101) Summit, the DCAPs

explained CS101 focuses on the local urban school district and particularly 10th and 11th grade students who are B and/or C students. One African American Private DCAP, Frankie explained that, “Yes, if we don’t who will. There are good students that also come [but] the focus should still be on B or C.” Another African American Private DCAP, Bobby, stated, “We’re talking about social disadvantaged. The spirit of the student that we’re trying to help is B or C students from urban areas and lower SES that kind of covers both.” The DCAPs understand that they want to make an impression on some of the population that may not necessarily have access to DCAPs and college knowledge. They convey that not all students have access to opportunities due to their social background and status.

The targeted population comprises of underrepresented students who are qualified to graduate from high school and go to college but they lack the information, support, and money. Other criteria include sophomore or junior class status, LCSD student or city resident, grade point average of 2.0 or above, desires to go to college directly after high school. The committee recommends that students have a resume, unofficial transcript, and dress professionally for the summit.

3.3.1 Local City School District

The local urban school district is comprised of 12 secondary schools. African American students comprise of 61 percent of the population and 63 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch (A+ Schools, 2015). A more detailed profile of the school district is discussed in Chapter 5.

3.4 STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Purposeful sampling was used to select the study's participants to yield the most information about college access (Patton, 2002). I located the participants through my involvement as Chair of the College Success 101 program (Patton, 2002, p. 230). The sample comprises of 14 DCAPs. The criteria participants are current DCAPs that work with underrepresented minority students, the local urban school district, a member of College Success 101, and participates in other college outreach organizations such as the Council of Higher Education or College Success Roundtable.

The DCAPs represent 8 of the possible 10 colleges and universities in the metro area that fit the criteria. Of the 14 DCAPs participating in the study, 3 are from public research universities, 3 from a private research university, 1 from a regional university, 2 from a community college, and 3 are professionals from local liberal arts colleges.

The majority of the DCAPs are between the ages of 26 – 40, male, Black/African American, and native to the local city. Some of the participants graduated from the local urban school district but the majority attended high school in the greater metro area. Every participant has a bachelor's and the majority went to college in the region. The length of employment in the college admission field ranged from 1 year to 20 years with the average length of employment being 3 – 5 yrs. A complete description of the participants is included in Appendix C.

3.4.1 Institutional Profiles

The College Success 101 collaborative is comprised of diversity college admission professionals (DCAPs) that range in institutional types from local private colleges, community

college, and public research universities. I have provided descriptors of the institutions represented in the focus groups and interviews.

3.4.1.1 Private colleges/universities

There are five private colleges/universities in the group. Four are liberal arts colleges where the enrollment is small, private governance, and the focus of education is liberal arts based. For the smaller institutions, there is one primary person who recruits LCSD. It is similar in the larger colleges, but often that one person is part of a team that work together to recruit LCSD students. In a simple website search for diversity initiatives there was some information such as student demographics, diversity resources and/or a specific office of diversity initiatives; however, none of the colleges provided information on their local and/or diversity recruitment and college outreach efforts on the internet.

One university is considered a private research university because of its medium-sized enrollment, graduate programs, focus on research, and private governance. In a simple website search for diversity initiatives, there was information and a specific website called the diversity resource guide. The website included information on the student demographics, diversity recruitment and outreach activities.

3.4.1.2 Public colleges/universities

Four colleges/universities in the group are considered public colleges/universities. One public community college represents the public 2- year degree and certification program in the group. In a simple website search for diversity initiatives there was a specific website for the Office of Institutional Diversity & Inclusion (OIDI); but, did not specifically explain the diversity recruitment and college outreach efforts.

Two universities are considered large public research university in this group because of state/public governance, budget, focus on research, satellite campuses, and large enrollment. In a simple website search for diversity initiatives, there was information on diversity and human resources. Also, each branch campus had their own statements on diversity initiatives. However, only one university had information on diversity recruitment and outreach.

One university was a regional branch campus with state/public governance, budget, and offers a limited range of undergraduate and master's programs. It is considered a smaller satellite campus and shares the same diversity recruitment and college outreach efforts as the main campus of the large public research university.

3.4.2 Individual DCAP Profiles

In the previous section I provide a synopsis of the CS101 collaborative as a unit. In this section, I frame the individual profiles of the DCAPs that make up CS101. Again, the description and profiles will guide the narrative's development. I share small vignettes of the individual DCAPs and to give a human depiction of the work that takes place at most colleges/universities' admissions offices. Again, all of the DCAPs are passionate about what they do. These vignettes are composed to humanize a systematic process that touches the lives of many students. Yet, the individual profiles are shared in reflection of their involvement in CS101 since the focus of the study is on the CS101 collaborative as a group.

3.4.2.1 Frankie

Frankie is a Black woman that had worked in college admissions for 5 years. She is quite frank in her answers and often gives her opinion during meetings. Throughout her answers, she

shows great knowledge about LCSD and the college-going culture. Her title is Senior Admissions Counselor at a small liberal arts college. Her primary territories are LCSD students and the East Coast region. When she gives her views of LCSD, she talks mostly about relationship with guidance counselors. She is also one of the DCAPs that believes that students are responsible in their college-going behavior. She is also very descriptive about her institution's LCSD recruitment and LCSD students. She boasts about the autonomy and independence that she has to recruit students such as the ability to schedule travel and campus events. She indicates that she has average involvement with community organizations.

Concerning CS101, she was one of the key members of the group. She had been involved in college success 101 for as long as I have. She is one of the DCAPs that had worked in admissions for over 5 years. Therefore, she had been an integral part of CS101. She was the head of the registration committee. After five years as an admissions counselor, she resigned and pursued a career in another field.

3.4.2.2 Feliz

Feliz is a White woman that has worked in college admissions for 4 years. She has a very happy disposition and is glad to help in any way. She talks mostly about her work with students and she is the least critical of all DCAPs. Her title is undergraduate admissions counselor at a small liberal arts college. Her primary territories are LCSD students, the Mid-Atlantic area and the South. She indicated that her institution has an average involvement with community organizations.

Although, she has only been involved with CS101 for only four years, Feliz was one of the key members of the group by helping in many different capacities. Whenever she was asked to contribute, she was always easygoing, positive, and gave 100 percent. One of her main duties

was being the head of the college fair committee. After four years, Feliz accepted a promotion at her institution but, due to being shirt-staffed, she as remained on the executive committee of CS101 in a limited capacity.

3.4.2.3 Jaune

Jaune is a Bi-racial woman that worked in college admissions for 3 years. Her title is undergraduate admissions counselor at a large research university. In her responses, she was very upfront and deliberate because she thoroughly reviewed the survey and questions. She explains, “My title is an Admissions Counselor but I don’t necessarily think that’s representory of everything that I do.” Her primary territories are LCSD students and international recruitment. When she gives her views of LCSD, she talks mostly about the disparities among LCSD high schools. She is also critical of every group in college admissions from students and guidance counselors to DCAPs and her respective institution. Jaune indicated that the university had low involvement with community organizations such as an on-campus office and CS101.

She was involved with CS101 for two years, she is one of the DCAPs that has worked in admissions for 3 years. In 2014, she resigned from the university as a DCAP. After being involved for over seventeen years, this public research university resigned from the program and collaborative. The sentiments that Jaune expressed were mirrored in the reasons that the university’s leadership declared in leaving the CS101 collaborative. They were supportive of CS101’s efforts and indicated that they were involved this long because of the mission and collaborative They wanted to end the relationship due to CS101’s logistical challenges as well as the office’s staffing and time constraints.

3.4.2.4 Mustafa

Mustafa is a Black male that has worked in college admissions for 9 years at a private research university. He is considered a leader of the group and maintained an advisory role for the past couple of years. He really explored the questions with his answers. He was an associate director of admissions at a private research university. His territories ranged from year to year. Yet, his main territories are the Mid-Atlantic and international recruitment. The university has average involvement with community organizations such as presentations, college fairs, and campus visits but the biggest initiative is College Success 101. Also, LCSD recruitment falls under his managerial duties as part of the targeted recruitment initiatives team. His views of LCSD focus mostly on the general culture, relationship with guidance counselors, and disparities among LCSD'S high schools.

Mustafa was one of the more senior members of the group. He has been involved in College Success 101 from the beginning and he is one of the DCAPs that is in a more managerial position and role. Therefore, he has also been the main reason that CS101 has continued over the years. After many years of being a leader and integral piece of CS101, Mustafa is no longer at the private research university and no longer involved in CS101 logistics. He is now a senior administrator at a liberal arts college. He still participates but it is in a limited capacity.

3.4.2.5 Tyrone

Tyrone is an African American male who had worked in admissions for 5 years, first at a large public research university and then at a medium-sized private research university. He was an assistant director of admissions at his current institution. He was often candid in his responses and gave great examples throughout our conversations. His territories ranged from year to year. Yet, his main territory is LCSD schools, the East Coast region, and the South. His viewpoints

centered mostly on LCSD students. The university has average involvement with community organizations such as presentations, college fairs, and campus visits but the biggest initiative is CS101.

Tyrone was one of the key members of the group and very passionate about helping since he gained more responsibility over the years. He was involved in College Success 101 for as long as other key members such as Frankie and I. He is one of the DCAPs that has worked in admissions for over 5 years. Therefore, he had been an integral part of CS101. After many years of being a member and integral part of CS101, Tyrone is no longer at the private research university or admissions and is now works in another field.

3.4.2.6 Sasha

Sasha is a White woman that has worked in college admissions for 4 years at a medium-sized private research university. She was an assistant director of admissions at her current institution. Her territories ranged from year to year yet, her main territory is LCSD schools, the East Coast region, and the South. The university has average involvement with community organizations such as presentations, college fairs, and campus visits but the biggest initiative is CS101.

She is direct in her responses and reflects on the revelations that she has made since she has come back to the metro area and better understands the LCSD's educational system. Her viewpoints reflect her ability to master multicultural competence, especially since she is not a person of color. She has strong opinions and fully embraces her roles as a DCAP. She had recently been more involved in CS101 as the committee chair of the registration committee. She also helped with PR/marketing.

3.4.2.7 Pam

Pam is a Black woman that had worked in college admissions for 4 years. She is really funny and includes lots of metaphors in her answers. Throughout her answers, she shows great knowledge about her institution, LCSD, and the overall college-going culture. She talks mostly about college admissions and the role they have in the college-going culture. She also rated her institution as having a high involvement in community outreach such as SAT prep workshops, bus trips, dual enrollment, presentations, and college fairs. She is an enrollment services specialist III at a regional branch campus of a large public research university, which makes her an entry-level admission counselor and her primary territory is the majority of LCSD schools and the local metro area.

Although, she has only been involved with CS101 for three years, Pam was one of the key members of the group and has helped in many different capacities. Her main involvement in CS101 consists of central logistics and operations. She is still employed at her university and still works with CS101.

3.4.2.8 Verunike

Verunike is a Bi-racial female who has been an admissions counselor for her alma mater for the past 3 years at a large public state-related university. She is also a recent graduate of LCSD. Her main involvement in CS101 centered around the creative efforts of publications and media. She also rated her institution as having a high involvement in community outreach such as SAT prep workshops, bus trips, guidance counselor breakfast, presentations, and college fairs. She is an enrollment services specialist III at a large public research university, which makes her an entry-level admission counselor and her primary territory is the local area. She explains, “Sure so I have been in this position for a little less than a year so I’m very new to sort of the

admissions aspect in total I was an admission office volunteer as a student at [The University], which is sort of why I was able to make this transition.”

Although, she has only been involved with CS101 for only three years, Verunike was one of the key members of the group. She is one of the DCAPs that has worked in admissions for under 3 years. Yet, she has been an integral part of CS101. She is still employed at her university and still works with CS101.

3.4.2.9 Sly

Sly is a Black male who has been in college admissions for 17 years at the local county community college. He is thoughtful and takes his time answering questions. He is also very interested in the current study and the overall opinions of the DCAPs about the current college-going culture. His institution is involved in community outreach in various community but it is mainly geared towards recruitment. His territories include some of the local city and neighboring county schools. Overall, he recruits in schools with a large student of color ratio.

Sly has been involved in CS101 for almost as long as I have and he is one of the more senior members of the group. He understands a lot about the social issues that face many of the LCSD students to go to college. He is still employed at his respective university and still works with CS101.

3.4.2.10 Martin

Martin is a Black male who has been in college admissions for 25 years and is close to retirement at a large public research university. He is very opinionated and takes his time answering questions yet, he is a sage and rich with information. His institution is highly involved in community outreach such as SAT prep workshops, bus trips, guidance counselor breakfast,

presentations, and college fairs. He is director of the city recruitment center at a public research university. He is in charge of all recruitment activities within the city. His territories are the local city and county schools. He recruits in schools with a large student of color ratio.

Martin is one of the more senior members of the group. He has been involved in CS101 from the beginning and he is one of the DCAPs that is in a more managerial position and role. Therefore, he has also been the main reason that CS101 has lasted this long. He is considered a leader of the group; yet, has maintained an advisory and funder role. He understands a lot about the social issues that face many of the LCSD students to go to college. He is still employed at his respective university and still works with CS101.

3.4.2.11 Focus Group Participants

There are participants in the focus group that transitioned to their positions in during the current study. Rafael and Bobby participated in the focus but had limited involvement in College Success 101. Bobby was a former Assistant Director of Admissions at a private research university but recently started his own private company to provide help and support in the admissions process. Rafael still works at the private liberal arts college and holds the title of Assistant Director of Admissions and Coordinator of Multicultural Recruitment. Their comments were brief pertained to one aspect of diversity recruitment

Jerry and Adam were heavily involved in CS101 and both were co-chairs (at different times) and considered leaders among the group. They both no longer work at the Office of Admission that they were employed at the time of the study; however, Jerry still works in admissions at a different institution. Both discussed the challenges in LCSD schools as well as local recruitment and admissions. Rafael, Bobby, and Jerry are young professionals whereas Adam is a senior member and close to retirement.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

The collection and analysis in this research study is a combination of elements and techniques across different traditions. There is protocol with the measures for this research study that is provided in appendices B to I. The biggest goal of the data collection is clarification and depth about college access from the study's participants. The data collection plans and guides for preparation is implemented before, during, and after the data collection (Mertens, 2009). The guides allow for flexibility to accommodate the evolving nature of the data collection.

In-depth interviews are the primary method of data collection and take place in 2014 - 2015. The focus groups and interviews are audiotaped. The principal investigator transcribes the focus groups and interviews verbatim. I took efforts to retain the naturalness of the interviews while also maintaining rigor (McLellan, MacQueen, Neidig, 2003).

3.5.1 Phase 1: Demographic Questionnaires

Potential participants were contacted in 2013 through email and all agreed to participate. The 14 individuals were given a questionnaire and returned the document at one of the CS101 meetings. A demographic questionnaire was administered to gain demographic information about the college admission professionals. The survey collected race/ethnicity, gender, age, educational backgrounds, residence, employment, etc. The questionnaire also asked participants to define college access, college-going, college readiness, and their college access outreach efforts. In developing the questionnaire, I wanted to gauge the groups/interviewees' cultural background, knowledge, and definition of college access.

3.5.2 Phase 2: Focus Groups Pilot Study

I conducted a pilot study consisting of focus groups in 2013. The sessions were group discussions focused on LCSD's college access and were prompted by myself. It created a candid but in-depth conversation about the local urban school district's college access through discussing its college-going culture with the DCAPs (Kreuger & Casey, 2000). The focus groups provide an evidentiary basis for identifying DCAPs that subscribe to various levels of utilizing race-conscious admission policies. The focus groups were meant to gauge the DCAPs working knowledge of college access.

The focus groups were conducted from January 2013 – May 2013, through the college preparatory program, CS101. The sample population comprised of 14 DCAPs with the average number of participants for each focus group was 9. I emailed the participants seeking their interest in joining the focus group discussion. The research devised the focus groups to hold the discussion during monthly CS101 meetings. Over the months, I conducted five focus groups with the DCAPs to understand their knowledge and attitudes concerning college access. The focus groups consisted of open-ended questions and each lasted approximately 1 hour as it occurred during the business meetings. The approach was staggered with focus group guides being structured during each phase (Guest, et al., 2011). The content of the guides were driven by what was learned from each successive focus group session (Guest et al., 2011). The focus group data collection plan and guide for preparation was implemented before, during, and after the focus groups, which are included in Appendix G (Mertens, 2010).

The pilot study focused on the DCAPs' views of college access. I wanted to assess the comprehension of DCAPs on college access in the urban metro area. The overall findings suggest that the DCAPs understand the significance of college access.

Overall, the focus groups with the DCAPs were enlightening and aligned with previous research on college access. Overall, many of the DCAPs responses were comparable to the theoretical definitions of college access. This proves that this group of stakeholders is a viable resource when seeking views or information on race-conscious admission policies to inform theory. There is a particular groupthink and culture among the DCAPs. Overall, the DCAPs think that college access and community outreach are important. Some meta-themes such as college knowledge, academic preparation, support, etc. did emerge from the data that corresponded with the Perna (2006) college access integrated model where the DCAPs were aware of the impact of higher education context and the broader socio-historical context on college-going.

However, there were some themes that were a surprise such as student awareness, good habits, interpersonal skills, and college opportunity. Many of the previous studies did not focus on the importance of psychological interpersonal skills; however, they did emphasize the impact of social/cultural capital.

Another concept that was referenced in this research was the Venezia et al.'s (2003) disjuncture theory. Many of the DCAPs felt that some urban public school teachers/staff/counselors do not utilize college access strategies and practices to promote a good college-going culture. Throughout the conversations, the fact that the local city school district (LCSD) does not participate in regional or national college fairs was mentioned multiple times. The context is that the urban public school district has a low college-going culture. The DCAPs stated that the local school fairs are the only fairs that schools attend, some guidance counselors aren't involved, and parents don't get much information. A descriptive analysis of the district and high schools is included in Chapter 5.

The information obtained through the five focus groups subsequently formed the basis for the concept of college access used in this study. The confidentiality and privacy of each participant was observed and focus groups were tape recorded and transcribed. Coding categories were developed and refined on an ongoing basis, guided by the study's conceptual framework.

3.5.3 Phase 3: Interviews

Interviews are the primary method for data collection in this research because it has the potential to elicit rich, thick descriptions. The interviews take place from 2014 - 2015. Furthermore, I utilize the interviews to clarify statements and probe for additional information from the questionnaire and focus groups. This method offers the potential to capture a person's perspective of an event or experience through open dialogue (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). It is a legitimate way to generate data while interacting with people to capture the meaning of their experience in their own words.

I interview using the techniques of Spradley's (1979) ethnographic interviewing. It is a research tool used to develop rapport by implementing friendly conversation and exchange between the researcher and participant. In other words, it involves eliciting information to foster the development of rapport to encourage participants to talk about their views and culture (Spradley, 1979). I build trust so questions are longer with more explanation and restating questions to prepare the participant in the conversation. The three most important elements of ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1979) are:

- Expressing explicitly the purpose of the interview and research;
- Giving ethnographic explanations of the nature of the "conversation/interview;"
- Asking ethnographic questions that are descriptive, structural, and/or contrasting.

Techniques include asking friendly questions, asymmetrical turn taking, incorporating the participants words and native terms in the questioning; expressing cultural ignorance; creating hypothetical situations; expressing interest; expanding; and repetition. Overall, in ethnographic interviewing, both questions and answers are discovered from the participants (Spradley, 1979).

3.5.3.1 Interview schedule

I use the study's research questions and pilot study with the DCAPs as the framework to develop the interview questions. Matrices are constructed to further illustrate the relationship between this study's research questions and the interview questions as they were being developed. The matrices are included in Appendix B. The pilot study developed a series of open-ended questions; yet, they are semi-structured to allow new insight to emerge during the focus groups. The interview protocol is included as Appendix D and E.

3.5.3.2 Interview process

The researcher sent individual e-mails to participants describing the purpose of the study, inviting their participation, and requesting a convenient date and time for an in-person interview. The researcher also sent confirmation e-mails. At the beginning of the study, the interviewees are asked to review and sign a university consent form for participation in this study (see Appendix H). All interviews are conducted in-person and tape-recorded. In between interviews, the audiotapes are transcribed verbatim. Following the interviews, an informal debriefing is conducted for reflection of the conversation.

The interviews take place from September 2014 – November 2015 in a large urban northeastern city. There are 10 participants from 7 different colleges/universities. Each

participant during and/or outside the CS101 committee meetings participated in one interview. The interviews span about 30 minutes to one hour. The interviews are semi-structured and informal. The interviews are conducted in college admission professionals' workplaces. The interview data collection plan and guide for preparation is implemented before, during, and after the interviews and included as Appendix D (Mertens, 2009).

3.5.4 IRB Approval

The present study gained IRB in Fall 2013 approval with an exempt status. The copy of the approval letter is included as Appendix J.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

In order to manage and analyze the large amounts of data, I filtered the volume of information, identified significant patterns, and constructed a framework. Data analysis and data collection is a simultaneous activity to avoid the challenges of data management (Merriam, 1998, 2014). There are four phases of the research analysis. During the first "noticing" or "reading" analysis phase I examined the data to become familiar with nuances and subtleties (Diffendal & Weidman, 2011; Seidal, 1998). Therefore, the decision-making of significant data became easier and required less effort. The coding process started from this point and grew from identifying and naming interesting trends in the data.

The priority of the second "collecting" analysis phase was setting the conceptual order to the data according to their properties and dimensions (Diffendal & Weidman, 2011; Seidal,

1998). I developed the categories of meanings, explained the units of analysis and context, and established the coding scheme to reflect the relationships in the data. This is where the codebook is developed.

The third "thinking" analysis phase involves preliminary judgment or decisions about which domains were most important to the study (Diffendal & Weidman, 2011). In other words, I manage the data for analysis and synthesis. The purpose of this process is to narrow the focus of analysis by studying domains that are most relevant; while, making choices about which aspects of the assembled data should be emphasized, minimized, or set aside completely. This phase also includes a "data reduction" process (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Seidal, 1998). Moreover, this step also consists of developing the themes and meta-themes in the data.

The coding process fragments the interview into separate categories, forcing one to look at each detail, whereas synthesis involves piecing these fragments together to reconstruct a holistic and integrated explanation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). Overall, the researchers' approach was to come up with a number of cluster, patterns, or themes that were linked together, either similarly or divergently, and that collectively described or analyzed the overall research agenda.

The final analysis phase is the "writing" or "display" process. Data displays such as conceptual maps, graphs, diagrams, charts, and/or matrices are important in data analysis. Good data displays provide a new way of thinking about the data. The researcher is able to extract and discern patterns and interrelationships. The last activity involves drawing conclusions by re-examining the problem, the conceptual framework, and research questions. Verification can also be used to revisit the data and crosscheck or verify conclusions (Diffendal & Weidman, 2011).

In order to improve trustworthiness, I employ several strategies consistent with assessing

the “goodness” of qualitative research (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006), including peer debriefing and adhering to epistemological (constructivist) and methodological assumptions.

In the data analysis, I incorporated various research strategies to garner reliability and validity. I conducted open-ended surveys to verify the discussions during the focus group for triangulation purposes to establish validity. Discussion with the DCAPs affirmed or disaffirmed the researcher’s codebook and coding strategy.

The size of my data set is comparable to other research using a descriptive design with transcripts from approximately 16 questionnaires, 5 focus groups, and 10 interviews. Again, the data is useful to many groups such as my dissertation committee, higher education and qualitative research peers, urban school districts, local community based organizations, college/university administrators, and policymakers. The analysis is connected to the research questions throughout the coding. The timeline is two years from March 2014 – March 2016 for the analysis since it takes place simultaneously with data collection. There were minimal resources because there is only one researcher.

3.6.1 Narrative Analysis

Personal narratives are meaning-making units of discourse. The DCAPs interpret their experiences, professional beliefs, and personal convictions through their stories. Storytelling is part of the research process where participants inform the greater community about aspects of their lives and the meaning-making that takes place.

In the current study, I portray the DCAPs as an authority on college access. They are also gatekeeping advocates to students’ ability to access college. The DCAPs’ narratives emphasize

the DCAPs' perspective to create order in college admissions (Reissman, 1993). They also contribute to the construction of college knowledge as cultural capital in P-16's racialized and community context. Through their descriptions of diversity recruitment, the reader is able to decipher the DCAPs voices to create a story. The DCAPs created stories concerning their experiences and why college access is valued but limited. The narrative is constructed and the DCAPs' "culture" of diversity recruitment is explained through the individual accounts. Plummer (1995, p. 87) states, "For narratives to flourish there must be a community to hear; ...for communities to hear, there must be stories which weave together their history, their identity, their politics."

This narrative approach illuminates the intersection of biography, history, and society. For example the "personal troubles" that the DCAPs discuss in their narratives of diversity recruitment, tell us a great deal about the socio-racial stratification in P-16 education (Kohler-Reissman, 2000; Mills, 2000; Reissman, 1993). Greater social issues, such as institutional racism and discrimination within college admissions, are unearthed during the analysis. In other words, the narratives reveal the neoconservative climate that has silenced discussion on race/ethnicity (i.e. attacks on affirmative action as well as race-conscious admission policies), which has impacted diversity recruitment and, ultimately, college access for underrepresented students of color. The DCAPs' "personal troubles" are located in the contemporary time and place where they are works of history and society such as the socio-racial spaces they live and work. Narrative analysis illuminates individual as well as collective meaning juxtaposed in the socio-racial structures of P-16 education (Kohler-Reissman, 2000; Laslett, 1999; Reissman, 1993). I used the DCAPs' stories to theorize about cultural capital and racism.

By focusing on the research questions and themes of the research, I was able to create subplots to discuss the P-12 LCSD schools, college admissions, and higher education context. Sharing the DCAPs narrative is a relational activity as well as a collaborative practice that gathers others to listen and empathize (Kohler-Reissman, 2000; Reissman, 2000, p. 2). This aligns with the social constructionist paradigm.

Personal narratives serve many purposes--to remember, argue, convince, engage, or entertain their audience (Bamberg & McCabe, 1998). The “truths” of narrative accounts exists in the connections between personal, professional, and societal beliefs. Therefore, meaning-making evolves from the DCAPs’ perspective. Reissman (1993) explains, “Personal narratives—the stories we tell to ourselves, to each other, and to researchers--offer a unique window into these formations and reformations (Durbin, 2008, Kohler-Reissman, 2000). The DCAPs’ narrative representing their work “identity in its multiple guises in different contexts” (Reismann, 2002, p. 24). Furthermore, it allows for a study of the DCAPs experience and the changing meaning of college access.

3.6.2 Data Analysis Quality

Lincoln (1995) explains that interpretive inquiry is explained as a fairly recent research method that is still being defined. Therefore, discussions on interpretive inquiry center on debates about qualitative methodology to defend their work and the need for new criteria. The new paradigm criteria embraces a set of three new commitments: (a) new and emergent relations with participants; (b) the uses of inquiry and its ability to foster action; (c) a vision of research that promotes social justice, community, diversity, discourse, and caring (Lincoln, 1995).

Trustworthiness consists of any efforts by the researcher to address the more traditional quantitative issues of validity and reliability through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability; therefore, qualitative research is assessed differently from quantitative research. Validity/credibility are important in research and are the inquirer's process of assessing what he/she has stated to research (Guest et al., 2011). Furthermore, reliability/dependability is the consistency when repeating or comparing assessments within a study. In spite of traditional research protocol, it becomes important for interpretive researchers' to incorporate the new paradigm criteria because it fully includes "The Other" perspective in research methods, analysis, and findings. I also include discussions of positionality, authenticity, community, voice, reciprocity, transparency, and negative deviant analysis.

3.6.3 Reflexivity

In this section of the paper, I want to make clear my personal views and stance on promoting access to racial/ethnic minority students. By reflecting on my own feelings about college access, I recognize that I influence my data collection as well as how I analyze and interpret data. In other words, my values are present in the research process. As a working-class African American woman DCAP and a qualitative researcher that studies issues of race, equity, and education, I use my experiences as a lens throughout my research. I focus on how DCAPs attach meaning to the students, schools, departments, and communities they serve. These issues are critical to the study's execution. Based on previous research, my initial observations, and my experiences as DCAP, the purpose of this study is to gauge the DCAPs' views of race/ethnicity on college admission policies, practices, and programming. I am earnestly interested in researching college access due to my African American heritage and responsibility to the African

American community that is affected by the achievement and access gap.

Qualitative research provides a rich insight into human behavior. The literature review on cultural capital and critical race theory has helped me to better understand my own theoretical/conceptual frameworks as a researcher. I utilized both theories as the framework for this study, because, although cultural capital has historically been the lens to research college access, it lacks the consideration of race and institutional racism in college admissions. Furthermore, critical race theory establishes the importance of race in education and, for this study, college access. In addition, it places importance on using research to empower the voice of marginalized groups to address social issues such as the college access gap.

I became an Admissions Counselor because, when I was an undergraduate student, I understood that a DCAP was my advocate in the college admission process. I have become an advocate for others who are also disadvantaged in the P-16 educational system. With my job as a DCAP and being a person and staff member of color, I became an advocate for minority groups such as underrepresented racial/ethnic minority students, women in STEM, first-generation students, and urban public schools students.

As a DCAP researcher, I was able to observe the duality of the job where DCAPs are either a gatekeeper, an advocate and/or both. DCAPs can be a gatekeeper when he/she decides to uphold the admissions criteria and enrollment policies of the university. DCAPs uphold the identity and characteristics of the college/university as well as the academic standards of higher learning. However, a DCAP can also be an advocate when he/she decides to fight for the student. The DCAP understands the cultural and socio-economic background of his/her family, community, and/or school, the institutional racism of the school district and P-16 educational

system, and the potential of the student. All of these factors are part of the decision to admit or reject a student.

I fully understand that my education and research are influenced by my biases, subjectivity, and assumptions. To produce an accurate profile of college admission professionals (DCAPs), I am working within the critical and constructivism paradigms. Using Guba and Lincoln's (1994) chapter, I hope to illustrate my background so that my audience understands my stance in my research.

Again, the researcher and the context under study influence meaning-making and inquiry is value-bound (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, the researcher's goal is to be involved in the reality of the participants and interact with them in meaningful ways through ethnographic interviews. Also, my background shapes my interpretation. For example, I have acknowledged my own cultural, social, and historical experiences as a way to "position" herself in the research. Since I am a colleague, I am aware of my expectations and familiarity with this profession and the participants. In this role, I am a participant observant and am mindful of the ethical dilemmas.

3.7 DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

3.7.1 Delimitations

I explicitly state the delimitations or boundaries of this research study to be transparent about what is included and what is not. Again, the process of my design includes grounding my research in cultural capital and critical race theory. I've also devised this research in the tradition

of qualitative research and within the critical and constructivist paradigms. The conceptualization of this study focuses on analyzing the diversity college admission professionals' (DCAPs) perspective on college access. The operationalization measures such as the applied thematic analysis and verbatim transcriptions were decided to ensure experimental rigor. Through the pilot studies, I have incorporated the codebook, training, peer debriefing, and reliability measures. Coding takes the majority of analysis through utilizing a general level of keywords to fragment the text but synthesized around themes. I plan to report my results through applied thematic analysis.

Again, due to the types of questions asked, importance of researching the urban sociological context, and cyclical nature of college admissions, the descriptive design was chosen as the research methodology. I seek to conduct a naturalistic inquiry to gauge the DCAPs' vivid and informed perspective of college access. The major goal is to gain authenticity, voice, and community.

The delimitations of the colleges/universities that participate in the College Success 101 collaborative were decided by the researcher to ensure a commitment of college access outreach by the DCAPs. For the purpose of time and limited resources, I will not engage participants in the greater community or P-12 school administration (although this will become avenues for future research).

3.7.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues relating to the protection of the participants is a vital concern (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 1998, 2014; Schram, 2003). As the researcher, I am responsible for both informing and protecting respondents. Participants were consulted of their involvement and

informed of purpose of the current research study. One central issue of protecting participants in this study is the ways in which information is treated. It is anticipated that no serious ethical threats were posed to any of the participants. This study employed various safeguards to ensure the protection and rights of the participants such as privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity.

4.0 DCAPS DEFINE THE LOCAL HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT

4.1 INTRODUCTION - COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

College access is a topic of importance since it stems from the “college pipeline” issue of enrolling underrepresented students of color for college (Carter, Locks and Winkle-Wagner 2013). Many colleges/universities in the country have made commitments to diversity; and yet, their role in constructing the current climate of college access such as the college access gap and enrollment of underrepresented students of color has not been studied extensively.

In this chapter, I address research question 1 on the diversity college admission professionals (DCAPs) perspective of the higher education context. The goal is to show that DCAPs are an authority on college access through analyzing DCAPs within the College Success 101 collaborative. The purpose of the collaborative is to increase college access for the local city school district (LCSD) students. Therefore, just as P-12 creates the college-going culture, higher education also contributes to the ability of LCSD students’ going to college.

In this chapter, I give an account of the DCAP’s perspective, role and duties, the admission office as well as the institutions of higher education’s efforts to improve college access through diversity recruitment. The chapter chronicles the DCAPs’ world and higher education’s role in promoting college access. First, I provide a profile of the DCAPS as an authority on college preparation. Secondly, I analyze the DCAPs’ narratives to understand how

racist and discriminatory schemas are incorporated in institutional profiles and characteristics of college admission offices. I describe the college admission world from the DCAPs' perspective. I also give descriptions of traditional recruitment activities as well as roles and duties. This serves to give a more in-depth portrayal of LCSD and diversity recruitment practices, strategies, and policies. Third, I analyzed the ways in which colleges/university's promote college access for LCSD and diversity recruitment. I also gauged whether the DCAPs felt supported in their roles and duties to recruit underrepresented students of color. Fourth, I will analyze the DCAPs' views in light of the use of college admissions as an institutional diversity initiative. The DCAPs' narrative suggests that there is cultural habitus among the DCAPs for further exploration throughout the rest of the chapters.

The DCAPs give a glimpse of the higher education layer that is seldom explored in college access research. Therefore, it becomes important to share their narrative on the college admission process and how it assists and/or hinders college access for LCSD students. DCAPS are knowledgeable of the necessary college preparation and the implications on college admissions. The current study is designed to provide a starting point for understanding a significant facet of higher education's role in college access. It is exploratory to chronicle DCAPS as viable stakeholders to address the issues of college access for students of color. Finally, I incorporate higher education theory to explain higher education's impact on college access.

4.2 PERNA'S (2006) INTEGRATED COLLEGE ACCESS MODEL

Perna's (2006) multi-layered Integrated College Access Model is a framework to understand the multiple factors and complexity that impacts college access. The utilization of Perna's (2006) conceptual model involves multiple layers that work in conjunction to better understand the college access. As suggested by Perna's (2006) multi-layer model, one contextual layer signifies the role that higher education institutions play in shaping a student's college-going views, attitudes, and behaviors. Higher education institutions influence the process by being a source of information for students about postsecondary enrollment options (Antonio & Muniz, 2007; McDonough, Antonio & Trent, 1997; Perna, 2006; Turley, 2009). In other words, DCAPS are an authority on college knowledge as cultural capital. The focus of the current study reports the DCAPs' views of the various layers to show their interdependence. In this chapter, I report the higher education context. I chronicle the P-12 school and greater community context in the next chapter.

4.3 DCAPS AS AN AUTHORITY ON COLLEGE ACCESS

An important component of the DCAPs' college admission duties is to recruit LCSD and underrepresented students of color. Throughout the sections, the DCAPs give examples of the recruitment policies and practices in college admissions. Therefore, I regard the DCAPs as an authority on college access.

To assess the DCAPs role as a stakeholder in college pipeline, I analyzed the pilot demographic questionnaire, focus groups, and interviews. The DCAPs' defined college

preparation in order to gauge their knowledge of the factors needed to go to college. This section explores DCAPs' constructs of college preparation and defining college access, college readiness, and college-going culture. We will also revisit the concept of DCAPs as an authority on college access in order to align with cultural capital theory in chapters 6 and 7.

The DCAPs think that college readiness, college knowledge, college access are not only important; but also, acknowledge the steps and characteristics to be college-ready. The DCAPs' perspectives were enlightening and touched upon the concepts of college preparation and how college access comprises of the resources or college knowledge to gain admission and enroll. Many of the DCAPs' responses were comparable to the theoretical definitions and needs of students for effective college preparation (CollegeBoard, 2006; Conley, 2010; McClafferty et al., 2002; Perna, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Venezia et al., 2003). Some meta-themes such as interpersonal skills, college knowledge, awareness, and support, etc. did emerge that aligned with the literature review of college access research (Roderick et al., 2008 2009; Sommerfeld, 2011; Vargas, 2004). The DCAPs understand college access as cultural capital where the definition matched with the idea of college as a social and economic investment for an individual.

The DCAPs observed that students needed to fully understand the responsibilities to go to college, especially academically and financially. In other words, it is important to comprehend that college prep is a standard for college success. From the focus groups, DCAPs such as Adam explained the importance of asking students, "what they think college readiness means because most students don't really know."

4.3.1 DCAPs' Define College Access

First, they defined college access as not only admission to college but also as academic and financial opportunities. Similar to the popular beliefs of higher education as a form of social attainment, the DCAPs expressed their concerns of LCSD underrepresented students of color having the resources and cultural capital to gain college admission. Through college access, students should have opportunities to pursue or attend higher education. In general, the college admission process is an example of gaining cultural capital in the form of college knowledge to gain college access.

Students need to be aware of the steps to prepare to go to college for each high school grade level. Another point was to understand all of the postsecondary opportunities. Tyrone urges that there is a need for college knowledge among LCSD students:

The fact that they have options. Just tapping into what fits them best... Thinking about what are the standards academically... What is this school's program? Who is giving me the right options? Not just apply to this school because it's popular or I see them on TV or the website. You know really tapping into their options and how they line up with their goals career-wise."

The DCAPs explained that college access is awareness of not only the college admissions process but also college in general. It ranges from academic capital and computer literacy to financial aid and course registration. Such awareness could lead to greater retention efforts.

The DCAPs are concerned about the amount of college awareness that students have about not only the application process but also the college system such as financial aid, housing, registration, etc. Also, they are not quite sure where and if LCSD students are getting college knowledge. The DCAPs discussed the possibility that if students are not having conversations about college at school, that they might not have them at home either. So, this puts students as

well as guidance counselors and DCAPs in a precarious situation to aspire to improve college access in the midst of limited college resources.

The DCAPs compared the recruitment process to finding a diamond in the rough or a pearl in the ocean. The DCAPs talk to as many students as possible but realistically connect with a small and manageable number. Through follow-up conversations, the DCAPs create a relationship and support for the student through the application process. These students often succeed in the admission process and most likely enroll. The relationships also continue beyond admission where DCAPs serve as a support throughout the college experience.

4.3.2 DCAPs' Define College Readiness

GPA and academic rigor are important, yet the DCAPs defined college readiness as gaining college knowledge and skills about the SATs, admission requirements, and academic resources, which is just as essential to go to college. In addition, the DCAPs felt that students needed to learn good habits such as maintaining good attendance, effective time management, good study techniques, etc.

The DCAPs also affirmed that LCSD students have to consciously and purposely seek resources for college access because college admissions is not an automatic process. For example, Martin discusses the lack of confidence and socio-emotional issues that impact college readiness for LCSD students:

To not only get them exposed but also to make them aware of what they need to get ready for, so that it relieves the anxiety of college prep, and I think that's most important. Relieving the anxiety just like our SAT workshop helps them relieve the anxiety of taking a test.

Martin hints at some of the underlying feelings of fear and anxiety as students and parents endure

the college admissions process. It is an emotional experience for the better or the worse. The DCAPs expressed academic as well as interpersonal challenges such as low expectations, narrow-mindedness, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation. Frankie exemplifies this thought in her comments:

Uhm and so that's the, that's that college success student that we're looking for. We're trying to find these students who, for whatever reason, they weren't kind of really pushed or encouraged uhm in terms of college. Or or made to think about the grades and how that would play in. Uhm but at an [higher education] institution they could focus in more, when it's about their education. They have the ability, they just haven't been prepped to do whatever it is that they need to be doing in terms of college.

Also, the lack of college knowledge reflects some of the challenges to the ideal college readiness. Frankie makes a comparison between schools with poor college-going culture with high college-going culture:

That awareness lacks in many students. But it's, I just don't think that there is the same kind of push that goes on at some of the other school. My niece's counselor is tuned in and specifically a college counselor...They meet with students and parents and they have to choose to get the applications by the deadline. It's part of their writing classes to get their essays together. It's fully incorporated into the high school culture that everyone is going to college.

This is a different strategy than LCSD schools' where the teachers have not incorporated college-going into the school culture but views it as an extra job that is not mandated by the school district.

The DCAPs commented on the discrepancies in LCSD students' college preparation due to the lack of academic rigor and high expectations. Throughout Jaune's narrative, she gives examples of the polarity between LCSD high schools in the same district. Frankie further explains the gaps in academic achievement in LCSD with colleges/universities:

The grading is an issue. They think that they're so prepared because they are coming out [of high school] with a 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, and that they're intelligent and ready to go. And it becomes a supershocker when they come to college and they see that people have been doing things that they haven't ever heard of before and at a level that they're not ready to

compete because they haven't been properly prepared in high school. Writing preparation, research papers don't have a grasp of college level.

This quote brings up an interesting point that, even if students seek resources and are considered college-ready within LCSD schools, they still may lack competency in areas such as writing, math, computer literacy, etc. They have the right GPA and SAT scores to be admitted but lack academic capital. This could explain the disparities in attrition rates, the rise in remedial courses, and grant-funded retention efforts. There is not only an achievement gap and college access gap but also an academic competency gap that is inter-related.

Martin also explains the need to talk about retention strategies, “gotta talk about survival, survival skills.” In recruitment, the group discussed the need to explain the resources on college campuses while also involving college/university staff and faculty to talk with students about opportunities and services on campus.

4.3.3 DCAPs' Define College-Going Culture

Third, the DCAPs explained college-going culture by explaining: (a) All of the people that are involved in the college admissions process i.e. students, parents, friends, and P-12 educators; (b) Encouragement and support are a part of creating a positive and strong college-going culture; (c) The student is to be conscious of the academic, social, financial, professional steps to apply and enroll in college.

The DCAPs explain that a student's immediate environment, such as the timing of college access and academic enrichment programs, limits a student's college knowledge. Most DCAPs agreed that students need college knowledge early. Verunike comments that the awareness needs to start sooner. She states:

But I think that even doing things with the 8th or 9th graders would be useful. Uhm just to get kids starting to think about it sooner... I think even if we started off with something small... Uhm that would be a good push. Just to see where students are at now.

Sasha adds that DCAPs need to be cognizant of the previous knowledge that students may or may not have:

I've learned that students are starting from different places in the application process. Not only geographically but their background can be very different and each student approaches the application process differently with a different level of you know engagement from their parents, engagement from their schools. I think it's just always best to not assume anything and to meet a student from where they're coming from and see how you can best serve them.

Verunike and Sasha discuss the need for DCAPs to serve as resources for students, regardless of sociocultural factors such as race and/or income.

The DCAPs also discussed differences in the college-going culture between urban public and suburban high schools. For example not all of the area high schools participate in CS101. Some participate every year; while, others have not participated in the past 5 years. The DCAPs did not give specific details such as naming particular schools or counselors; however, from the conversations, I could sense the challenges that DCAPs face working with the LCSD public high schools.

4.3.4 DCAPs' Groupthink

Due to the knowledge and insight, this group of stakeholders is a viable resource when seeking relevant views on college access and the college admission process to inform theory.

There are also similarities and Martin states:

Uhm, I know some college representatives for a long time. Unfortunately, I don't really get into their business in terms of how they recruit their students. I understand that they have to deal with certain academic and SAT requirements. Ah, I don't know how much they can go further than that in terms of assisting the student like we can. I'm pretty sure

the state school would have the Act 101 program just like we have one...but I believe based on the associates that I've met that they probably feel the same way I do. They might not have been here as long as I have, but based on the years that they've been here I think they can agree a lot of things that I say.

There is a particular groupthink and culture in college admissions and among the DCAPs that I will explore in chapter 6 concerning the DCAPs' cultural habitus. It is worth exploring to better understand higher education's construct of college admissions and role in college access. In regards to the DCAPs' views, there were similarities as well as differences. This can explain the groupthink of a like-minded group as well as the similarities in the job of a DCAP to promote college access among urban underrepresented students of color. Also, the DCAPs were very specific in their responses and had conceptual knowledge of college access. For example, college readiness was discussed and described by all participants, although the words "college readiness" was not necessarily used. Rather, when participants discussed "college access", they referred to the concept of "college readiness" such as academic preparation and interpersonal skills.

In addition, it is important to show that there is also variety among the group. I posit that, the varied responses in defining concepts such as college-going culture, show the diversity of beliefs among the DCAPs as well as the types of institution. There are also divergent beliefs among the DCAPs about college preparation as the responsibility of the student or the school. For the DCAPs who believed that it is the student's responsibility, they stated that the student should understand and be aware of the requirements in the college admission process. Other DCAPs believed that the culture/environment plays a big factor in how students are encouraged and supported to go to college. This can explain some of the inequitable lack of college knowledge for students and disjuncture in the educational system (McClafferty et al., 2002; Perna, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009; Venezia et al., 2003). In other words, some of the DCAPs expected students to understand the criteria for college admissions when they may not

attend a high school that has a good college-going culture or have the resources to promote college readiness. This conflict in the conception and cultural reproduction of college access will be explored in the next chapter.

Roderick et al. (2008) found that low access to social capital (norms, information, and clear structures of support) made managing the process of identifying colleges that matched student qualifications and interests difficult. While students aspired and were motivated to enroll in college, they did not complete college applications and submit financial aid forms (Roderick et al., 2008). The DCAPs recognized the importance of opportunity, college knowledge, and awareness, which aligns with research on college knowledge as well as college access barriers (McClafferty et al., 2002; Perna, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009; Venezia et al., 2003; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Venezia et al., 2003). They are also aware of the educational policies and practices of P-12 schools as well as higher education institutions. All in all, the DCAPs think that college knowledge, college access, and school/community outreach are important.

4.4 DCAPS' DEFINE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

4.4.1 Race/Ethnicity in College Admissions

College access plays a crucial role in expanding socio-racial contexts of choice. Furthermore, colleges/universities are gatekeepers to a college degree or certification, the most valued social positions, and a means for social attainment and mobility in the U.S. (Moses, 2001). Admission standards and selection of students for college is at the heart of the struggle for equal opportunity and social justice. Again, the dominant social structure places

underrepresented students of color at a disadvantage in competitive higher education admissions, thereby constraining their socio-racial context of college choice. This explains the college access gap since supports for underrepresented students of color' expansion in college choice is not as advantageous as their White American peers.

Postsecondary institutions have tried to promote access for underrepresented students of color through a variety of enrollment strategies such as targeted diversity recruitment. Again, policies that regard a student's race/ethnicity, in order to consider the student's cultural context in the admission process, are labeled as race-conscious. Moses (2001, p. 28) states that, "Race-conscious policies serve the dual purpose of enhancing students' context of college choice and supporting the goals and functions of colleges/university's mission." Often, a college/university's mission to enroll students from a variety of cultural backgrounds includes consideration of racial and ethnic background as a plus factor.

Colleges/universities are finding that they serve as a mediator between providing student diversity and permitting socio-racial stratification in order to promote college access. Although institutions of higher education serve as the gatekeepers and educators for the highest status and highest power positions in our society, they are also a part of the social function of democracy (Moses, 2001). Undergraduate programs employ multifaceted strategies including:

- Targeted recruitment;
- Defining admission criteria by social context;
- DCAPs as diversity recruiters;
- Public relations through the use of media and marketing;
- Diversity programming;
- College access outreach programs.

College access is multi-faceted and democratic in the attempt to combat oppressive societal structures, broaden student's socio-racial context of college choice, and help develop student's self-determination and personal autonomy.

4.4.2 The Business of College Admissions

Colleges/universities are in the business of producing knowledge as well as educating the future generations of the nation (Binder & Aldrich, 1995; Dixon, 1995; Hossler et al., 1999; Huddleston, 2000). Higher education is a service industry where colleges/universities depend on recruiting and enrolling as many students as possible to maintain their budget and operations. One of the important departments that pertains to the logistics and operations of colleges/universities is the admissions office. College admission, as part of enrollment management, is a comprehensive unit within college/university's organizational structure (Binder & Aldrich, 1995; Dixon, 1995). Therefore, understanding the various stages and purposes of enrollment management, such as diversity recruitment is critical to institutional equity and success. Furthermore, Dixon (1995) explains that this segment of administration in higher education is important to research since it has experienced significant change and pressure from many constituencies about race-conscious admissions policies and diversity recruitment over the years.

Most colleges/universities consider recruitment and enrollment management important work to sustain the institution's goals and budget, therefore, admissions is tuition-driven. Huddleston (2000) explains that the admissions office is expected to produce significant revenues based on student headcount. With the need for revenues from student enrollment, there is great pressure for a strategic college admissions office. DCAPs such as Mustafa and Jaune explain that college admission is being asked to focus on academic quality and other student performance variables. A big challenge for admission offices and DCAPs is facilitating enrollment management, which is comprised of complex activities to recruit new students into quality programs and expect them to successfully complete college (Binder & Aldrich, 1995;

Dixon, 1995; Hossler et al., 1999; Huddleston, 2000).

Also, there are constant battles to resolve the underlying pressures and dimensions of colleges/universities' organizational culture through college admissions. For example, many of the DCAPs such as Pam and Sasha indicated that college admissions are trying to garner more applications and fight the inevitable decreasing enrollment numbers due to the decline in high school aged applicants in the local region. Pam states:

I think as far as a our campus goes, our enrollment is struggling uhm I think that that's kinda of what you see in [the region], we have a lot of competition in this area. You know and in other service areas like in H_town for example there's not much going on, there's not that much out there in H_town. There's a lot of options. Uhm and especially since costs begin to increase community college becomes a very viable option too. So we're not just getting it at four year schools but know we're competing with 2-year. So I think in our service area, we're struggling but there are a lot of external factors that are going on there.

College admissions are fighting the pressures of the college/university to increase enrollment and tuition to allocate the overall budget. They often explained that they have to be strategic in their efforts to use the least amount of resources for the greatest gains.

The following sections focus on the enrollment concerns of college admissions and DCAPs. First, I will discuss traditional enrollment strategies in light of institutional racism. Next, I will share common race-conscious admission policies and diversity recruitment activities to further show that diversity matters in college access.

4.5 INSTITUTIONAL RACISM IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

4.5.1 Institutional Mission and Characteristics

Most of the DCAPs discussed the university mission, structure, size, as well as university characteristics that affects enrollment. These are defining areas that impact the various aspects of college admissions. For example, Frankie mentions her institution's size as a factor and benefit in diversity recruitment. She explains that the college mission, "It really does stand up for what we say that we're about uhm in terms of the university." She continues:

So I really appreciate that [The University] heritage that we kind of are falling back on and really securing uhm and making sure that it is a solid background that we actually do that we know we say that this is our mission and we're actually living up to what we say we want to do.

Frankie also explains that the size and mission of her institution are good reasons why they should focus on recruiting LCSD students:

I think our size really lends us to focus on that that you know needy community, who needs that attention, who really needs someone there to encourage them, who needs to be in a small classroom, where they can't really hide behind another person, or another person's words or intelligence, or something like that. They have to stand on their own so, uhm you know just that that re-focusing.

Frankie continues that, "We have the capacity to really hand-hold. Uhm and so I really appreciate the move towards that re-focus of who were are in terms of a student and what we can do for a student." Similar to Frankie's college/university, Martin also remarks on the mission of his university as, "We were, you know, designed to, you know, work with the common man. - Because of our two plus two system you can still have the opportunity to be admitted to [The University] with a less academic requirements." Frankie and Martin represent two very different institutions but they share similar missions to promote diversity, encourage higher learning, and

aid communities. Both remarked that their colleges/universities are accessible and accommodating to LCSD students and underrepresented students of color. Even though they target recruitment in LCSD and other urban school districts that are predominately students of color, the colleges/universities are selective in the college admissions process and predominately white institutions. In other words, there are sociocultural differences that I will discuss throughout this chapter and chapter 7.

Pam and Jaune remark on the challenges of institutional characteristics such as the hierarchical and decentralized structure. Pam discusses the hierarchy of her university and states, “Oh boy, are we hierarchical! I sometimes wonder if the Boston marathon was through a university, no one would ever finish. Cuz like where do you go. Uhm the amount of red tape is ridiculous.” Pam lists the hierarchy:

So I report to the director of enrollment management on our campus. Uhm who reports to. Cuz our campus is really confusing. Every campus outside of the main campus has a chancellor, enrollment management, counselors, registrar, financial aid, it’s all under enrollment management. Uhm the director reports to the chancellor. The chancellor then reports to the Vice president of our commonwealth campuses at the main campus. Uhm who reports to Lord only knows but my guess would probably be the Provost cuz I can’t see her going directly to the President. So she probably reports to the Provost who reports to the President who reports to the Board of Trustees.

Jaune further explains that due to decentralization within the hierarchy, not many departments/offices are aware of the diversity recruitment at her institution. Jaune states:

It’s a decentralized university. You know and so, whether it works or not, I mean there are some inefficiencies that come with being decentralized. And every department having its own department head and assistants and all of that you know. So I definitely don’t think that it’s noted university-wide of the recruitment efforts that we do.

With such hierarchy and decentralization, the DCAPs express the challenges in communication between departments and offices. The DCAPs point out the confusion and ignorance that reflects diversity recruitment. Furthermore, colleges/universities’ organizational structures influence the

DCAPs abilities to share insight about the objectives, goals, and strategies to recruit underrepresented students of color. Overall, colleges/universities strive to be accessible and accommodating; however, due to the organizational structure, they are not as effectual as promised.

4.5.2 Traditional College Admission Characteristics

Stemming from enrollment goals is the core practices that characterize college/university admission offices. Overall, the college/university mission and identity is often reflected in diversity recruitment and vice versa. From the individual profiles and in reviewing diversity recruitment such as DCAPS titles, duties, recruitment travels, and admission policies, postsecondary institutions run the gamut on college admissions staffing and strategies. They range from large to small, not selective to very selective, and centralized in one office to decentralized among many campuses. Some have extensive admission offices and/or have developed comprehensive enrollment management plans; while, others only have a small staff with intuitive planning.

Similar to the college/university characteristics, undergraduate recruitment is determined by the size, selectivity, and centralization of the admissions office (Dixon, 1995). Size determines the marketing effort which translates to the number of staff, PR/publications/communications, programming, and the scope of the recruitment territory. Selectivity of college applicants is another major factor that ranges from open admissions to highly selective. This also determines the application requirements, which in turn affects the admission criteria and the number of applications and enrollments. A smaller function of selectivity is research and trends analysis to be the most effective and efficient office.

Centralization considers the office as well as the university structure. In the organizational structure there are clerical and data processing staff, temporary/part-time workers, student helpers, and admission counselors who are managed by mid-managers and then a director oversees the department. There are senior administrators such as the vice president of enrollment and the provost that oversees the process and how it relates to the university's mission, budget, and strategic plan. There are other factors that include technology, yet size, selectivity, and centralization are the biggest concerns for most admission offices.

Although Verunike works at a large university and there are many offices in the region, she talks about the collaborative work of her office due to the small size and multiple duties that requires everybody to do a little bit. She states:

Uhm so everybody does a little bit of everything, which is nice cuz we're all on the same page in terms of knowing exactly what our office does uhm and sort of what's on the schedule any given time. Cuz the Fall is very hectic for us there are lots of high school visits, there are college fairs, there are campus visits. Uhm we do things with financial aid in the Spring, we do SAT prep workshops for juniors in the spring. You know we sort of it allows everyone to be on the same page at the same time.

Verunike's description of her office is an example of different recruitment strategies based on size, selectivity, and centralization. She works at a large university that deemed it necessary to have various offices in the region to divide the work. Her university is selective so, she is able to make decisions but applications are also referred to the main central office to make admission decisions. Her university is decentralized because of the autonomous offices throughout the region that have their own staff, budget, and enrollment numbers. This is similar to the strategy of Jaune's public research university, yet Jaune is based at the main campus office. Therefore, she has a much larger admission office and was designated with specific duties and roles within the office.

Other DCAPs have similar or different configurations of size, selectivity, and

centralization in the office. Feliz works at a small, private liberal arts college with a medium-sized office that's larger than Verunike but smaller than Mustafa and Sasha's private research university. Like many of the other DCAPs, Feliz has a designated recruitment territory and jobs/duties. Feliz and Frankie's institutions have low selectivity and they are fully responsible to assist students within their territories, which is similar to the majority of DCAPs. At the public community college, Sly has different duties since he recruits not only high school students but also adults. Even though his institution has open admissions, he has to recruit in a big territory like many of the other DCAPs. His office is decentralized to different campuses and is responsible for the prospective students at his campus. Mustafa and Sasha work at a highly selective institution with a large admission office because it is centralized at one campus. The other DCAPs discussed their admission office and they were composed of different formulaic combination of size, selectivity, and centralization of the admissions office.

The DCAPs give a glimpse of the institutional characteristics that highly impact college admissions and, ultimately, diversity recruitment. The DCAPs have similar or different mission statements but all of the institutional goals include a focus on diversity and inclusiveness. Yet, none of the DCAPs stated that they have achieved campus diversity.

The colleges/universities represented in this study are still working towards building their critical mass of underrepresented students of color to promote structural diversity. Not just diversity in numbers. There are some institutional challenges such as the institutional hierarchy and decentralized structure limit admissions' ability to recruit students of color and promote campus diversity. The DCAPs discussed their admission office and they were composed of similar formulaic DCAPs role and duties, targeted diversity recruitment, and race-conscious admission policies.

4.6 THE ROLES AND DUTIES OF DCAPS

Pam really gives a quintessential definition of college admissions and the role of a college admission counselor:

Admissions is pretty much the gatekeepers to college. So what we do is tell people about XYZ school uhm and then we're kinda like that frontline. So if you have questions about applying or if you want to apply or whether you want transcripts or SAT scores uhm and in some cases depending on the school, we actually make decisions and some don't make decisions, you just think that we make decisions.

In essence, the bulk of the DCAPs recruitment activities include a lot of interaction within students, guidance counselors, parents, etc. Sasha explains:

I've learned that a lot of it is customer service. Uhm I think I kind of expected that but I think you know you have short-term connections with a lot of the people that you interact with on a daily basis, making sure that you're providing them with uhm patience and helpfulness. I think it's much more important than I could have imagined.

Pam and Sasha explain that the DCAPs serve as a resource and interact with students and families to answer questions ranging from the college/university majors and student organizations to the application process and admission statistics. They largely serve as customer service representatives to ensure that prospective students are satisfied with their interactions with the college/university. DCAPs ensure that students get the best overall experience in order to foster a good and lasting impression of the college/university.

Similar to other DCAPs and previous research, Sly gives a detailed account of DCAPs' responsibility for a variety of recruitment activities: generating interest in the institution by creating a comprehensive student profile; identifying and contacting the potential applicant pool; converting prospective students into applicants; maintaining consistent contact with the applicants to sustain their interest in the institution; coordinating programs and activities to help sustain interest through the application process; hosting yield enhancement activities to

encourage enrollment; providing quality customer service; and maintaining and developing constituent relations with various community leaders (Duniway, 2012; Hossler et al., 1999).

Other DCAPs explain their primary duties and roles within their own college admissions office. Jaune describes her role as, “Really being an admissions counselor. So meeting with students individually, giving information sessions, uh recruiting at high schools, uhm and then accepting or denying students from the general population.” Frankie discusses her role and duties as an admissions counselor, “My responsibilities are really at the counselor level...Uhm I help the families get connected with whoever they need to on-campus.” Frankie also talks about some of the traditional recruitment activities and strategies, “We uhm have to visit for high school visits and I mean just kind of the traditional things. This also includes recruitment travel to different cities for college fairs and high school visits as well as campus events.”

The biggest revelation from this list is that it is not exhaustive; so, for most of the DCAPs, diversity recruitment is not the only major duty or role.

4.6.1 DCAPs’ Explain Role and Duties

The DCAPs are considered front-line staff members to represent the college/university to students, guidance counselors, parents, and community members (Binder & Aldrich, 1995; Dixon, 1995), especially communities of color. Jaune explains, “You know, there are people like myself who are doing the groundwork, the dirty work and uhm, I put that in quotes ‘dirty work.’ But you know I’m the one who talks with the majority of students. I do, I’m doing a lot of being in the schools.” Their biggest duties are to provide college counseling in a professionally poised manner.

Staff, including DCAPs, perform a lot of transactions to counsel students, guidance

counselors, and families from email and PR communications to one-on-one conversations and large presentations. Also, a part of diversity recruitment includes leading tours, conducting telephone campaigns, social media campaigns, overnight programs, and giving presentations. It is also hard-work due to the recruitment travel and work over the weekends and evenings. Pam gives a great example of the role of the DCAP:

I think, depending on the student, I also might take on the role of parent, or external organization. You know because I think you find kids who have real needs and in admissions we see that a lot. Uhm and so I think that when you see if you make a solid connection with a student, you start to fill in those gaps that you see they don't have. You know. If you need me to take you down to the SAT prep workshop, you let me know and you be ready at 6:30 and you know. That's the kind of stuff you do. But I think. You know it's interesting that college admission professional and an admissions counselor, like the professional, we go the extra step. Because we're all in it for the good of the kids. You know and as you work with them over the course of the year they go from the kids to our kids to my kids. You know when you see and they come to campus. You don't get rid of them.

She adds:

So I think depending on how you see yourself, in admissions, you either go the extra mile or you don't. And also it depends on the [college] that you work for, where you have to go the extra mile, if you want to get that kid. Uhm whereas other schools you don't really have to. They're coming to you.

Janet Lavin Rapelye's (1999) states that college admission professionals, are simultaneously educators and business managers where admission to college is to further educate students as well as serve the administrative needs of colleges to enroll students. In this way, improving college access, examining demographics, and achieving student diversity are just some of the important issues that are being addressed by college admission offices and DCAPs (Huddleston, 2000).

The DCAPs have familiarity with high schools and strong educational beliefs. Many of the DCAPS have varying work experience including guidance and/or teaching experience. DCAPs possess professional character traits such as poise and friendliness as well as a

personable demeanor in order to assist students and guidance counselors with college knowledge. All of these traits help in recruiting a high need population such as LCSD students. Their efforts also show the specialization within the DCAPs' job duties and responsibilities.

Due to the poor college-going culture and high need for college knowledge at LCSD schools, DCAPs spend resources and time explaining the institution to others, support major college decisions, and giving instructions about complex admission procedures (Binder & Aldrich, 1995). Such duties require good listening and advising skills. More importantly, they need to know their institutions thoroughly in order to explain key facts to others. The DCAPs' nurturing behavior is a reaction to student's poor college-going behavior and high need for college knowledge. However, there are expectations that students take more individual responsibility and seek help when needed. The DCAPs note that a college-going culture of support and a cooperative environment are needed for students to call on professionals such as DCAPs for help. Yet, this is contrary to what the DCAPs explained as the low college-going reality of LCSD schools and the lack of counseling for LCSD students to gain access to college. Therefore, there is a gap in what is ideal to the reality that we will further discuss in the next chapter.

4.6.1.1 Specialization of DCAPs

Pam gives another great example of the reason why DCAPs' positions exist:

I think one of the big things that attracted me to the job was the fact that as an admissions counselor I think I take my first generation college status in the equation everywhere uhm and so the two previous schools that I worked at it was more and more difficult for me to sell students on those schools because I didn't believe in the product and so I think that [The University] has the quality that you can really stand behind and it's demonstrated quality uhm and so that was one of the things that attracted me. That was the big thing that attracted me to apply for the college and then they offered it. This I can get behind so.

She adds:

And so I think that I relate to students and parents because I see a lot of my own experiences in these students. You know a lot of them are first-generation students, minority students, low-income students, and I'm like I've covered all been there done all of those things. And I think you know when you have somebody who is honest with you about what this road looks like then I think that the students respond differently. You know as opposed to, I think it also helps that I look like the students because I think that people respond differently to someone that looks like them. You know, it's 2015 and I think that race still plays a big part in things and so I don't hear much opposition from my colleagues about that. You know they're like go for it... But those schools are mine.

Pam gives a great explanation sociocultural factors such as race/ethnicity impact college admissions. As a DCAP, she sees that race/ethnicity matters. Even for DCAPs that are not staff of color, Sasha is an example of attaining racial consciousness to work in college admissions and being a DCAP. She explained that during college and afterwards, she became aware of the racial and income segregation. She states that in admissions she can address it:

So yeah I think we even do that one when I think about who do I send to each school. I didn't go to E_School so I think it's in some ways it's positive. You know we send someone like [Maurice] who is a very great example of an intelligent high-achieving Black man to a school that they don't have many examples of that. And uhm in some sense I think that it's a benefit to have those certain types of populations together and having students benefit from those types of experiences but that's pretty much where it ends.

Pam and Sasha give examples of being bicultural middle managers where they negotiate race/ethnicity as culture with institutional racism in college admissions. They also show signs of sociocultural "double-consciousness" where they acknowledge a student's race/ethnicity to bridge cultural differences and, ultimately, fit within the institution's race-conscious admission policies.

The DCAPs also explain the bicultural nature of diversity recruitment where you have to be knowledgeable and work with secondary schools, community organizations, and his/her respective postsecondary institution. During one of the focus groups, a Private DCAP, Jerry,

discusses the many duties of the job, “I think that’s what’s a little difficult because no one’s title in this room is outreach anything. Most people’s title isn't outreach and I think that’s part of the issue. Because most of the people have different hats and it’s still an important piece; but whenever it comes down to it... What’s going to fall to the waste side?” The DCAPs explain that diversity recruitment and outreach is a lot of work and specialization. For example, some of the DCAPs used their own personal time and resources to participate in College Success 101 and attend other community events. In the questionnaires many of the DCAPs indicated that they partner with community organizations. This is often on top of their traditional admission job duties. Some DCAPs felt supported by their institution to sponsor community outreach. Yet, throughout our discussions, the DCAPs explained that they had to rationalize their community involvement to their supervisors on how this will attribute to the university’s enrollment strategy, such as their work in CS101.

Yet, despite the specialization, many of the DCAPs’ positions are considered entry-level. Their pay is equivalent to entry-level educators such as teachers and guidance counselors. Verunike stated, “So uh I guess my official title on paper would be enrollment services specialist 3, which makes me an entry level admission counselor for [The University].” For many of the DCAPs, this was one of the first real professional jobs after graduation. Like Verunike, Pam, and Sasha, many of the DCAPs entered the job because they had worked with the Admissions office at their alma maters as volunteers or paid student workers such as tour guides. However, there are also many challenges within the admissions profession. Feliz indicates that there is a lot of turnover in college admissions, which is very true. In the past 9 years that I’ve participated in CS101, there is only one remaining member that still works in admissions from when I started. Each college/university has gone through their share of turnovers and promotions.

Another challenge is the gender and ethnic diversity gains but not in leadership. McDonough and Robertson (1995) explains that, “We have within our professional staff assistant ranks the potential for future professional leaders and improve the diversity of the profession.” In other words, there are few DCAPS that are in leadership positions, even when diversity recruitment is a specialization that requires multicultural competence as well as knowledge of communities of color, organizations, and events.

Although DCAPs are considered specialized diversity counselors, the DCAPs questioned the effectiveness of their LCSD recruitment. Mustafa explains the challenges to engage school staff, students, families, and community members:

We’ve all tried different events and even in the evenings to bring in not only students but parents and they’re not well-received. How do you get the audience? Uh we do it for CS101 and it’s worked well. But how do we, you know add or build to that to that uhm, because CS101 can’t serve every student and CS101 is a very targeted group at 2.3-2.9 area range, 3.0 range. Whereas what about the other students who may not go to CS101. You know how are they getting that information?

Mustafa acknowledges his role and duties of sharing college knowledge to underrepresented students of color in order to promote college access. Yet, he and others showed their concern of how to overcome challenges in the P-16 educational system.

4.6.1.2 DCAPs as bicultural middle managers

The DCAPs are considered bicultural middle managers for various reasons. One, is their work between P-12 and higher education systems. Two, is their experiences and work with connecting communities of color with offices, departments, and, more importantly, colleges/universities that are predominately white.

Martin describes, in one of the focus groups, how DCAPs can stretch themselves to their maximum limit. He states, “We have to be careful not to stretch ourselves thin. You know we get

caught up in doing so many things and we're doing everything. And then you burn yourself out."

Many of the DCAPs are staff of color and are considered to be bicultural middle managers between the P-12 schools, community, and senior administration in higher education.

Martin further explains, "I know that it's hard... If you're particularly focusing on one college. You have to deal with all that's inside. And it's just like you said, if you don't do it, then it might not be done." Martin continues:

But you're doing all of this stuff outside of campus. But you got to deal with the things that are inside of campus. And then you got to deal with home. And you and eventually you're gonna be doing it just to do it and to get it done. And not to value it because you're not going to enjoy it.

For example, although Frankie states that she has support and autonomy, she still has to gain approval from her supervisor:

We do have a lot of autonomy in this office. I make my own travel calendar and give that to my superiors. I schedule my own high school visits. In outreach I have a lot of opportunity to do whatever I want with outreach. So uhm there's a lot of flexibility given to me. Hence why I can do so much with College Success 101.

So Frankie is able to do her work with autonomy and support but she works within the parameters of the office's enrollment strategy and university policies. This shows the real source of cultural power and bureaucracy within the university structure. Furthermore, senior administration (dean, provosy, and/or director) may or may not recognize the importance of diversity and inclusive excellence, which determines the degree of race-conscious admission policies and the level of community outreach.

4.7 DCAPS DEFINE DIVERSITY RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

When it comes to local and diversity recruitment, there is a specialization that impacts college admissions. Over the decades, the college admission office has evolved into a systematic enrollment management with well-informed practices, strategies, and policies such as presentations, recruitment travel, application review, PR/marketing, social media. Yet, there are areas of admissions such as diversity recruitment that remain and align with the traditional purpose of college admission counseling.

The colleges/universities recruit to promote diversity while also boosting public image. The most popular forms of recruitment activities and community outreach were: high school visits, college fairs, targeted urban recruitment travel, school/community campus tours, community outreach, and community programs/events such as College Success 101. Among some of the colleges/universities, some sponsored diversity campus overnight visits and summer pre-college programs. Within the diversity of the urban context and high school types, the DCAPs primarily recruited in the local public high schools to follow the educational trends of underrepresented students who predominately attend public schools.

The colleges/universities all expressed efforts to recruit LCSD students, primarily as part of diversity recruitment. In other words, LCSD recruitment and community outreach has become synonymous with diversity recruitment. Sasha states, “We not only have a commitment to the city but we also have a commitment to first-generation, low-SES, ethnic minority students. There’s a lot of overlap with the students that I’m serving in the city.”

For example, Tyrone is responsible for ethnic minority recruitment, junior recruitment, women’s recruitment, women in STEM, first-generation students, lower SES students. He states, “So basically our targeted recruitment populations are uhm students who are underrepresented.

And uhm minority, considered to be minorities within the population. Uhm so that's my main overall responsibilities."

Jaune's primary territory is LCSD schools and is also on the diversity recruitment team, "So everything from sending out mailings to organizations, reaching out to specific diverse students from underrepresented populations, recruiting those students, as well as hosting underrepresented students here at the university. So I'm [the] personal contact for those students." Mustafa is the supervisor of the diversity recruitment team at his college/university where LCSD recruitment falls within the targeted recruitment initiatives team.

Verunike explains that her main duties are, "to recruit multicultural students from the area. Although we do work with all demographics, uhm you know we sorta have a vested interest in the minority population in [The Local City] and sort of exposing those students uh to [The University]." Martin also talks specifically about the diversity recruitment efforts, "Uhm, our outreach office here, our focus is all students of color. However, we help all students because we know that there are many majority students who are disadvantaged and some majority students just unaware in terms of being well-informed of what it takes to be admitted to a college institution." Again, LCSD recruitment is diversity recruitment.

4.7.1 College/University LCSD Recruitment

Most of the DCAPs expressed the need and importance of recruiting locally. Frankie explains that the LCSD recruitment comes from, "Uhm LCSD I don't know are necessarily a primary [feeder school]... Well, well their numbers were a priority so, bringing in those students and the fact that we're in [The Local City] was a priority." Some of the DCAPs such as Frankie give specific activities. She states that, "You've gotta go to all of the PCHE fairs uhm and we

have to have a presence at those. We uhm have to visit for high school visits and I mean just kind of the traditional things.”

From his position at an elite private research university, Mustafa believes that there is a need to recruit in LCSD. He states:

And I think the big one is uh one the students are in our backyard. They’re right here. Uh you know we have a lot of great institutions uh and they should really consider as a viable option regardless of what level they may be academically uh. They should know about the schools that are right here, as I mentioned, there are a lot of schools here.

Mustafa comments that they do have a local city school district recruitment plan. He further explains that he receives a lot of support, “And so the director is very much involved and is always engaging us on what else can we do. Is it time to rethink what we’re doing? So the plan that we’ve had has evolved.” He explains his office’s recruitment plan:

LCSD recruitment plan is a part of our overall office strategic recruitment plan. So it’s not you know, well alright let’s do a little bit here and then no. But it’s something we talk about when doing our marketing action plan. It’s something that the President has talked about, it’s something that the board of trustees have talked about, how do we get more students from [LCSD]. We’ve done some stuff where we have tried to, we have 6 week summer programs where we’ve even tried to get some more students from [LCSD] to go to those programs, as well, and that’s a way for us to impact them earlier on.

Similar to Tierney’s (2005) prediction that some institutions will have planned recruitment while others will not. Mustafa represents the comprehensive planning associated with large and selective universities.

When I asked her to discuss if there is a plan for local recruitment, Feliz indicated that, “I mean that’s definitely something that we’re focusing on. She continued by saying:

Like we have a scholarship project. I had to put together a marketing and promotions plan for LCSD. So you know I’m working with our marketing director/VP, working with him and then also the other marketing people. Kind of thinking together what kind of message do we want to convey to these students. So yeah I do, obviously it’s a really slow process. It’s not like I said going to be fixed in a day so far, so good.

Frankie explains her admissions office challenges to devise a LCSD diversity recruitment plan:

Now there have been attempts to make a specific plan, particularly when the [scholarship] money came into play. Uhm but nothing that's been all of that successful in terms of organization. I think most and a lot of the effort has been looked at for retention because we want to look better in their reports. Uhm so in turns of recruitment, I I I mean I have support for again whatever I need. I have a lot of autonomy. They'll let me do what I want and give me whatever I need. Uhm you know, if the [scholarship students] want to visit, if they want to do lunch, we can do that and whatever the case may be. We have a lot of support on campus for what we need, which is nice. But no there's no specific recruitment plan.

Both Frankie and Feliz felt that they had autonomy and an intuitive planning process due to the small nature of the offices and universities. Frankie commented that it allows for flexibility and adaptability to accommodate various recruitment activities. This is dissimilar from a complex and very comprehensive recruitment plan to guide their marketing and outreach efforts. The rest of the DCAPs fall within this spectrum of valuing a structured plan to valuing flexibility. So, college admission runs the full gamut from having a written, detailed plan to not having a plan.

4.7.2 College Admissions Culture and Support

Along with recruitment activities and college fit, most of the DCAPs stated that they have university-wide and/or office support to target recruitment at LCSD schools. Tyrone explains that he has support from his office:

I definitely feel supported. It's a uhm office, I would say it's an overall office effort that starts with me, that starts with our team. But yeah, it's come down from our director to our team leader. And you know it's it's basically, Uh uh a responsibility, a challenge for us to ok say, "You know we're in [the city] this is our own backyard.' We should be able to at least feel comfortable with what we're doing here. As far as connecting with [LCSD] schools, I definitely feel supported in these efforts. Uhm to do what we can and what's feasible and improve what we're doing.

Tyrone gives an example where the university as a whole understands recruitment as well as supports local efforts. For example, he describes one effort:

Yeah I think uhm. We have something every year that's called the BOND luncheon.

BOND stands for building our network of diversity and we just recently had the luncheon. Uhm giving updates about of how we've done as far as recruiting our targeted populations throughout the year and some of our efforts towards improving on that in the coming year.

He continues discussing the university-wide support for recruitment:

“And in one section we talk about what's [LCSD] recruitment and uhm I feel as though the people at the luncheon, it consisted of faculty and staff members throughout the university, and I feel like a lot of them were very supportive in those efforts, to boost the uhm [Local City] you know student body and student representation on campus as well as throughout uhm the country obviously.

He further states he was approached by a couple of people who readily offered their time to help out in seminars, activities, and/or events. In other words, he and other DCAPs indicate that LCSD recruitment is seen as an effort to promote diversity because, at 54 percent overall, the majority of LCSD students are African American. Furthermore, Tyrone shows the moral support that he receives from not only his team and the office but university-wide.

Martin also talks about his autonomy and the support that he receives, “Well I think because of [The University] but yes of course from everywhere. We're getting support of course from my own office, which is the enrollment management office. But also the academic colleges.” He continues:

Definitely. I have my own budget so whatever I need an increase the next year based on what I like to do to help these students be successful and I have never been denied, and so do I believe I have the support? Most definitely.... So yes there's support everywhere.

Martin shows the logistical support such as the budget and autonomy to work on recruitment projects. Although Tyrone and Martin's descriptions are both examples of support, they are different but both are needed in diversity recruitment. Tyrone explains the moral support; while, Martin describes the logistical support (i.e. budget and resources) needed in diversity recruitment. Other DCAPs including Mustafa, Verunike, Frankie and Feliz state that they receive support. This is evident in the autonomy and independence that they receive to control their

schedules, outreach efforts, and/or budgets. Also, the DCAPs indicate that staff and faculty from the academic colleges are even participating in diversity campus events and college fairs.

Pam shares the interconnection with other departments such as academic affairs that affects the DCAPs' autonomy, "We don't at [The University], we don't have a lot of autonomy.

The GPA requirements are set by the undergraduate admissions at the main campus.

Unfortunately, in our system the [departments] have a lot to do with that." She continues to explain why academic departments set the admissions criteria:

Uhm but one of the reasons why a lot of our colleges changed their enrollment criteria to make them less restrictive, was because they weren't getting kids. Cuz the kids weren't eligible for the program except for business. Business, if they're faculty only had two kids to teach they wouldn't care. But for everybody else, who depends on full classrooms to increase numbers to drive tuition so that we all get paid. They really had to think critically about, 'ok so how do we address this less competitive high school population? Well we got to make some changes because we can't expect them to do it.' Uhm so I think that's kind of driving things too.

4.7.2.1 There is also poor university-wide support

There are instances, contrary to the majority of DCAPs that receive positive support, where DCAPs did not feel supported in their local and diversity recruitment efforts. Sasha and Jaune are examples of negative or deviant experiences in local diversity recruitment. Sasha explains that, although she feels supported by her admissions office, local city recruitment is not a top priority for the senior administration:

Uhm it's definitely not a priority to have local city students. Uhm the emphasis is on being a global university uhm and recently the current president has made very ambitious and important goals to increase diversity of the underrepresented populations as well as first-generation and low SES populations. So in that regard I feel well supported but I think specifically targeting the city, not so much. And not you know no fault of their own but it's not their job. You know I think they have to keep the wellness of the university in mind. If we were able to bring in some high-achieving city students that would definitely, certainly be a good thing. Uhm it's not so much on their radar.

Jaune views her large public research university as not giving a lot of support and the

university as a whole was not aware of the recruitment efforts. Jaune felt that they were only supported to a certain extent, “Right uhm so in terms of support from the university, from my admissions office. Uhm when I read that question I thought yes and no. Uhm I think that I am and kind of the initiation or something like College Success 101.” Jaune adds:

I say yes because we do have an obligation to the city. But I say no because the office, the people more concerned about the numbers recognize that we’re not getting many students from this. So you know we don't necessarily need to do every college fair in the city because I mean we’re already here. You see [The University] everywhere. So yes and no like I said.

For example, Jaune explains that only two offices were aware of the diversity recruitment, the Provost’s office and academic departments. The provost’s office is the office concerned about the enrollment numbers:

And I can’t imagine that the whole university knows about it. I’m sure our office obviously knows it. The provosts they obviously know because you know they approve our budget and all of that. But uhm in terms of different departments and all of things like that, I can almost guarantee that not all of them know all of our recruitment efforts and everything that goes into our recruitment efforts.

So how can Jaune receive proper support if the university does not know the diversity efforts of the admissions office? This explains why specialists like DCAPs are needed to recruit and not the entire university. Many of the other DCAPs were also inclined that the entire university is not aware of admission activities and, more importantly, diversity recruitment strategy. Jaune further explains how retention gets much more attention than recruitment on her campus. She states:

Uhm and kind of talking about retention. I don’t necessarily think that [LCSD] recruiting is too much in their radar. But the Retention definitely is...So I think retention is kind of a, it is a university-wide effort and you see that in the departments. But in terms of recruitment, that’s us in terms of you know being on the ground and talking to students. But then also the provosts office kind of breathing on us saying, ‘Hey we still need our numbers to come up or we still need our profile to look like this whatever they need.

Jaune indicates that retention was a strong university-wide effort:

But yet retention that's more university-wide, much more. And even us in this office, myself and my uh supervisor, we both work with retention. So you know that doesn't, I mean so, just recruiting students and admitting students that doesn't stop for us. We're still working on different programs here in the university to help educate those students who maybe get scholarships and, if they lose their scholarships, how can they get their scholarship back or you know getting their grades up. Like that's something that I'm still involved in and that I still do uhm for us it doesn't stop but retention it's kind of everybody's efforts.

Apart from Jaune, none of the other DCAPs directly discussed a connection between college admissions and retention efforts of student affairs. Frankie and Mustafa mentioned that admissions office does give the names and contact info of students of color as well as "at-risk" for monitoring and retention efforts. But the practices and strategies were not discussed in detail and did not seem comprehensive or extensive.

4.7.3 Recruitment Outside of the Norm

The DCAPs also mentioned that they have different roles from their colleagues because they recruit a different population. For example, Frankie explains her challenges in recruiting LCSD schools. Her role as a DCAP is different than her colleagues but similar to other DCAPs, "That's the biggest and starkest difference in my office. That I through the summer am working these students all of the way up until the beginning of classes that first Wednesday of classes and I'm still working with people to get stuff in." This can be interpreted as the recruitment is much more hands-on. Recruitment takes more of a form of counseling and guidance as opposed to sharing information about the college/university. In the next chapter, Frankie and Feliz will give accounts of the hard work and investment that DCAPs impart to students when they develop relationships with students to counsel and recruit LCSD students in Chapter 5.

Mustafa lists some of his unique LCSD recruitment activities as, "Targeted interviews, uh

participate in city-wide higher education council, CS101, uh the new college success forum, uh and then we also work with local [community-based organizations], etc.” They had also sponsored bus trips. Yet, Mustafa indicates that there are challenges and he would also start building relationships with guidance counselors.

Martin alludes to recruitment activities and advocacy as exposure. He explains that he tries to expose students to college through various recruitment activities:

What we try to do --- once again when I talk about helping the students make a well-informed decision --- providing those bus trips adds to that, so we have in our budget funds to provide students trips to many of our campuses that are basically west of the state.

He continues by stating:

And I think that's probably our best trips. To not only get them exposed but also to make them aware of what they need to get ready for, so that it relieves the anxiety of college prep, and I think that's most important. Relieving the anxiety just like our SAT workshop helps them relieve the anxiety of taking a test.

Also, DCAPs host diversity college preview days and overnight visits that center on showcasing the diversity of the campus.

Jaune’s narrative is the best example of creating recruitment strategies to address LCSD’s college-going challenges. She suggests helping students understand the best options such as community college or regional campuses and then transferring to her college/university. Yet, in explaining the transfer, she highlights gatekeeping practices:

As far as professionals, at the higher education level in my experience here at [The University]. I don’t I don’t necessarily know, if we’re sending that message because we work with quite a few transfer students. I would like to think that our admissions team, we of course predominately recruit incoming freshman students, but we do have a decent population of transfer students. And we see nothing wrong with that as long as students are meeting our criteria in terms of the courses we want to see. Uhm you know GPA, all that kind of academic stuff. Uhm as long as they meet that, we have no problem with transfer students. The biggest kind of thing that we run into is the institutions they’re coming from. So really any accredited four or two year institution, we’re fine with taking credits form. Uhm but it’s those types of for-profit institutions Kaplan, Everest that we’re not to happy about and that’s just university policy and not just OAFAs.

Even in offering recruitment activities and alternative admission options, Jaune and other DCAPs show that they are an employee of the college/university rather than students. In other words, in all of their efforts to help students and serve as a bicultural middle manager, they are adhering to admission policies and primarily serving the needs of their respective college/university.

4.7.3.1 Providing personal attention

Admission offices place an emphasis on service and providing personal attention and interactions to make their college/university distinctive. This entails adding value beyond just giving college information. As shown from the DCAPs' narrative on their recruitment strategies, the investment of targeting high schools and students reflects the size and character of the college/university. The DCAPs explain the decisions and meaning making that they have to make about their diversity recruitment. Tyrone and other DCAPs highlighted the importance of constant communication. For example, he talks about personal attention as well as utilizing recruitment strategies to help students. He discusses the need to connect with students so that they not only understand college information, but also make a personal connection with the DCAP to get students' buy-in. Through his efforts, he tries to show that he cares about their future so that they know that he is giving factual and reliable information.

Yet, small, personal, one-on-one interactions are often the exception rather than the rule due to the calculations of total quality management and return of investment strategies often used by college admission offices. For example, most presentations and college tours involve groups of students rather than one-on-one meetings. One-on-one conversations even more rare in

interactions with LCSD students, guidance counselors, and high schools due to large class sizes, time constraints, and miscommunication.

The DCAPs stated that their main duties were providing personal guidance for students about college admissions as well as their respective colleges/universities. Again, this refers to college admission counseling as a major part of the DCAPs' roles and duties. Yet, admission managers and directors deliberate over the services to provide and expectations about quality. Hossler et al. (1999) anticipates market research, geo-demographic databases, and sound marketing principles to be the primary generators of applications. Furthermore, the enrollment management office relies on more advanced information technology for social media marketing and customer relationship management. In some ways many of these systems are automated. Yet, the DCAPs didn't discuss the connections between their work with online customer relationship management systems and traditional college admission counseling to effectively recruit LCSD and students of color?

4.7.3.2 Issues of visibility rather than engagement

Another challenge to college access is the visibility among family, community members, and schools. There is limited support from parents, other family members, friends, and teachers to encourage college attendance, especially if they have not attended college or do not have adequate college knowledge. Hossler et al. (1999) states that the achievements of alumni or faculty, events sponsored on the campus, athletics, and academic programs all play a part in broadening the visibility of a college or university. LCSD students often do not have the cultural or social capital to expose students to college information and the names of local colleges to begin the college search process. More than likely, students will have to gain information about college by directly experiencing a college, such as touring campus or more than likely watching

commercials and college sports teams on TV. Verunike discusses her institution's visibility and reputation:

[The University] has never had the issue of seeing students, which is nice but we stay pretty busy at college fair, which is a nice problem to have. You know we get a lot of applications. We see a lot of students in a year it's not something that every college has the privilege of having. So when you're looking at a smaller liberal arts college, they're begging for kids and we're like we have too many. So you know it's a good problem to have but you know you always want more.

The DCAPs understand their market position in relation to LCSD's college-going culture.

The institutions have visibility as well as an identity among the LCSD students as a college/university that they would and could attend. This is another essential part of the process of developing institutional visibility that LCSD students do not access. In other words, it's not enough to simply talk to students but they need support to even apply. Tyrone also mentions his offices' LCSD recruitment plan; yet, he proceeds to discuss ways to improve the plan. He explains:

I say this office is uhm, how well we recruit [LCSD] is uhm, I would say it's uh average right now. Uh we're definitely, we definitely uh have plans in the works for the coming years on how to improve our efforts as far as connecting with the [LCSD], making sure that we are able to maintain relationships with them and with families to, at least have them know that [The University] is an option for them.

Jaune, Verunike, and Feliz commented on the impact of visibility on recruitment. For example, a private college/university may be less known nationally since they do not advertise on TV, however, they may be well-known in their immediate communities due to the enrollment of a sibling or the employment of a parent.

There is also the additional challenge where most of the colleges/universities employ the same recruitment activities, even though they differ in size, selectivity, and identity. In other words, colleges/universities are indistinguishable due to their similar recruitment activities. Also, sometimes, the messaging is the same such as every college/university markets that they have

small class sizes, despite their size, since this is attractive to students and families.

4.7.4 College Fit and Selectivity

There is a concept that came up in most of the interviews known as college fit. It is believed among the DCAPs that students should attend a college that fits his/her academic performance, college readiness, and interpersonal skills. Martin explains this concept:

So I think the position where I'm at whereas I can recruit for all of the campuses makes it easier for me to help the student find the best niche. The best fit for that student and I think that's the key that, ah, given my position helps me to continue to do this year in year out.

He also adds that it is important to make good decisions about helping students through the application process:

So I think it's best that you look at a person and on your judgment say, 'Hey we can help you or we can't.' But if we can't, don't force somebody to come to your school. You're doing that student and yourself a disservice. I'd rather have you go to CCAC and be successful and then transfer over now that you have the tools.

As Martin explains, DCAPs are making recruitment decisions concerning students at all times.

Verunike also gives a great example of the concept of college fit. She states that some students should go to the satellite campuses because they meet the requirements of the campus. She also reasons that they, "might not necessarily have the same level of being proactive as other students. Uhm they just don't thrive as well uhm at [The University] as they would at a [branch] campus." She gives other reasons such as large class sizes and interested majors. Verunike ends this strand of discussion in her interview by saying:

So you know, it's all about what's best for them in terms of the career goals. Uhm but also in terms of making that college transition uhm most effectively. We don't just want to accept students but to make sure that our students are graduating as well uhm and you know in that 6 year timespan cuz you know no one wants to be a college student

forever... Uhm because you know everyone who applies to [The University] does not get [The University] and to understand what some of your other options are.

Pam further gives an example where she would help students:

Uhm I think sometimes is that I realize I recruit students that [The University] is not the best fit for them. So when I find those students I try to give them ideas about places where they might find a better fit. Because if I recruit them and it's not a good fit and I know that and then they figure it out, we don't retain them anyway. So I'd rather have them look at some place that suits them more and there are some kids that can do much more than [The University] can do. If you're Harvard or Yale, Notre Dame, or MIT material by all means go try it. If you don't like it you can transfer to [The University]

In other words, Verunike, Martin, and Pam vet students as they recruit in order to attain the best prospective students who will ultimately fit the college's standards. All of the DCAPs, especially Mustafa, Jaune, Pam, and Martin, talk about how students might fit with the institutional characteristics. More importantly, DCAPS make admission decisions based on criteria and requirements as well as character traits. Verunike and Martin went from discussing admission requirements to judging students' character and ability to be proactive in their studies. While this seems extreme and even risky, it is also the hard reality of campus life and retention. This could also explain how such decision-making may result in the college access gap and the lack of diversity and inclusion on college/university campuses. If DCAPs have preconceived notions about a student concerning their initiative or academics, then a student might lose access and opportunity to go to college. In addition, sociocultural or background information such as racial or socio-economic stereotypes could also play a factor.

4.7.5 Diversity Recruitment Challenges

Although there are recruitment activities such as DCAPs, practices, strategies, and policies, for the majority of the colleges less than 10 percent of the incoming class comes from

LCSD schools. An even lower percentage of underrepresented students of color from LCSD attend local colleges. The DCAPs acknowledged that they play crucial roles in outreach to high schools to make contact between the student and parent with the college/university. Yet, the DCAPs often implemented strategies that best benefit the institution and not the student. The DCAPs discussed the need for relationships with high schools that are dealing with challenges such as meeting testing standards and accountability. Jaune states, “In a way we are conditionally recruiting specific students in a sense that I mean we’re, we’re going to [LCSD], and we both know and probably the majority of the people in the school of education understand that, [LCSD] aren’t necessarily the greatest and is not the greatest system.”

Similarly, Sasha explains:

And uhm you know obviously are visiting schools that are going to produce students that are interested in [The University]. But then as part of our initiative to be more connected with [the city], we’re also going to school where we really don’t see it likely that we’re going to have any competitive applicants. Some of those schools are uhm in H_community, and the B_community, A_community, NG_community, uhm WH_community. SC_School is definitely improving uhm. R_School we don’t go to some of the schools just because uhm not only do we find that they’re not really the best use of our time but there’s not really much connection to be made with the students. Uhm cuz even if we don’t meet any students that are interested in the [The University] we still like to go to provide a resource to students, occasionally there’s not even a counselor to meet us. Or to really care or setup a meeting. Uhm so it’s uh it’s two-fold. It’s we have the schools that are under-resourced but we continue to go and then there are some schools that are so under-resourced that, that we just can’t get there. So uhm those definitely exist as well.

Sasha clearly acknowledges the racial segregation among the LCSD schools. She also recognizes that it has led to the imbalance of resources in the district. Therefore, she and other DCAPs develop recruitment strategies based on the socio-racial and SES segregation.

Mustafa voiced the same challenges that other DCAPs stated, “But the problem is that the schools have not unfortunately, there are some great kids at some of those schools. You know then the hard part is trying to find those great kids.” Similar to other DCAPs with selective

admissions criteria, Mustafa states that his institution recruits few students from LCSD. He explains, “We do ok uhm recognizing that uh many of the students may not be ready for the rigors of a school like this. We’d love to do better but in order for us to do better, uh the students need to be at a higher level regarding academics.” He names the schools that have enrolled students at his university and it is obvious that they are the top high schools in LCSD. Also, they are the most diverse schools in LCSD, which, I reason, that the students were most likely not an underrepresented student of color. Again, this reflects most colleges/universities where LCSD students make up less than 10 percent of incoming first-year students (except the less selective colleges/universities).

4.7.5.1 Cost Accounting

The reality is that the demand for colleges/universities is only increasing and will not diminish anytime soon. Therefore, colleges/universities will continue to increase their staffing, marketing, and programming. Yet, some of the limitations include the admission office’s fund allocating, budget, and financial aid. The DCAPs did refer to cost accounting, cost containment, and quality to explain the return of investment for colleges/universities to recruit students from poor college-going LCSD high schools. There is a matter of discerning what is best for the college/university, which may come at the cost of students, guidance counselors, and high schools. Cost categories are itemized and defined for budget purposes, as well as the utility of diversity recruitment, programs, and marketing. Mustafa explains:

I think from a university standpoint, if students aren’t prepared for your institution, then it’s hard to justify, you know going back 2 or 3 times a year. The culture and the level of academics has not been raised. So I think that’s the tough part, if the school’s aren’t changing and we’re not able to admit any of the students, uhm then it gets to a point where, alright, well we need to try to visit other schools or end up doing more outreach programs like CS101.

Jaune also shares the same sentiment concerning LCSD recruitment:

The office also recognizes, you know [LCSD] and the little return that we get. You know we can go to all of these college success (another program that I'm really involved in is InvestingNOW through our engineering school). But you know, we are receiving little return, you know though these students are applying the scores aren't there or the grades aren't there...I guess going back to the support.

For example, admission offices operate leanly in order to offset the university's general costs such as academic programs, facilities, staff/faculty salaries, etc. (Duniway, 2012; Hossler et al., 1999). In other words, institutions make strategic use of scarce resources. Admission offices strive to implement plans that are flexible to accommodate the labor-intensive work of recruitment and admissions within the parameters of the college/university budget. Due to the budget, hierarchical structure, and decentralization of institutions, senior administrators are concerned about what staff are doing, how they are performing their duties, and the level of performance.

4.7.5.2 Fear factor

There is risk and fear when it comes to the DCAPs jobs. Frankie explains:

There's a lot going on an individual level and not institutional. If I left, I have no idea what would happen and it depends on a single person. Everyone's afraid to put their name on a permanent plan. It's going to pay off to have more students going to college.

Frankie alludes to the fact that DCAPs may hesitate to solidify plans because there is a possibility it could cost his/her job. In other words, if the plan works, then there are great rewards. Yet, if the plan fails, then there could be repercussions such as demotion or termination.

In an aside, when talking to Frankie about discussing race/ethnicity in the interview, she states that no one wants to jeopardize their jobs by talking about controversial topics like race/ethnicity and affirmative action in college admissions. This fear factor is constant in the admissions office.

There is fear of not meeting recruitment numbers and goals, fear of competition from peer

institutions, fear of waning service quality and lacking demand, and there is also the fear of litigation for supporting affirmative action.

There is also difficulty in facing some of the difficult decisions in admission. During one of the focus groups, Jerry discussed diversity recruitment stating, “You’ll pay 400 for plane ticket but you’ll gap them 20000 dollars.” Frankie explained, “Sometimes we’re on the phone with someone and like I can’t encourage you to come. Because 10000 dollar gap is just totally irresponsible... It’s crazy!” The DCAPs explained the difficult conversations with students and their families about admissions and financial aid. They understand the college/university’s enrollment strategies; yet, they share strong feelings about the cultural integrity of race-conscious admission policies and practices.

4.8 OTHER RACE-CONSCIOUS ADMISSION POLICIES

4.8.1 Biased College Admissions Criteria

The DCAPs think that college readiness, college knowledge, college access, and school/community outreach are important. The DCAPs also reflected current research on the impact of socio-cultural factors in relation to the various layers in the educational system. College applications often constitute the trend of grades in college prep courses, standardized aptitude test scores, and the cumulative grade point average. Yet, as explored in the conceptual framework, some of the admissions criteria, especially the standardized admission tests are racially biased and add to the capitalistic meritocracy within P-16 education.

The DCAPs indicated that students' need to be academically prepared for college success. Academic performance and high GPA are important as well as course rigor, especially math and English course requirements. One way to deal with the challenges of recruiting from LCSD's poor college-going culture, as Jaune stated to acknowledge the bias in order to conditionally counsel and recruit specific students through admission practices. In addition DCAPs also conducted more deliberate conversations as well as stated alternative options such as the test optional choice, interviews, and borderline application reviews.

4.8.1.1 Merit-based review of applications

Each of the DCAPs explained that one of the main roles and purpose of recruitment is to garner applications through interactions with prospective students. The DCAPs would make admission decisions based on grades in college prep courses, standardized admission tests, average overall grade point average. According to the NACAC (2005) report on the state of college admissions, these are the top factors used to evaluate applications for admission and have remained in 2003 remained consistent with previous years. This type of review is considered merit-based and, as explained in the literature review, is racially and ethnically biased due to socio-racial stratification in education, cultural capital, and power.

For the DCAPs, the issue is not only garnering interest but also increasing the conversion rates among applicant as well as the admission rate. There are challenges to attain applications where the student may not be academically excelling to gain admissions. However, if DCAPs are strategically targeting their recruitment trips to high schools with good college-going culture, the problem for most LCSD students is obtaining college knowledge to even apply. This is impacting college access of this regional area where the students who need college knowledge the most, are the most unlikely to get it.

Pam explains the objective nature of college admissions:

At [The University] you literally enter in the unweighted GPA and they're class rank (if they have it) and their SAT scores and you hit enter and out pops this uhm there's a science and non-science predictor. And so it gives you on a 4 point scale, based on their high school performance, where somebody predicts that that's how they'll perform. And you go, 'Now who the hell makes that decision.' And they're like, 'the screen.' And you're like, 'Who built the screen.' And they reply, 'I don't know.' Uhm but like it's really that mechanical. Like there's no if it says an 2.89 and the the cutoff is a 2.9, you don't make it cuz, we don't round. You know uhm so the answer to that is I don't know.

She also discusses the need to be more subjective in admissions:

Uhm I think the fact that it's computerized because of the volume of applications that we receive it makes sense. But I think there are extenuating circumstances that computers can't read. I think in some ways it's not as subjective as it should be. Uhm and because people only touch the applications if they fall below a certain threshold some of those extenuating circumstances aren't always obvious. There are a lot that we never get to because they you know, they don't meet the criteria.

She realizes that objectivity is needed in admissions to sift through the thousands of applications.

Yet, she also sees the benefits of being more subjective in order to review applications that may not meet the numerical criteria but have other excellent qualities as a candidate. Again, the racial disparities in college readiness can explain the college access gap, which we will discuss further in the next chapter.

4.8.1.2 Non-academic factors

Another criteria that DCAPs felt was important to assess students' college readiness are interpersonal skills. The DCAPs expressed the importance of non-academic interpersonal skills such as good communication, good habits, initiative, etc. The distinction can be made between that which is based on educational competency (i.e., grades, subject matter knowledge, etc.) in conjunction with educational strategies/processes (i.e. study skills, note-taking, test-taking, time management, etc.). Also, DCAPs believed that students should have skills in many areas such as mentally, socially, financially, and emotionally. Martin talks about the need for skills:

I believe these kids nowadays need every skill that is out there. Uh, they lack so many skills for whatever reason that once again the few, there has been not that many, for now they are the many. Uh, it's not just academically. It's socially. It's just the whole gamut. They --- there's no foundation anymore and when you [students] don't have a foundation it's very hard to really care. Because you don't know what the future holds or could hold and so your self-defense mechanism makes you say, to hell with it. Even though you do care but you don't know how to care, so you have to have a self-defense mechanism to justify your existence. And again --- I'm sorry, and again this is more the student.

The DCAPs indicated that the term non-cognitive sometimes refers to factors such as student engagement, college knowledge, motivation, and/or social support.

Sommerfeld (2011, p. 19) states that non-academic or non-cognitive factors as assessments of college readiness are, “a way to improve the accuracy of selection criteria, casting light on students’ abilities to navigate the multiple demands of the college environment so that they may have been better able to persist to graduation.” Besides the cultural biases and institutional racism that is reflected in statistics, Sommerfeld (2011) explains that the trend for considering non-cognitive factors grew from the need to explain the disparities between minority students and their White American peers in college readiness, access, and enrollment rates. As seen from the DCAPs responses, some colleges/universities are using the non-cognitive approach as part of their college admission policies/decisions to promote college access and diversity. Yet, cultural power and capital also impacts non-cognitive factors such as interpersonal skills.

4.9 COLLEGE RECRUITMENT AS DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

Universities employ recruiting strategies designed to help increase diversity within the organization, making it one of the most highly ranked diversity practices in higher education (Milem, Chang, and Antonio, 2005). Diversity initiatives are the specific activities, programs,

policies, and other formal efforts designed to promote organizational culture change related to diversity (Arredondo, 1996; Wentling & Palmas-Rivas, 1998, 2000). A diversity initiative can encompass a wide range of specific activities - from recruitment programs or changes in campus climate, to diversity training or social events, to professional development programs and mentoring relationships. College recruitment is the dominant tool for attracting diverse applicants. For example, Pam describes that admissions is an important part of her institution's efforts to increase diversity:

Right. My last boss [at the branch campus], she was a big champion of diversity. Uhm and I think that our campus, more so than any other is the system, and specifically Western PA, support diversity. We have one of the highest campus percentages of Pell grant students, which traditionally tend to be minority. Uhm our students who have free-lunch eligibility in high school. Uhm we are fairly, as far as racial diversity goes, we're just about 50/50. And that's big. Now we only have 600 students but still that's big. That's saying a lot. We are, uhm our faculty is actually really representative of the students. So you see black and brown people that are teaching and not just there working. Uhm and so I think as a university, we've made real efforts to be diverse. The fact that we're located in the Mon valley. It's a really socio-economically deprived area. Uhm and so, more so than racial diversity, I think for us socio-economic status it's an equalizer because no matter what color you are, your bank accounts look all the same. So I think for us our location and our campus strategies have helped a lot in recruitment. In my recruitment and that's what I asked for and that's what I got. I don't think my boss likes to argue with me, she said I just want you to be happy.

Diversity recruitment strategies are used as one of the primary ways that applicants can show interest and gain information about the college/university. One example is students of color rate diversity as more important in a prospective school. Another example is to hire staff that reflects the diversity that you're trying to attract. Therefore, diversity recruits diversity. Recruitment activities such as pro-diversity pictures and statements are found to be effective in increasing perceptions of institutional attractiveness across applicant demographic groups. I will further discuss such diversity initiatives in Chapter 7 in the racialization of admissions section.

There are many incentives but less strategic planning concerning diversity recruitment.

Also, there is a small number of research on diversity interventions (Kulick & Roberson, 2008). Whatever the reason, diversity recruitment is one of the most popular diversity initiatives in higher education as evidenced by the CS101 collaborative (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005). Yet, there is little research on its impact and the linkages within the university administration.

4.9.1 Accountability Through Involvement of Senior Administration and Allies

During the focus groups, the DCAPs felt that some of the directives and initiatives would have a different feel and probably better received if it came from senior administration. The DCAPs discussed finding that the right people and resources help to increase diversity and outreach on the college campus. Martin mentioned that:

In my office... I don't have to be on campus and they don't see me as they go. But they'll call me because they still don't have access or their trust. But at least I have other people at the campuses that I say to or let me call this person or you can call this person. With a lot of you on these other campuses, you are THAT person.

He further explains that, "You need to have help to make your school accountable and of course from the top down."

Frankie furthers this thought:

I mean it would change the entire tone of things, if it was coming from the top. Oh yeah definitely. Presidents can make things happen in a snap that you would spend all year to try to coax and push and move and navigate and convince. The president says go do this and all of the professors show up at your door.

Martin also states the need for allies to promote diversity:

We got white professors or white persons who I need to say, 'Hey look you can call me too. I value this too.' And you need to have that at your campuses too... When you get non-minorities staff and faculty helping you then you have other faculty looking at them. And they know the answer that they're going to get from you and they'll push you aside. But they'll go look at them and ask 'Why are you doing all of this? Why are going to go above and beyond the call of duty?' And they will hear them a lot more than they would hear from you.

The DCAPs comment on the hierarchy within universities to accomplish diversity recruitment. They also bring attention to the role that race plays in their role as DCAPs. The majority of the group are staff of color that understand the benefits of racial/ethnic diversity in the student population. The DCAPs understand the challenges and benefits of their race/ethnicity in their role as diversity recruiters.

4.10 THE NEED FOR DIVERSITY

A major concern in higher education is not only college access, but how to successfully achieve diversity of underrepresented populations. Education is viewed as being the chief line of advancement for underrepresented students of color and explains why more African Americans and Hispanic Americans are entering middle-class status (Altbach, Lomotey, & Rivers, 2002; Chang, Altbach, Lomotey, 2005; Ogbu, 1994). Yet, as mentioned in the literature review, there are P-16 educational pipeline issues for racial/ethnic minority students to go to college. Furthermore, on the higher education level, there are growing demands and increased complexity in racial dynamics due to the rising number of minority students, staff, and faculty in higher education. In other words, colleges are trying to increase college access but are not considering the needs of the changing population.

In explaining diversity in higher education, Milem, Chang, and Antonio (2005, p. 4) state that the most common use of the term is to describe student body composition. Institutional programs and policies that increase college access and the compositional diversity of a campus play an important symbolic role by communicating to internal and external constituents that

diversity is a priority for the campus community (Bauman et al., 2005; Bensimon, et al., 2004; Hurtado, Inkelas, Briggs, & Rhee, 1997; Hurtado, Carter, Kardia, 1998; Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999; Milem et al., 2005; Williams, et al., 2005).

Colleges/universities count diversity as main priority; therefore, there are many efforts to attract the most diverse classes each year. Research also shows the benefits of increasing the compositional diversity of a campus by increasing the representation of students from various racial and ethnic groups. This leads to a broader collection of thoughts, ideas, and opinions held by the student body (Antonio 2001a, 2001b, 2004a; Antonio et al., 2004; Chang, 1999, 2002, 2003; Chang, Seltzer, & Kim, 2001; Chang & DeAngelo, 2002; Gurin, 1999; Hurtado, Dey, Gurin, Gurin, 2003; Milem, 2003; Milem & Hakuta 2000).

However, for colleges/universities increasing college access such as the recruitment and admission of racial/ethnic minority students is often the first indicator and measure of diversity on college campuses. It is also the easiest and considered a surface level institutional change (Williams et al., 2005). It is much more difficult to implement and sustain programs and services to help racial/ethnic minority students better transition to college. College admission is the easiest diversity fix and it is considered a strategy as opposed to changing the campus organizational culture. An example is often diversity admission practices are decentralized from retention/graduation services; therefore, one department is not aware of the practices/initiatives of the other. Another example is that the chief diversity officer is, often, not in charge of campus diversity admission practices. They are presented with a report of admission statistics but are not part of the enrollment strategic plan concerning how DCAPs recruit students of color.

Williams et al. (2005, p. 9) states that traditional efforts to improve the campus climate for diversity typically involve strategies that create immediately noticeable change, but such

efforts rarely promote change at a level deep enough to ensure the transformation necessary to make excellence inclusive. For example, an institution interested in recruiting more students of color may include more pictures of these students in campus brochures and may recruit at more racially diverse high schools. Yet, these attempts are usually done only within admissions and enrollment management and do not influence the larger norms and practices of the institution. Chang et al. (2005) warns that educational benefits do not automatically accrue to students who attend institutions that are, in terms of student or faculty composition, racially and ethnically diverse.

4.11 SUMMARY

CS101 is a collaborative of diversity college admission professionals (DCAPs) who primarily recruit LCSD and students of color. Furthermore, diversity recruitment is part of increasing college access and is often a part of diversity initiatives for higher education. DCAPs are professionals involved in the recruitment and advisement of students making their college choice. As seen from their narratives, they have backgrounds in education; understand and believe in their colleges' educational philosophies; and engage with high school counselors in advising students and parents on college standards and requirements (McDonough & Roberston, 1995). DCAPs are more than likely the educator that provides the most support to LCSD students making the transition to college. They play a crucial role in outreach to high schools and in their contact with students and parents.

The DCAPs reveal that they still maintain the role of college counseling to students due to the needs of LCSD's college-going culture. Institutions are still the authority on college

admissions and standards. There are adjustments such as conditional counseling. There are still limits and disparities where underrepresented students of color are less likely than average to gain college knowledge and enroll in college. The gap is most pronounced at four-year colleges, where blacks and Hispanics constitute only 17 percent of the undergraduate population, even though together they constitute 31 percent of the national college-age population.

In spite of all of the sophisticated print materials and social media, the best form of diversity recruitment is one-on-one relationships between the DCAP, guidance counselor and/or student. There should be various media available as well as the DCAP to explain the college admissions process. In LCSD's recruitment, there is miscommunication and/or restraints on resources for a DCAP to reach each and every student, who may or may not be ready to begin a more serious exploration of colleges. This is the biggest difference in the college admission size, selectivity, centralization and institution type. As Hossler et al. (1999, p. 20) states, "The more personalized an admissions office can make the admissions process, the more positive the response will be from students. As such, the more it can be personalized during the recruitment process, the more effective the marketing efforts are likely to be." Yet, in this chapter I explored how time and money are valuable resources for DCAPs and how this impacts LCSD diversity recruitment.

The DCAPs work within a neo-conservative climate that turned the classic idea of college access as the public good, where a service is provided to all students irrespective of wealth or class, has been redefined to higher education as a privatized commodity. Policies that sought to enable previously marginalized students and communities of color to gain access to college have changed or eroded. The DCAPs' goals become less to develop ways to increase access and more toward developing strategic plans that enable them to increase not only their

market share, but also the quality of the product—the enrolled student (Duniway, 2012; Huddleston, 2000).

Postsecondary institutions are now in a market economy where competition has become paramount; certain kinds of students—such as academically prepared students of color—are in short supply. The temptation may exist to do what is in the best interest of the institution to increase the student of color presence on campus while increasing GPA and SAT averages. However, such enrollment strategies are not in the best interest of the student and, ultimately, the country.

The DCAPs assumed a hybrid role of marketer and educator where marketing is limited to recruitment and DCAPs are involved in counseling students and guidance counselors to provide college knowledge. When intense efforts are focused on the same students, then little is being done other than shuffling students from one institution to another rather than increasing the presence of under-represented students on campuses everywhere.

5.0 DCAPS' DEFINE LOCAL COLLEGE ACCESS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The local city school district's (LCSD) P-12 and postsecondary education systems have not met teenagers' heightened aspirations with sufficient and well-targeted resources to help all students prepare well for college (Aud et al., 2010; Hout, 2009; Turley, Santos, Ceja, 2007; Venezia et al., 2003). The low level of college readiness for African American and low-income students is in stark contrast to the students' aspirations to go to college. Overall, students want to go to college but lack the preparation and knowledge to pursue post-secondary education.

In the last chapter, according to the ecological levels of Perna's Integrated College Access Model, I presented a profile of the DCAPs' perspective on the higher education context. The DCAPs' narrative concerning their roles and duties to recruit underrepresented students of color legitimizes their place as authorities on college access. This chapter examines the local DCAPs' understanding and interactions with the local city school district's (LCSD) college readiness, access, and college-going culture. I am addressing research question 2 by assessing the DCAPs' perspectives of P-12 and community college-going culture. In the first section, I mainly focus on the DCAPs' views and interactions with LCSD schools, guidance counselors, and students. Then, I gauge the DCAPs' perspective of community outreach to see how it impacts on the greater college-going culture.

The DCAPs discussed the varying roles that school staff such as guidance counselors, students, and the greater community impact college access. The DCAPs acknowledge the relationship between the students, the DCAP, and the guidance counselor (Perna, 2006; Tierney, 2005). In addition, the DCAPs commented on the working balance between P-12, community organizations, and higher education to improve college access for local students, especially underrepresented students of color. My biggest goal in this chapter is to share the DCAPS' perspective of the P-12 and community ecological layers that are factors to LCSD'S poor college-going culture. Overall there is socio-racial stratification and disparities among the high schools, student and guidance challenges as well as the lack of cultural capital of college knowledge in the district.

There are various indicators of LCSD's poor college-going culture. First, the DCAPS explain the socio-racial disparities between the high schools. Secondly, there are more disparities in the district-wide merit-based scholarship program. Lastly, the DCAPS also had great discussion about guidance counselors, students, and challenges that impact the college-going culture.

5.2 DCAPS' VIEWS OF LOCAL CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT (LCSD) CONTEXT: POOR COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE

5.2.1 LCSD's College Preparation

Throughout the chapter, I present the DCAPs' view of the LCSD'S college-going culture. In order to support the DCAPs' statements about the local city school district, I report the

racial/ethnic disparities in college access and college-going culture. One thing to consider for the local context is the biggest minority population is African Americans and most data on underrepresented students of color is on this population.

All of the DCAPs allude to LCSD having a poor college-going culture. The DCAPs expressed frustration with the expectations, behaviors, and activities of some of the public high schools. Martin represents a lot of the DCAPs concerns about LCSD's college-going culture, "Uhm, I get a feel that academically our students are going downward and not upward, and I feel if it continues we're going to be considered as one of those big city schools --- uh public schools whereas they have that graduation rate of 27-35%. I don't see the promise of it changing."

He adds:

So right now I'm quite concerned of the plight of the [LCSD] public school system and its students... I'm saying that there is still hope, but not like it used to be. We still have students that can survive, but that's what it is now. It's, I'm worried about them surviving instead of them achieving.

The DCAPs are professionally and personally affected by LCSD's low college-going culture. One, it influences how DCAPs target their recruitment. Two, the social issues and implications on underrepresented students of color makes an impression on DCAPs that I will discuss further in the next chapter on the DCAPs' cultural habitus.

From the city and key stakeholders' perspective, the current secondary school system is not meeting the needs of all students (A+, 2015). A district-wide research study report statistics by race/ethnicity and socio-economic status because, in national comparisons, the city has a large achievement gap between African-American and White American students and between students from low-income and affluent families (A+, 2015). The DCAPs agree in saying that LCSD has poor college-going culture, guidance counselors are overtaxed, and students lack capital such as college knowledge. I present the most telling college readiness statistics such as college

acceptance rates and percentage of students eligible for the district-wide scholarship. By combining the statistics with the DCAPs narrative, we can better understand the college-going culture of LCSD schools.

Annually, the district-wide research study reports the college readiness gap across the district by comparing White American students and African American students. One report states, “We are particularly concerned by the persistent racial achievement disparity, especially in our high schools, and the implications for student readiness for job training and college and eligibility for the [local merit-based scholarship program] (A+ Schools, 2009, p. 1).” It continues, “Too few black students are eligible” (A+, 2009). The socio-racial stratification and achievement gap are main concerns for LCSD and results in the low college-going culture of the district.

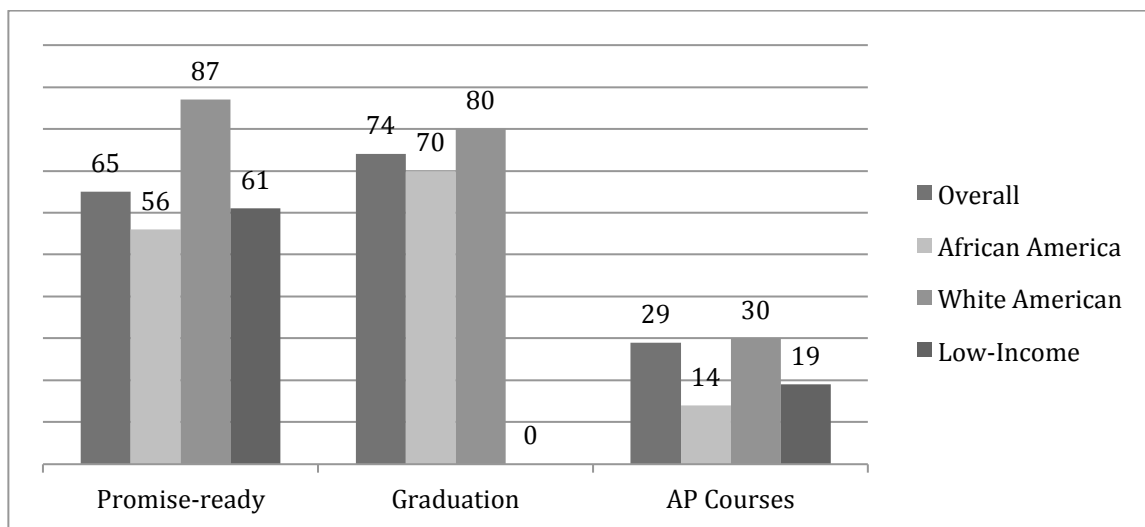


Figure 1. Percentage Rates of College Readiness by Race and Income, 2014

While not every DCAP directly talked about the racial disparities and socialization, it was implicitly discussed by describing diversity recruitment strategies and the interactions with high schools, students, and guidance counselors. There are also discussions about the mentality or mindset of the students and staff that affect LCSD’s college-going culture. DCAPs such as

Martin, Mustafa, and Tyrone discuss the mentality where some of them see it as lowering expectations. For example, Mustafa discusses the low expectations that occurs in LCSD:

So you go to the fairs, and no knock on schools like on [community colleges]. I think they serve a purpose and there is a need for them. But there's a level of disappointment when they're the most popular school uh at these fairs. Where the lines are so far back that uh you know they're not anywhere else for the most part, including you know the [public university], which you would think you would see more of those students showing more interest there. And not necessarily focused on [The University] but certainly [The University] would like to see those students as well. But when [community colleges] are the most popular school at the majority of the [CHE] fairs, uh we gotta rethink, 'Ok what are what are we telling these students about, about college. Is it two years and you're done or should it be let's shoot for four years. If that doesn't necessarily work out then let's talk about uh two year.

Tyrone also shares his observation of LCSD's college-going culture:

Uh well my impressions of the college-going culture here is uh unfortunately is really narrow. I mean the mindset is really narrow. Uhm when I talk to students uhm within the public school system uhm and the charter schools, I mean the, the vision is really narrow. They think that they have one or maybe two options, if anything. And I don't know where exactly that started but uhm yeah I think their idea of what they can do, what the students can do is pretty limited... Yeah I think that that's where my mindset is now with the [city's] college-going mentality. I think that it's pretty narrow right now unfortunately.

Martin discusses the mentality affects all stakeholders and not just students but explains that it is a vicious cycle that affects students, parents, and teachers. He further explains that:

There's no way for success. And then you get the school board who's trying to focus on the money --- that's another thing --- instead of the students. And when you start bringing in schools together that shouldn't be together. Now you that you got a kid that has to deal with --- I mean once again survival.

There are many indicators of what poor college-going culture looks like. For Mustafa, Martin, and Tyrone it is the lack of expectations among students, guidance counselors, staff, and teachers. All of the DCAPs described it in terms of the district 's current restructure, stratification of schools, need for college awareness and knowledge, student challenges, limited parental support, lack of financial literacy, poor facilities, and less rigorous curriculum. In

addition, there were substantial conversations on the challenges facing guidance counselors and the lack of college readiness, so I will discuss these topics in their own subsequent sections.

5.3 DCAPS' VIEWS OF THE SOCIO- RACIAL STRATIFICATION

5.3.1 Inequality Among LCSD High Schools

To look at the high schools' college-going culture by race/ethnicity will give a better picture of how race and socio-economic status play a role in urban public secondary education. For example, I compare the schools to show the disparities that the DCAPs discussed in their interviews. Schools such as D_School and A_School have the lowest percentage of Black/African American students with 41 and 31 percent, respectively (A+, 2015). Yet, comparatively, these schools also have the best college-ready and enrollment rates in the district. In contrast, P_School, E_School, and I_School are predominately African American and exhibit the racial disparities since they have the lowest college preparation rates. E_School has a moderate graduation rate (72%) but low college acceptance rate (51%) and the lowest percentage of students eligible for the LCSD scholarship (34%) (A+ Schools, 2015). Similarly, I_School has moderate success with 77% graduation rates, 45% of students are eligible for the LCSD scholarship, and 41% were accepted into 4 and 2-year college/trade program, which is the lowest college-ready percentage in the district (A+ Schools, 2015). In the Figure below, the schools with the arrows were discussed as having a high college-going culture whereas the schools in the circles were designated as low college-going culture. Again, this seems to correlate with the school's diversity and predominate race/ethnicity.

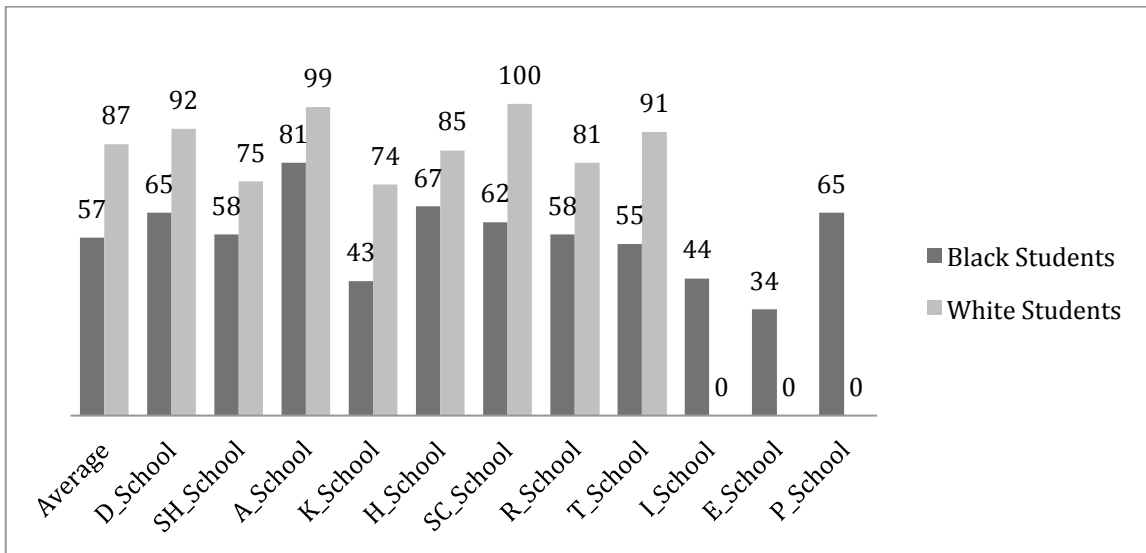


Figure 2. College-Ready Scholarship Percentage Rates by School and Race, 2014

From looking at LCSD’s statistics, community context plays an important role in college-going culture. For example, during our discussion, Pam explains that performance is tied to the diversity of a school and the neighboring areas. In addition, sociocultural context matters as well. Sasha points out that there is segregation and race/ethnicity is a factor in college-going culture:

The city is one of the most racially segregated cities in the country. You don’t need to go far to see that. I think you, like I said some of it’s built around community, I think PB_School was built around community for a long time. Uhm E_School as well. Uhm but now it’s just about no one wants to be at those schools unless you have to be. You know unless you’re stuck there and I think socio-economically is a big part of it but that also transcends racially as well.

With the racial segregation there is also socio-economic, cultural capital, and power stratification. In other words, the more segregated schools (predominately African American) are also less privileged. Therefore, there is socio-racial stratification among LCSD schools.

Overall, the college readiness statistics and demographic information in Figures 1 - 5 about local urban school district gives context to LCSD’s challenges. Overall, Black/African American students make up 61 percent of high school students in the school district (A+ Schools, 2015). However, at some schools they can be up to 99 percent majority. Also, 68

percent of students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch (A+ Schools, 2015). While the numbers show the disparities, I will also provide examples from the DCAPs on LCSD's racial achievement gap.

For example, there is a declining population and colleges/universities are constrained by the drops in the high school population, which affects their recruitment and local enrollment numbers. In addition, there are clear differences in the high schools based on racial composition and resources that the DCAPs remarked in their interviews. Some of the DCAPs such as Pam, Jaune, Mustafa, and Martin commented on the socio-economic and racial stratification among the schools in the district. Jaune describes the stratification that she observed within the school district:

One thing that I noticed kind of outright is how polarized things are uhm within the LCSD so, those schools with money you can tell they have money. And you can tell those teachers are really enthusiastic. And you know, and I hate to generalize but uh that's really what I saw. But then those schools that had less funding, you can tell are a little bit more run-down. Uhm teachers or guidance counselors or even the secretaries when you first walk into the schools are kinda like, 'Oh you can go over there.' Just it, just very polarized atmosphere and I think it is, it comes down to money. You know and higher education and government and all of that it all comes down to the funding that's available or lack thereof.

Jaune also used codewords to discuss LCSD's underserved students of color. For example, Jaune explained that some schools were less funded and underresourced, which shapes the educational experience of staff and students. She and other DCAPs expressed the biggest characteristics of this polarization was money or funding that often correlated with race/ethnicity. Jaune, Frankie, Tyrone, and Sasha describe the stratification in terms of the facilities, students, guidance counselors, and college knowledge.

Mustafa also comments on the stratification of schools within the school district. He states, "Depends on the school, it totally depends on the school. Uh there are some where you go

into and you get the vibe, ‘Ok this is what the focus is and then there are others where it’s the opposite unfortunately.’” Mustafa continues:

Again it depends on the certain school. When you got to A_SCHOOL, it’s a magnet-type school with a focus on the arts for the most part. Not every kid is coming out of there in something in the visual or performing arts but there’s that focus. So when you go to that school and the level of questions are up here, they know about what they’re thinking about studying and so you get that there and at D_SCHOOL you have the advanced track, those students in the advanced track definitely know. You recognize that they’re ready but if they’re not in those tracks then there’s that huge dip. Uh and there there’s a concern there and some of the other schools that may not have that level of advanced like A_SCHOOL curriculum. You know it just all depends on the type of school that you go to.

Mustafa also used codewords to describe high schools that are predominately African American and less funded such as E_school; whereas, the more diverse or predominately white schools as more funded such as A_school and D_school. Tyrone also explains how the stratification impacts student performance. He explains:

Within the LCSD in general, I would say that unfortunately a large portion of them are not due to lack of funds to provide the best school supplies. Uh when it comes down to books or just electricity within the buildings. You wanna, you wanna go someplace where you’re comfortable. You know you can feel as though I can be here all day. I wanna learn, I’m here to experience, you know with my peers and with my teachers. And I don’t even like the place I’m coming to so I’m not going to be engaged (I’m not going to be focused on anything)... Let's try this again. Uhm because this place is nasty. The school I’m coming to is not comfortable and we don't really have books or anything like that and my classes are too full because we don’t have enough space you know in the building.

The DCAPs acknowledged the stratification that takes place within and between LCSD schools. Pam, Jaune, and Sasha also compared the local city school district’s college-going culture with wealthier and more affluent school districts in the area. Overall, the socio-racial stratification has led to a low college-going culture.

The results from the NCES’ Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups report (Aud et al., 2010) suggest that relative to White American students, students of

color attend more impoverished, more segregated, lower achieving schools with fewer resources to meet student needs in both the total national sample and in high-achieving subsamples (Aud et al., 2010; Carnevale & Fry, 2002; Horn & Chen, 1998; Learning Alliance for Higher Education, 2006; Montgomery & Rossi, 1994; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Yun & Moreno, 2006).

Furthermore, urban public school students are experiencing concentrated disadvantages as Yun and Moreno (2006) discussed where there are lower college eligibility and participation rates, fewer advanced placement (AP) classes, high percentage of students eligible for free/reduced lunch, and racial/ethnic segregation. This has an impact on equitable schooling outcomes and, more importantly, college access. These results help in explaining the college access gap between underrepresented students of color and White/White American peers in the U.S.

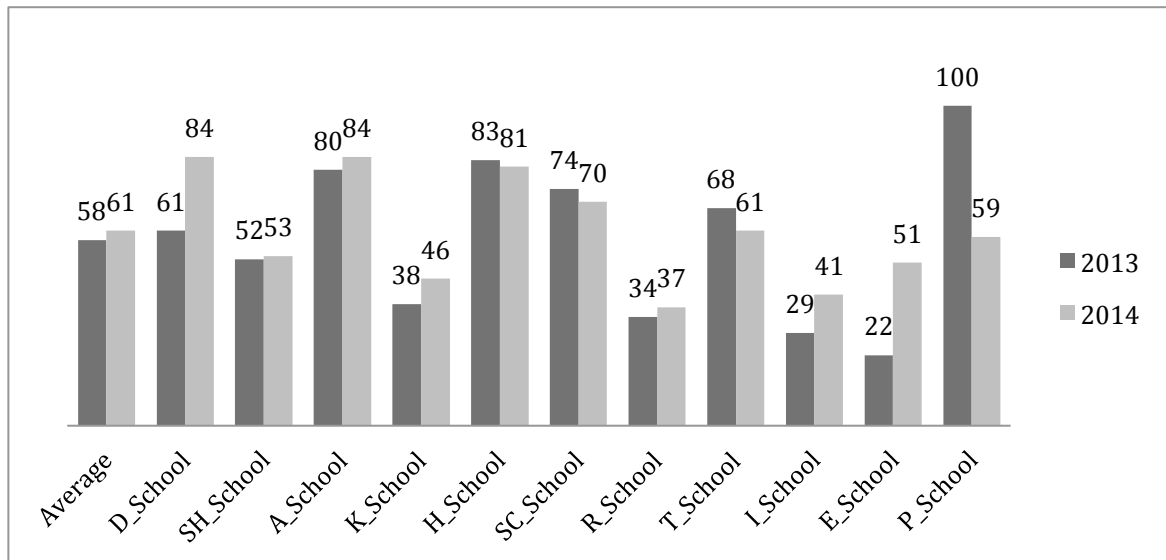


Figure 3. College Acceptance Percentage Rates by School, 2013 and 2014

5.3.2 LCSD Merit-based scholarship program

The district-wide merit-based scholarship program, College Ready, is one of the leading indicators of LCSD college-going culture. Similar to the merit-based financial aid that is offered through federal and state agencies, the merit-based scholarship is setup as an incentive for students and families to achieve academically (Iriti et al., 2012). It works toward promoting academic success, increasing academic expectations, and encouraging students and communities to dream big and work hard toward high aspirations and hope.

To evaluate its effectiveness to raise college readiness and the college-going culture, Iriti, Bickel, and Kaufman's (2012) analyzed students' retention and persistence trends. The study focused on three cohorts of students (2008, 2009, and 2010) to develop a profile of students receiving the scholarship. Students' retention and persistence behaviors were recorded and then compared to colleges/universities retention strategies. They found that the merit-based scholarship has helped an overwhelming number of students to enter college. In addition, the scholarship helps students to enroll and persist through college.

Many of the DCAPs discussed the promise scholarship as a way for LCSD to improve the college-going culture. Similar to Iriti et al.'s research and the community report, Verunike talks about the scholarship program as an incentive for college readiness:

Hmmm that's a really good question. Uhm I think there are definitely more incentives being put in place to make sure that students are really sort of more prepared and You know a part of that is the Promise. The Promise is kind of the initiative to be on top of your game in terms of you know being in school every day and making sure that students getting the grades that you need to have.

Verunike also gives a great description of LCSD's effectiveness as a merit-based scholarship program from her perspective. She states:

Uhm you know the Promise [scholarship] is great. I come from the first class of [College Ready] scholars. So I know what a benefit that can be. Uhm you know 5000 dollars was a lot of money for me and now they have 10000. So I think it's great to see the region itself. Willing to put that kind of money and uhm into its district and into the schools and into its students. Uhm so it's definitely a plus. And but now I think the district is sort of seeing where they're failing students in that there's all of this stuff to get students, [college] ready now. Uhm as opposed to the [scholarship] just being there which is sort of interesting for me to see. But I think there are definitely great strides being made to make sure that students are being ready, in that they're in connection with you know people who can help them get there.

She described the college readiness scholarship has been used as a way to open up discussion about going to college. Yet, it hasn't addressed the larger issues of the college access gap and the district's socio-racial stratification.

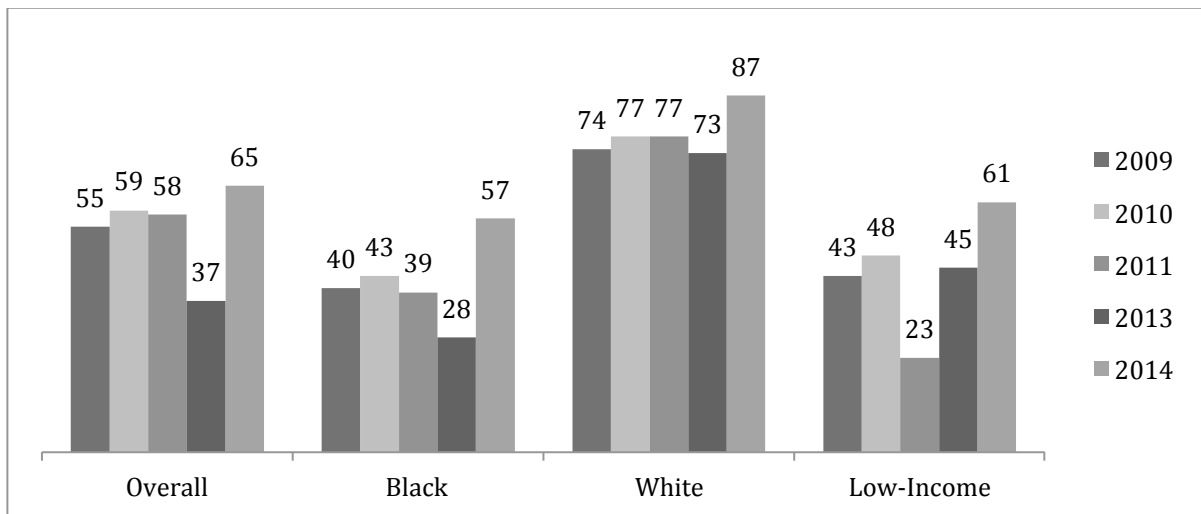


Figure 4. College-Ready Merit Scholarship Percentage Rates by Race & Income, 2014

In other research, the merit-based scholarships do not address the preparation and educational disparities between privileged and marginalized students (Bangs et al., 2011; Miller-Adams, 2009). The profile of the student who most likely utilized the scholarship, enrolled in college, and persisted to graduation include: higher expected family contribution (which indicates a higher income); higher GPAs in high school; and attended postsecondary institutions with higher admission selectivity (Iriti et al., 2012). These findings suggest that students would most likely go to college with or without the financial assistance of the merit scholarship.

The district-wide report also did a comparison among high school and racial/ethnic groups of students that qualified (A+ Schools, 2015). One of the major trends is the gaps have also been found between Black/African American and White/White American high school graduates. Overall, 65 percent of the district’s seniors earned grade point averages of 2.5 that qualified them for the merit scholarship program (A+, 2015). Yet, there is a large disparity between these two groups where Eighty-seven (87) percent of White/White American students qualified while only 57 percent of Black/African American students and 61 percent of low-income students qualified for the merit-based scholarship (A+, 2011b). Iriti et al. (2012) found similar findings in their study. Therefore, the majority of White American students at any school qualify for the merit-based scholarship; while, this is not the case for African American students. Again, there is considerable disparity between African Americans and White American students.

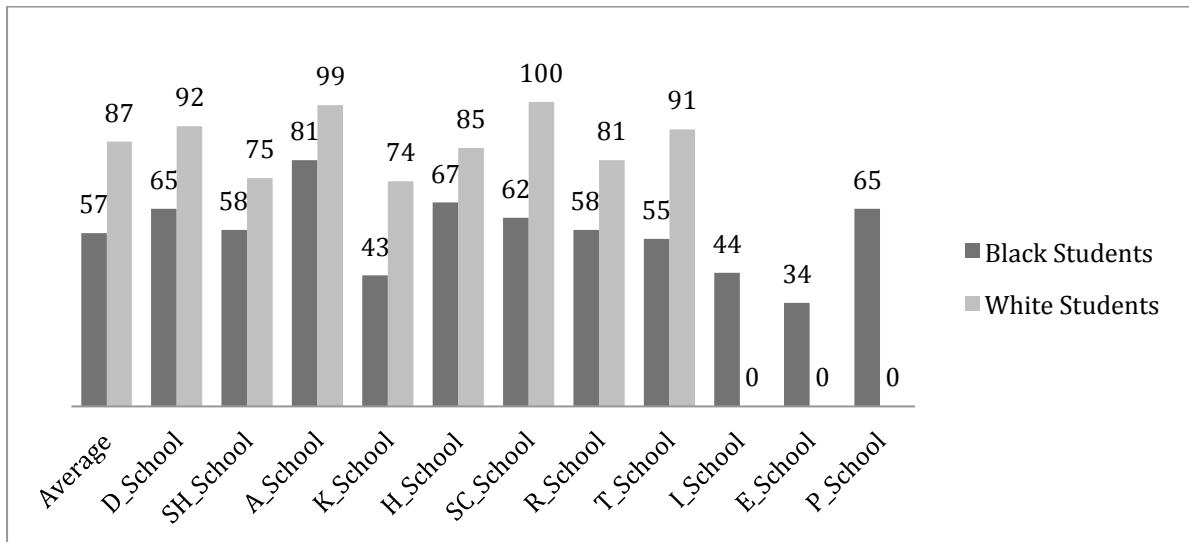


Figure 5. College-Ready Scholarship Percentage Rates by School and Race, 2014

5.4 DCAPS' VIEWS OF STUDENT CHALLENGES

The DCAPS discussed some of the challenges that students face to gain college access. In further analysis, they can be categorized as internal and external factors to the student's locus of control. Pam explains that, "For the kids that are well-qualified they have options and they, to a greater extent, they control the conversation. You know where you have students that are not as qualified, you control the conversation. It's different," This is another form of stratification where students' possess some cultural capital and degree of external and internal locus of control.

5.4.1 School Support and External Locus of Control

Martin gives an account of the curricular challenges at some LCSD schools that students face:

You have students who want to learn or they can't learn because of their environment. And then for those that survive and persevere, that's a blessing. It's so far and few... And then if you are still getting by, by your senior years you don't even know how successful you really are, how good you really are, can you compete with other students from other schools. Are you prepared to be an engineer? To be a doctor? Or do you have the equipment, the tools that are needed, the calculus class. Some schools, many schools don't even have calculus anymore. That's what colleges start off with if you want to be an engineer or scientist or whatever. You have to have calculus starting off, so you have to start from minus one. Even if you get the opportunity to get in.

Martin gives a great example about how the college-going culture is a major factor in whether students go to college. College-going culture relates to Perna's (2006) socio-ecological model where there are layers that directly and indirectly influence a student's college choice.

Feliz also gives an example of some of the external factors such as family life that impacts students' college decisions:

Uhm I just think that home life is a big influence as well like maybe they're the first to go to college. And they just because they are first-generation, they don't think they're college material. Because mom or dad didn't go so, I think it's just kind of uhm getting them confident and comfortable enough to actually apply and you know kind of cause they don't think that they can go to college. They just don't think so. It's just kind of building the confidence uhm but they lack outside sources. Like maybe, I'm not saying that this would fix the problem but make them more exposed to it that they can actually do it. Make them more likely to take action.

In her quote, Feliz is expressing concern about LCSD students' lack of social and cultural capital. They often come from families that did not attend college as well as attending schools that have limited college resources. This inevitably affects students' expectations to go to college.

The DCAPs noted that it could be a lack of awareness due to their poor college-going culture. Also, from analyzing the disparities between LCSD schools, the poor college-going rate plays a part in a student's ability to access college. For example, what and where are the resources so, students are aware of when and how to take the SATs? What about students waiting on their guidance counselor for their latest grades? Frankie also gives an example of a student's home life, which affected their academic performance. She states:

We had a student with 1.9 GPA. And we try to open up our doors to everyone but 1.9 is extremely low. However the student raised their GPA to 3.0 From junior to senior on the report card so, we were like what's going on. The counselor had a full conversation with me and sat the boy down and told him to tell me everything. And found out that the student was homeless, His mom was on drugs, he didn't know where he was going to live, he was living in a car, he was trying to take care of his little sister. I mean just so many things were going on in his life that he couldn't get it together. But in his junior year he moved in with his girlfriend's family and he had a stable home and he had someone supporting him. His sister was with the grandmother so he didn't have to worry about her. Things were calmed down so he could focus on school. So that kid we gave a chance to because we saw that it wasn't necessarily what was going on with him in terms of school. Everything he couldn't focus on school with everything going on. The child now is here, he had his struggles definitely making that transition but he's here and comfortable and his little sister is here too. You know and so that family is going to be changed by [The University].

Frankie begins her story by describing the social issues contributing to the student's dire situation such as drug addiction, poverty, and homelessness. Yet, she explains by junior and senior year, he's able to turn it around and achieve in school with the proper environment and support. This story is telling of how external factors play a role in student's college access. Yet, is this example an exception or the rule among LCSD students who have the potential to go to college but are not college ready?

5.4.2 Individual Responsibility and Internal Locus of Control

In a different vein, some of the DCAPs shared that the students' were responsible for seeking help and college knowledge. Frankie comments, "Uhm I would say yes and it's not always. Sometimes it is lack of desire on the student's part but it's not always. Sometimes it's a lack of awareness." Frankie gives her own example:

For example, I admitted a student in November. I just called her in July to give a final call. You never think that you're getting new applications, I get additional admits and enrolls. '[Oh] I've been meaning to call...' since November? I've been looking at my call logs, called and left a message, called and left a message. So that kind of mentality where, 'Oh yeah I want to do that thing,' is so frustrating. Cuz it's like, 'Oh do you want to go to the club? No, I'm gonna go to college tonight.' So when I'm dealing with this student and his/her parents, everything is a rush, everything is an emergency. So, they don't have time to think things through and get things straight and get things correct.

Verunike adds to Frankie's comment about the difficulties in following up with students:

As far as students though, it's hard to follow-up with students as well. Only because for some students they submit their application and then they think that they're done. And like it's, 'No we need your test scores, your grades. If I waive your application fee I need you to go back and submit your application please. Just because you typed some stuff in does not mean that you submitted it cuz it's still sitting there. Uhm and then after your admitted, do you plan to go here? Are you going to pay your acceptance fees? How is this going to work? Did you do your FAFSA? We need that information too if you want a financial aid package.'

You can almost feel the frustration from Frankie and Verunike about students failing to complete their applications. Verunike continues to discuss the challenges of students asking questions if they don't have college knowledge:

I think you know, it's always hard to sort of following up with people to make sure that their on the same page as you and you are on the same page as them. Uhm I think that's the greatest challenge. And sort of will be my hardest challenge going into this year, Uhm as far as applications, is really making sure that students thoroughly understand the application process. And that it's you know because you clicked one thing, does not mean you're done. You know if you have questions about your application, 'Did you ask someone your question or is it something you're just hanging onto and just waiting for someone to ask you and I think that's the sort of larger challenge.'

Again, there are challenges specific to raising a student's motivation and expectations to go to college. Also, there are interpersonal factors that lead to students having initiative, intellect, passion, and ambition to access college resources such as DCAPs.

Some of the DCAPs such as Feliz, Sly, and Frankie explain that some students are not motivated. Even though he is an advocate, Martin is the most harsh critic of students. He states:

For many of these students [the community college] is the best fit. Uhm, prove yourself. Prove it to yourself that this is what you want to do because the first thing that they learn to do is have of all these loans, in debt, and then you finally wake up five years later and say, 'Okay I'm serious about going to college now,' and you can't.

Martin is explaining that it is the student's responsibility to gather college information and apply to college. On the other spectrum, Tyrone is the biggest advocate for students and shares his opinion about the challenges students face. He gives a great example of the lack of college knowledge and narrow-minded mindset. Tyrone states:

I speak with a lot of, specifically African American females. I've spoken with a lot of them want healthcare or nursing or sometime of health profession. But they really aren't thinking about how do I get to be a nurse, How do I get to get to medical school? How do I get to that destination? Uhm it's all, it's all about well I like nursing, I want to be a nurse because I like kids. And they really don't think about what steps to take to get there, what it really takes to get there to be that profession, to be in that position. So I would say that that is more so what the I mean by like, kind of like the single vision or or uhm you know one track mind when it comes to that. Because I mean backup plans they're out of the

window. You know there's not really not any, any second option. They're just like well if I'm not a nurse, then I don't know, I'll do whatever. Yeah so or if I'm not a uh lawyer or you know if I'm not in business. So I think it's ok to have goals but I think it's really just about how do I get there where do I start, where do I go. Uhm and sometimes I think they just skip to the goal rather than the first step or the first steps towards getting there.

In this quote Tyrone is articulating the difficulty LCSD students have in understanding how to use college as a means to achieve their career goals. Tyrone's quote is a great example of how the external (lack of capital) impacts the internal (motivation, self-esteem, etc.) locus of control and vice versa.

5.5 VIEW OF GUIDANCE COUNSELORS IN COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE

The DCAPs convey how the guidance counselor's role is beneficial as well as risky to the college-going culture. Essentially, guidance counselors are an important source of assistance and information for underrepresented students of color, low-income students, and students whose parents do not have direct experience with college (Perna, 2004, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, 2004; Tornatzky, Cutler, & Lee, 2002; Venezia et al., 2003;). School counselors help create a school's college-going culture and shape students' and parents' perceptions and expectations of potential college options (McDonough, 1997, 2005; Perna, et al., 2008; Perna, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Venezia et al., 2003). For example, counselors can influence students' aspirations for and understandings of college, academic preparation for college, and college-related decisions, as well as parents' support for their children's college aspirations (McDonough, 2005; Perna, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Venezia et al., 2003).

A review of the available data and research suggests severe structural constraints on the

availability of high school counselors to provide college counseling (McDonough, 1997, 2005; Perna, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Venezia et al., 2003). The DCAPs note that availability is typically lower in public than in independent high schools, but increase with the graduation, AP enrollment, and college-ready rates of the high school. Yet, from the questionnaires and interviews, the DCAPs believed that guidance counselors have a strong influence on student's ability to access college knowledge. The DCAPs also discussed the challenges that guidance counselors face to improve college access.

A paramount challenge is the guidance counselors' ability to address the school's college-going culture. In 2014, the average guidance counselor to student ratio in the traditional high schools is 1:319 (A+ Schools, 2015). This is a good explanation of the challenges to serve as resource for students. From the focus groups, Frankie explained the challenges of high school counselors, "Because the counselors in the schools are totally stretched thin. There's only one sometimes in a high school for everything that needs to be done. It's insane." The DCAPs were understanding of the harsh work conditions and limited resources that guidance counselors have. They knew that guidance counselors were overworked and dealt with a long list of issues outside of college counseling. Although most counselors are experiencing these challenges yet, in a vicious cycle, this is even more apparent at the schools with low college-going culture. Most of the time, these guidance counselors and schools need partnerships the most. The DCAPs were aware that over-burdened counselors contribute to the low college-going culture.

5.5.1 DCAPs Empathic Nature towards Guidance Counselors

Frankie, Sly, and Verunike are the most empathetic of guidance counselors. For example, Frankie states, "You're just trying to get my prospective as an admissions counselor. Like I said

before, my perspective is really from the guidance standpoint of things. I mean I, one thing that there's some frustration." Verunike also agrees, "So for us it's mostly the guidance counselor or someone in the guidance office only because we're in constant contact with them in terms of being able to pull information on their students. And sort of getting their students who they think would best fit [The University]. Frankie explains her relationships with guidance counselors:

Some of the counselors, you know, when I call them they respond within that day but definitely within the week and if I need transcripts, things like that, I know that I'm getting an email or a fax immediately. They have an awareness that this needs to be done in a timely manner. And we're talking on the phone together and we're cordial and talking about other things. And then there are some counselors who will tell their students if they know that I'm coming to their school. Or if there's, they'll tell me that there's this girl that I think would be really good, 'I wanna call because I know so and so has applied to your school and I really feel like that she would do really great at [The University] so I kind of want to give you a heads-up.'

Frankie continues to discuss how guidance counselors convey important information about their students:

Have been really honest with me, for example, when there are students who are borderline and I can't get a read on, I have not been able to engage with and haven't engaged with me much. And I'll call them and say, 'there's this borderline student who hasn't called me and hasn't been that responsive yet. Do you think it's just she's just that busy and has that much going on in her life that she can't get back to me or is this a lazy student.' And they'll let me know and will be honest, 'She's been a problem ever since she's been at school And I don't think she's ready for a real college atmosphere yet.' Or, 'No, she's got a baby at home and she's got a job and that she's just too crazy [busy].'

Frankie highlights the type of communication and relationship-building that takes place between educators to assist students. Other DCAPs such as Mustafa and Martin also remark on the need for good communication between P-12 schools and DCAPs.

Frankie further discusses the types of relationships needed for recruitment, "I know who to trust with that statement. You know cuz some will just say that oh she's lazy but some will say I know her grades really don't reflect it but she really can focus." There is sensitive information and students' lives are at stake so, trust and integrity is important in order to maintain a smooth

transition from high school to college. Verunike also recounts the importance of guidance counselors in the college admissions process. Verunike and Frankie share their gratitude for guidance counselors that are doing their job for ALL students and not just the academically achieving students. Yet, their praise reveals that maybe not all guidance counselors are fulfilling their duties and shares even more about LCSD's poor college-going culture.

There is also a continuum of the effectiveness of guidance counselors. Feliz states:

Of course some are better than others. I went to a school yesterday where the counselor just really wasn't really interested in me being there. So obviously that wasn't as strong as a visit that I had today at Carrick where we sat down together in a circle and spoke for an hour.

She gives the best and the worst examples of her interaction with guidance counselors that influences her perspective of LCSD's college-going culture.

Verunike further explains Frankie and Feliz's testament that some guidance counselors have limited time and resources to just devote to college counseling. Verunike also explains some of the guidance counselor challenges:

Challenges as far as counselors, largely, it's just in the amount of time that we're able to access students at the schools. You know especially in LCSD, in a lot of cases, there is only one counselor for the entire school and so you're kinda the last person on their minds sometimes. Uhm in terms of follow-up cuz you know they're worried about testing dates in one grade, and transcripts for another grade, and doing this for another grade, and they still have to answer students' questions about regular stuff. So you know they have 5 jobs in one and so you know bless guidance counselors hearts cuz I just couldn't do it. So I think it's sometimes tough really being able to sit down with a counselor to get all of the questions I might need answered. But at the same token you can't really be mad because you have to understand that they're doing so much as one person.

Verunike gives logical rationale for some of the deficiencies in the capacity of guidance counselors to answer every email and/or phone call. Although every counselor is experiencing these pressures, there are some who cultivate college readiness and access better than others. In other words, there are resources for schools that have average or high college-going cultures that

could be shared with schools with low college-going culture. Similar to Verunike and other DCAPs' rationale, these are important issues to raise in order to support guidance counselors as they balance their workloads and capacity to partner with colleges/universities.

Mustafa also discusses how the inefficiency of guidance counselors can affect a school's college-going culture. He comments that there are, "some schools where the culture is not where it should be." He further states:

So the schools that we may not have a relationship with, typically it's schools where the counselors may not have as much time to work with college, college counselors. And that comes across and you get there and they may be in the lunchroom. That's not a good environment for the students to ask questions in that type of setting. You know so those typically do not go very well.

Mustafa hints at the busy schedule and overburdened workload of some LCSD guidance counselors. Again, a DCAPs comment leads one to infer that not all guidance counselors or schools partner with DCAPs and colleges/universities in a good working relationship.

5.5.2 DCAPs' Judgmental Nature towards Guidance Counselors

Yet, some of the DCAPs even expressed that guidance counselors are a challenge in themselves. For example, the DCAPs mentioned that some of the counselors don't respond to invitations to on-campus events or delay notification about high school visits. Feliz states:

So that's what I'm trying to find out when I go to the schools. You know I ask them do you have any type of workshops that you hold or any parent nights that you have. You know kind of getting outside of just going to the guidance counselor and asking questions. Cuz is there anything that you're doing for them initially, uhm and I'm finding that there really aren't. You know like today and oh you know they're not happy and they're not like saying that, 'Oh yeah, we're not doing anything. Go us!' But you get what I'm saying. So there is just not, no we're not... So that's kind of what I'm finding out, you know.

Earlier Feliz expressed how guidance counselors can be exceptional but here she points to some of their ineffectiveness. The DCAPs shared that it is difficult to work with guidance counselors beyond the high school visit or correspondence. The DCAPs showed interest to sponsor programming or events, even apart from CS101. Sasha also indicated some of the challenges due to guidance counselors absence where, “occasionally there’s not even a counselor to meet us or to really care or setup a meeting... Yeah the counselors not interested in meeting or not available to meet.”

It is clear to note that there were some DCAPs that found working with school staff cumbersome. Tyrone was the biggest critic of guidance counselors, he states:

They’re kind of the gatekeepers in a sense between us and the students. I mean they are the ones that round them from day one. They’re supposed to be the ones guiding them to you know help them get, obtain all of the information that they can. To help them make the best decision, help the student make the best decision. And it’s funny because sometimes guidance counselors you can tell they really don’t have a heart for the student. They really don’t, they could really careless what happens to the student or where they go. Uhm because you know I might request some transcripts or SAT scores something and they might, the counselor might take forever to get back to me or they don’t get back to you. I understand, like you know for whatever reasons, they might be swamped or really busy. They might have so many responsibilities that they can’t really handle it too much and they might need extra time. But I’ve also seen times where uhm guidance counselors have discouraged students from applying somewhere because they don’t think that they could get in. Or they kind of you know been responsible for setting up students where they can think of only one option as opposed to another option. I I think uhm from my experience with guidance counselors, I think my view of them is really to get all of the information based on what the student has told them they’re interested in.

He gives a great example of the inefficiency that he previously stated:

It’s funny cause today uhm I was in a conversation with a guidance counselor through email. And I was trying to go there to his particular school to visit. And he emailed me back saying I don’t think it’s a good idea for you to come, for you to come because a lot of our students are low-income. And it’d really make no sense for you to come and speak with them about options there because I’ve done my research about [The University] and they’re financial aid uh process and I don’t think that it would make sense for you to come and speak with the students about their options there. But then he ended it with not that I would discourage any students from applying but I just don’t think that it makes sense for you to come. And I called him back and said well, first of all, I understand your

hesitation because someone on the outside looking in at the sticker price might think that oh you know that's unfeasible for some of my students to even think about doing. But I think, I feel that your job is to gain, obtain information and then present that to the students so that they can make that decision. It's not really your place to block anything.

Tyrone called guidance counselors gatekeepers and he views their role should be more like a disseminator of information. He also viewed them as having the potential to empower students to make good college choice. Yet, he felt that some guidance counselors make the choices for the students without presenting all of the college options. Also, there is mistrust and judgment because the DCAPs felt that the guidance counselors could and can do more to help students. They resented the gatekeeping that they saw happening on the part of the guidance counselors. Also, they were frustrated by the lack of effort by some guidance counselors.

5.6 CONNECTION WITH HIGHER EDUCATION THEORY

5.6.1 The Disjuncture Between P-12 and High Education Systems

The DCAPs were very knowledgeable about the P-12 college-going culture, which reaffirms Perna's (2006) multi-layered Integrated College Access Model as a framework to understand the multiple factors and complexity that impacts a student's decision to go to college. The DCAPs' discussions were in agreement with Perna's (2006) model. For example, their constant interactions with the school district, school staff such as guidance counselors, students, and families shows the interconnection between these layers, especially among the P-16 levels of education. The DCAPs shared a lot of their views on LCSD's college-going culture, students, and guidance counselors.

Another concept where the DCAPs reflected higher education theory and research is Venezia et al.'s (2003) disjuncture theory. The DCAPs highlighted the misaligned structure of U.S. education or "disjuncture" between K-12 and higher education also affects student's college access, especially college knowledge. Pam explains:

I think the other thing with P-12 is state's have say, which for better or worse. I think for the state it's for worse. Like cuz DE is nobody's friend. Uhm you know but state's have say. States they can define measurable outcomes and measure whatever they're looking for. But for us you know we're building off of the foundation that P-12 has either provided or has not provided. So like when we get kids from FC_School, which we wouldn't because they're not in our service area. But if we get kids from private EL_School or WC_School, it's a completely different level of readiness than public W_School, M_School, V_School. But we can't say to that student, like I mean outside of putting them in developmental English versus regular English. We can't say to them 'Wow! You're not ready.' You know what I mean. We have to take them what we get from them and move forward. As opposed to saying but you're not ready. Go back and try it again. Give it another year and then come back.

This is a part of the reality of DCAPs to help underserved students of color. They see the lack of resources and, although they can assist some students, they cannot help ALL of the LCSD students struggling to access college. As we stated in the last chapter, there is often only one or two designated DCAPs per office. Then, add the DCAP number(s) with only one guidance counselor and you can see that there are too few people to address the district's college access gap.

Many of the DCAPs felt that some teachers/staff/counselors do not utilize enough college access strategies and practices to promote a good college-going culture. Often, there is a mismatch of college access strategies and practices between K-12 and higher education. This can result in a disjuncture in college access as well as disruptions in the college-going pipeline. Throughout the conversations, the fact that LCSD does not participate in regional or national college fairs was mentioned multiple times. They also mentioned that high school guidance counselors are often constrained by high caseloads and their duties to administer tests and class

scheduling. The context is that LCSD has a low college-going culture based on many factors, including low expectations and inconsistent college-ready strategies and practices. The DCAPs stated that the local school fairs are the only fairs that urban public high schools attend, some guidance counselors are limited in their involvement, students are not aware of the college admission process, and parents don't get enough information in a timely manner.

5.6.2 Freeman's (1999) Study on Sociocultural Barriers for African American Students

Scholars such as Mahalingam and McCarthy (2000a, 2000b), state that the central fallacy of "window dressing" or "lip service" is that we can improve the lives of underrepresented students of color and promote diversity without recourse to discriminatory policies and practices that influence diversity recruitment. Furthermore, such institutional racism maintains the massive reallocation of wealth away from disenfranchised children and their families. The DCAPs recruit students from schools with cultural capital and strong college-going cultures. Cultural capital is amassed at schools that have preceding capital as well as showcase good college-going characteristics. Schools that do not have capital often do not have good college-going characteristics or the internal capacity to increase their cultural capital. The DCAPs would or could not recruit at schools that lacked college knowledge and support for college visits.

Kassie Freeman's (1997, 1999) study of African American high school student college choice serves as a basis for considering race/ethnicity in college access research. Freeman's (1997, 1999) group interviews found that African-American high school students believe that both economic and sociocultural factors restrict the college enrollment of African-Americans. She presents an argument for cultural capital theory where college aspirations and high school academic capital grow out of the cultural and social capital. Similar to the current study's

findings, college access is based on sociocultural and not just societal (elite) values (Freeman, 1999). Therefore, Freeman's (1997, 1999) qualitative study looked at the impact of race as well as racism on student college choice.

The DCAPs affirmed Freeman's (1997, 1999) claims that race/ethnicity and culture impacts recruitment. Each college/university is committed to diversity recruitment with at least one college recruiter that is designated as the DCAP. Furthermore, the recruitment is different due to low college-going culture and need of LCSD students.

DCAPs also discussed Freeman's (1999) themes of psychological barriers: college is not considered an option; loss of hope; and intimidation factor. For example, Tyrone discussed the narrow mindset of LCSD staff and students. The DCAPs understood the challenges and also affirmed the students' belief that not enough emphasis is placed on higher education participation in their schools. In addition, they still perceived that the benefits of higher education outweigh the costs. Similar to the DCAPs viewpoints, Freeman's (1999) themes show that there are not only academic barriers but also socio-racial and cultural barriers to African American enrollment in postsecondary institutions.

Yet, schools also restrict college enrollment. For example, the DCAPs' concerns focused on the influence of the school's physical plant barriers (e.g., poor physical conditions of the school). The DCAPs also listed social and cognitive challenges to college access. Finally, LCSD students lacked social capital (lack of high expectations and assistance from guidance counselors and staff); and cultural capital (e.g., considering postsecondary education as a realistic option and culturally-relevant curriculum) because they often did not have access to DCAPs.

5.7 SUMMARY

Again, all of the DCAPs observed that LCSD had low college-going culture that is reflected in the data that I presented about the school district. Compared to the last chapter, LCSD's low college-going culture is affecting the way that DCAPs interact and recruit students. The DCAPs are again shown to be an authority on college access because they acknowledge the several challenges that face LCSD students and guidance counselors. The DCAPs views also align with higher education research and theory to add to the scholarship on college access from the professional perspective.

Yet, they were aware of the systematic challenges in P-12 and postsecondary education that attribute to students' poor college knowledge and the urban school district's low college-going culture. LCSD schools do not have the resources, which is just one of the reasons for the low college-going culture. Therefore, as many of the DCAPs explain, a high school visit or campus visit is not going to address the larger issues of the socio-racial stratification and college access gap among LCSD students, staff, and schools. Even more so, the DCAPs, as part of diversity recruitment strategies, maintain the socio-racial stratification among the LCSD schools.

Along with Perna's (2006) Integrated College Access Model, Venezia et al.'s (2003) disjuncture theory is reflected in LCSD's poor college-going culture and the DCAPs' challenges to recruit local and underrepresented students of color. Although the DCAPs recognized challenges such as communication gaps, they were limited in their ability to redress these college access issues. For example, the College-Ready scholarship has become an incentive for students to improve their college readiness; yet, this strategy is not enough to improve the college-going culture and college access of LCSD schools. Furthermore, the countless duties and tasks limit the guidance counselors to develop their communication and relationships with DCAPs. There is

also a lack of incentive for DCAPs to go above and beyond for LCSD students outside of traditional enrollment strategies. Yet, from talking with the DCAPs, this is exactly what is needed to improve college access. The DCAPs also affirm Freeman's (1997, 1999) study of the sociocultural barriers to college access. Race/ethnicity is a factor in college admissions as well as the socio-racial stratification and institutional racism that is prevalent in diversity recruitment. While they were able to indicate how race/ethnicity plays a role in college access; they did not comment on the discriminatory policies and practices. There is institutional racism when DCAPs recruit at strong college-going cultures, which are more than likely predominately white or more diverse high schools. In other words, DCAPs do not recruit at predominately African American high schools.

5.8 COLLEGE SUCCESS 101 COLLABORATIVE: COMMUNITY OUTREACH

5.8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter and section, I explored the socio-racial stratification that affects college access, the complexity of diversity recruitment, and the DCAPs' role as an authority on college access. In this section, I will focus more on the DCAPs role as an advocate for community outreach to address the college access gap. For most colleges/universities, community outreach is a big part of diversity recruitment for the DCAPs. The DCAPs were very aware of community activities in the greater metro area concerning college access. In addition, the DCAPs felt that there needs to be more collaborative efforts. Many of the DCAPs felt that

diversity recruitment and community outreach were important but current practices aren't effective since the college access gap still exists in the city.

5.8.2 DCAPs' Community Knowledge

For most universities, community outreach is a part of diversity recruitment. From the demographic questionnaire, the DCAPs shared their community involvement. All of the DCAPs participated in community outreach activities at least monthly but some participated weekly. All of the members work with community based organizations with a college preparatory mission. The majority worked monthly and some worked weekly with organizations. All of the members worked with LCSD schools. The majority of institutions strategically utilized diversity recruitment and DCAPs to coordinate community outreach activities. The most popular forms of community outreach were presentations/workshops, college fairs, targeted recruitment travel to urban cities, school/community campus tours, and special programs such as College Success 101. Among the private colleges/universities, some sponsored campus overnight visits and summer pre-college programs.

During the focus groups, they described the efforts of the greater community such as churches, community-based organizations, and professional associations. The DCAPs again showed that they were very much aware of what's going on in the community and greater metro area concerning college access. For example they stated church functions, bus trips, scholarships, community workshops/presentations, colleges/universities, local non-profit organizations, [CHE] fairs, NACAC Fairs, etc.

In the interviews, it became clear that Martin and Verunike's large public research university and Pam's regional branch campus did a lot of community outreach such as

sponsoring on-campus workshops on admission and SAT prep, bus trips to campus, and summer day programs. Martin was also the only DCAP whose title included college outreach. Jaune's large public research universities and some of the liberal arts colleges did a lot of marketing in the area such as radio, billboards, etc. Overall, there were similarities in the community outreach activities among the colleges/universities, even among the different institutional types.

Therefore, there is a particular groupthink, traditions, and cultural markers that signify the community involvement of college admission offices.

During her interview, Verunike discusses how community outreach is a major function of her office:

And we sort of function as the main point of contact for local college fairs and sort of recruitment activities where people will want a [The University] representative. Uhm because there are so many campuses in this areas as well. Uhm there are 3 or 4 campuses that are less than maybe an hour or so away from [the city]. We serve as a central contact for people who may be looking for college reps for anything even if it's something as simple as college presentation.

She adds:

Uhm we would do things like that. Uhm our office also hosts various campus visits every fall and sometimes throughout the spring depending on the organization that we're working with. Uhm and that sort of serves as the purpose of helping students see the [The University] system before they apply or while they're applying."

From Verunike's recount of her college outreach activities, you can see that her office is often contacted to be a college resource and share information to students, families, and community members.

Implications discussed in Chapter 8 look at the recommendations such as a citywide partnership between urban school districts and colleges/universities for developing students' college readiness and access. Since higher education is vital for socio-economic status in the

local region and nation, it is particularly important that underrepresented students of color and low-income students receive the support and information to access and succeed in college.

5.8.3 College Success 101 Collaborative In Their Own Words

Mustafa explains the history of CS101:

CS101 grew out of [regional college admission association] Uh two branches: one was in [D_city], the other was here. You've heard the story. Uhm we kept ours going. Uh [D_city] lasted maybe a year or two, uh and then it just went away. Uh so we felt like we wanted to keep this going. Uh there was a commitment to the community. To the students who were coming out of the public schools specifically. Not just students from [this] area. The focus has always been on [LCSD] schools. We want to keep it that way. It's always been that way ever since so.

CS101 was founded in order to address the city's college access gap. DCAPs and CAPs were moved to start a program that would provide information to LCSD students. Again, the DCAPs are aware of the challenges for LCSD students to access college information.

Mustafa gives his thoughts about CS101's success and legacy over the years. He also talks about the growth that he's seen:

For me personally when I started in it. I felt the need to want to keep this going. Uh we certainly did not want it to go away and it's grown to it's and really it's, it's own. Uhm so nowadays we, the school counselors will contact us to find out the dates for CS101. Well as before it was the exact opposite.

The same reasons that CS101 was established are the same reasons that DCAPs are still passionate to continue CS101. As a whole, LCSD is still experiencing many of the same problems 18 years later.

Martin also declares that CS101 is an important program because the targeted population is B or C students:

Once I found out about College Success 101 and what it provided I thought it was necessary for our office to be a part of it. Uhm, everybody is always looking at the high

academic achievers --- successful student I should say. But, yeah, the middle ground are the most important and I understand many of them will go to but it's important to let them know that they are hopefuls if they want to aspire to go to other schools as well and be successful, and I figured that if we would be a part of this maybe we can not only help out in terms of letting them be exposed to [The University], but also find out what else is needed that we can contribute to. Whether it's with people or with our knowledge or financial commitment.

In their own words, the DCAPs explained their interest in sponsoring CS101 to help the “average” LCSD students that would be considered borderline in an admission review. These students may not get attention from school staff/teachers yet, they often aspire to go to college.

5.8.4 DCAPs’ CS101 Involvement

In the following sections, I will share accounts of the DCAPs retelling of how they became involved in CS101. Frankie describes her initial reaction to CS101:

I was involved in College Success 101 originally because somebody, my boss, said we need to be involved in College Success 101 and that’s gonna be your job. So I showed up at the uh event planning meeting and really loved it. I loved the concept. I was really excited to work on this committee. Uhm And I also really loved the fact that uh [Mustafa] and others who had been long time uhm organizers of this event were suuuper open to people coming in and really caring about the program and taking it on as their own. I felt like in that committee that my voice mattered. Uhm that my opinion mattered and it was really going to be heard.

Frankie also describes her passion and interest in being involved, “So not only was I excited about the program, but I was excited for me in terms of professional development.” Like most of the other DCAPs, they volunteered to be in CS101 since it was one of the duties of their predecessor. Yet, many found it gratifying and became more involved because of their interest in CS101. Sasha explains that her background of being a native influenced her involvement, “I really like the program and I specifically made it a part of my job to get involved in CS101. One I think as a [hometown] person but also as [The University] uh institution we should be uh

devoting more of our resources and attentions and efforts like CS101.” Tyrone explains that he was also encouraged by CS101:

And I went to a meeting and I was like, I guess I was encouraged by the participation with the other local colleges and universities around the [city] area coming together with the goal of helping you know local students be prepared for college. At least introduce them to the college admission process, which is something that you know is very needed, especially with uhm our local students here. And I think that you know that effort to come together and say, ‘Let’s take initiative and help our students,’ instead of just you know let’s get them to come to our school and our school only. I think that that effort really encouraged me to really say, ‘oh ok people do care.’ Even if it’s a few people, we’re able to come together and kind of put our heads together and see what we can do to help students who may be first generation or they maybe low-income or just have no idea how to, you know what an application looks like or where to begin when it comes to their college search.

He continues to talk about how his involvement in College Success 101 and how it helped him to be more effective at his job:

So I think uhm that’s when I first started uhm back then really starting to uhm get into, ‘Ok what is this you know college admissions process and how can I be effective.’ I feel like College Success 101 was a big part of me, helping me be effective. Not only uhm you know within my university, within my uhm target university but just in the city in general connecting with students, counselors. Getting out there and connecting with networks and you know just recruiting and networking like that. I think that was a good stepping stone for me to get used to the admissions world.

Tyrone, Frankie, and others were excited to be a part of a program that included like-minded DCAPs and higher education professionals who want to help LCS D students. All of the DCAPs explained that CS101 is a way to be involved in community outreach.

5.8.5 DCAPs Explain CS101 Benefits

The DCAPS describe the benefits of sponsoring CS101 every year. Some of the DCAPS explain that it is a service that they provide for the LCS D students. It benefits students because it is a venue for the DCAPS to share their cultural capital and their college knowledge. Jaune

states, “But in the mission of CS101, I think it’s also great because it allows us to serve the city, to serve the city that we live and work in.” Tyrone also echoes Jaune and the other DCAPS:

I think the goal to maintain uhm that type of support for higher education is definitely good because it’s needed uhm within the city. You know you can talk a good game but if you don’t do anything it’s not going to you know make a difference. And you know the kids you know coming up are the ones that are going to be running the city and running the country. So we don’t want them to just leave uh or uhm not have any preparation to even think about going to college. Because where is our city going? We want our city to keep going upwards and you know not take a step back. I think the goals are definitely in the right place.

Verunike also explains the many benefits of CS101 coming from a LCSD alumni perspective:

I think it’s a very important program to have. Uhm as a student, I was a [LCSD] student as well, as a student I never attended CS101, only because I sort of didn’t fall in the demographics of the program. But to be able to see it sort of on the backhand, uhm I guess as an adult and as an admissions counselor, uhm it’s definitely a valuable tool. Uhm especially when you look at [The University]. As a university, we do recruit a wide array of students. Uhm we can work with you know the B/C average student and even you know those students who are on the bubble. We have things in place to get them to be college-ready as well. So it’s definitely useful in terms of our participation in the program. Because these are the students that we are recruiting.

As part of the benefits, there are different components of the day’s event that improves college knowledge. Feliz further explains the program, “Uhm you know it’s more than just a college fair. It’s workshops, uhm financial aid, uhm just getting them exposed to it.” Mustafa continues by discussing the different workshop topics:

I see it as a tool to help the students and counselors in some cases uh with topics in the admissions process that they may not be as familiar with. Uh so I know the most popular one typically is financial aid. But not just students but with the counselors to hear what schools (colleges) may be looking for.

Verunike talks about the college fair:

Only because I think CS101 puts a great amount of resources in front of students. Because you get to see a lot of different colleges at the same time. You get a little bit on prepping for college and the college admission process. So you’re meeting a lot of valuable contacts and you’re making great connections at the actual event.

Feliz, Mustafa, Tyrone, Verunike and others explain how the CS101 program is geared towards sharing college knowledge with students and communities that do not have access to college resources.

5.8.6 CS101 Challenges

Because they're interested in assisting students, the DCAPs are even critical of their own college access outreach. Feliz discusses more of the logistical issues:

And uhm I know last time we kind of had some, some rough spots with the location last minute. So I know that kind of shook things up. So uhm And I know it's kind of hard for schools even though it's like _ for other things. It's like here, it's like pulling teeth to get something done. So uhm you know that's kind of what's expected when working with like how many schools? 9 different schools together. Some are big, some are small. You know so it's kind of, so that's kind of a challenge to get everyone on the same page.

Jaune also continues to explain CS101's challenges:

Uhm and you know I think CS101 is definitely great in theory. There are you know logistics that definitely need to be worked out, I'm sure that they need to be worked out each year. Because you know with the people and the students, we all have to work and tailor it to the people that we're trying to serve.

The DCAPs understand the challenges of working in collaboration and volunteering their time apart from their primary duties. Also, this type of collaborative is rare among colleges and universities.

However, they also understand that their efforts are limited and don't fully address the needs of LCSD to gain college access. Jaune explains:

And I think that in terms of college success kind of going back to that uh. These are things that we need to be aware of that's something that we almost need to implement in the way of executing the program itself. And uhm the programs within that program. You know the speakers that are involved and the schools that are involved. You know kind of letting everyone know. We understand that all of these kids aren't going to necessarily end up at our university. But with that being said let's work to maybe even help [the community college] or our branch campuses or [another university's] branch campuses.

So that the students do understand, “Hey, you don’t have to start out at the school to get the degree.

As Jaune explains each DCAP and university has an agenda as to how and why they are participating in CS101. Again, while CS101 is a great effort and collaborative venture it is not going to address the larger social and racial issues that impacts local urban college access.

The DCAPs explain that, although CS101 is a noble effort, it is not addressing the systemic issue of socio-racial stratification in college access. More importantly, the DCAPS are aware and state their concerns/frustrations. Frankie explains:

So College Success 101 kind of uhm plays a role. But we’ve always talked about this in College Success 101 that it really just doesn’t fill that need. It’s a part of the grand scheme of things but it can’t possibly fill the need that the students have and their campuses. It’s one day uhm of a college fair. Hopefully it sparks something, ignites something. But if there’s no one in the schools to really help that along. Hopefully they make a connection with a counselor at the fair but otherwise, it’s really, it’s not you know, it’s not enough.

Tyrone explains, “The results uhm the results are good but I think the results have been steady. Uh instead of increasing. I would describe and I would describe it as steady and not necessarily increasing as it should.” Feliz also adds:

I think the participation has remained steady and the amount of effort putting in has remained steady. If you keep doing the same thing then you’ll keep getting the same results. So I think if people will be a little more willing to step up and do a little bit more. Or uhm participation would you know rise a little bit then I think the results would rise a little bit so it all works hand in hand. It all works together so I think it’s good, it’s definitely, it’s heart is in the right place. Uhm we gotta get, we gotta get more out of everybody.

Jaune, Frankie, Tyrone, and Feliz expressed the limited improvements based on the constraints of the program such as the severity of the college access gap; DCAP turnover; limited number of colleges/universities that can host due to size; and the limits of time and resources in volunteering for CS101. The DCAPs are frustrated and want to improve but are limited in different facets to make a lasting affect on CS101. [

There have also been efforts to sponsor a College Success 102 where students are able to experience a “day of college.” Martin explains the efforts that he has made to expand CS101:

The one thing that I try to help out with is the next step and which was the concern that I am concerned with is not only getting into college but how to get out of college. And that's why I was so adamant about trying to get College Success 102 started so that we can get them to the next step and talk to professors and not only here but get them out of the environment and get them to that college setting no matter if it's [The University] or [another college] or what have you, so that they can be exposed and not go through the anxiety as much as if they were ever going to an institution and they can hear professors and they can find out what is needed to be successful once they're here in order to graduate. So that's what I found out that I thought was important. Do we still need to work on that? Yes we do, but I know we're working on it.

The DCAPs are critical of their efforts but in the hopes of improving the program and expanding its effect to address the college access gap.

5.9 COMMUNITY ADVOCACY SUMMARY

As part of a greater community effort, the College Success 101 Collaborative hopes to be a part of the college-going culture. Expanding on the vision of city initiatives such as the city-wide scholarship, the DCAPs want to help LCSD schools be accountable to provide programs and strategies that will help students and families plan and prepare for college.

Although the DCAPs' view LCSD as having a low college-going culture, college access outreach among the colleges can have an important impact on college access. Every college had outreach efforts that were described as part of a larger institutional diversity strategy. College Success 101 is one of the initiatives to improve college access. However, although the diversity recruitment strategies varied by the institutional type and level of community outreach, the outreach activities were similar and sporadic. Therefore, it is important that institutions of higher

education work with high schools to develop particular programs to build a culture where going to college is the norm and resources are geared toward students' admission to and success in higher education (Bauman et al., 2005; Bensimon et al., 2004; McClafferty et al., 2002; Milem et al., 2005; Oakes et al., 2002; Perna, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009; Vargas, 2004; Venezia et al., 2003; Williams et al., 2005).

6.0 CAPITAL GATEKEEPING, CULTURAL CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE, AND COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The current study highlights the DCAPs as an important stakeholder in promoting college access. The previous chapters show the perspective of the DCAPs on LCSD's college-going culture as well as college admissions within the higher education context. They have recounted the socio-racial stratification that takes place in the P-16 educational system. Overall, all institutions and levels of education have contributed to the college access gap among LCSD students.

In this chapter, I discuss the theme of DCAPs as bearers of cultural capital as well as cultural agency and wealth. I am addressing research question 3 to elaborate on the groupthink amongst the DCAPs to further show their role and impact on college access. The DCAPS are passionate about helping students, yet, limited in their efforts due to the socio-racial stratification, biased admission criteria, and institutional selectivity. In their narrative, I found that the DCAPs are critical of different levels of education and stakeholders. Moreover, the DCAPs serve in a dichotomous role of gatekeeper as well as advocates. They are the gatekeepers of higher education by choosing who and how to share information and grant admission to

college. Yet, they are also advocates through their beliefs, duties, and involvement in college outreach efforts such as CS101.

In sharing the narratives of the DCAPS, I explain the practices, strategies, and policies through the monikers of gatekeeping, critical, or advocacy. The discussions were analyzed to decipher whether they're actions were either to help students get into college or to prevent them in the admissions process. This method helps in identifying patterns of gatekeeping and advocacy DCAPs' local diversity recruitment.

6.2 COMPLEXITY OF DIVERSITY: NARRATTIVES AND COUNTERNARRATIVES

The DCAPs gives voice to a counter-story that exposes, analyzes, and challenges the dominant stories of capital and privilege in college admissions. They depict the challenges in the college admissions process that LCSD students face in gaining college access. This is a different narrative than the commitment to help low-income and underrepresented students of color go to college that is present in colleges/universities' mission and outreach. Colleges/universities still sponsor outreach efforts to increase college access in the scheme of its enrollment management strategies yet, is it enough to overcome the college access gap? These stories are often neglected when researching college admissions. Therefore, this research study uses the narrative mode to tell the DCAPs experiences as counter-narratives.

Through dialogue with the DCAPs, I use elements of CRT to illuminate the DCAPs' concepts, ideas, and experiences (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). The stories and participants are grounded in real-life experiences and are contextualized in the socio-cultural situation of college

admissions. The DCAPs' counter-stories are reflections of the participants and composite narratives form "data" to recount the racialized and stratified experiences of DCAPs' as staff of color or allies. Solorzano and Yosso (2002) explain that once the various sources of data are analyzed, the resulting composite characters tell a story. Therefore, my role was to engage the DCAPs in a real and critical dialogue about college access, socio-racial stratification, and cultural capital.

Solorzano and Yosso (2002, p. 36) further states that the counter-stories serve at least four functions as follows: (a) They build agency among marginalized communities of color by including their voice in educational theory and practice, (b) They challenge perceived wisdoms of the culture of power by providing a context to understand and transform the established socio-cultural stratification, (c) They open new windows into the reality of the marginalized by showing various opportunities and demonstrating that they are not alone in their position, and (d) They teach others that by combining elements from both their stories and the current reality to construct a parallel universe that is richer than either their truths or reality alone.

For example, there was evidence of privilege within the DCAPs' narratives from the decisions about travel as well as meaning making concerning LCSD schools. However, cultural power is also present in the DCAPs narrative because they often lack power to make high-level decisions and/or enact change. Solorzano and Yosso (2002) explain that it is important to recognize the culture of power and privilege in constructing stories about cultural capital and race/ethnicity. Without being unchecked, research can distort and/or silence the experiences of people of color (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Therefore, I engaged with the DCAPs' narratives to inform the national discussion on college access.

6.2.1 Complexity of Diversity for the DCAPs

Even though the DCAPs were passionate about college access and worked to assist LCSD students, they reflected on some of the deficit views of their respective institution toward LCSD recruitment. More importantly, it took the form of a defeatist tone and attitude where the DCAPs acknowledged the challenges of recruiting LCSD students. All in all, the majority decided there was nothing that they could do to eradicate the college access gap. In addition, in exploring the DCAPs' narratives there is little cultural resistance. Jaune, Mustafa, Sasha, Pam, Sly, Verunike, and even Martin expressed their opinions in a privileged perspective, as DCAPs with college knowledge. Although, they acknowledged the hardships that LCSD and students of color face, they still considered the return of investment in local recruitment.

All of the DCAPs expressed the complexity of cultural capital in college admissions throughout their narratives. This is part of the DCAPs' cultural habitus as well as the cultural wealth of their respective community of color or allies. This "double consciousness" is a real factor for DCAPs in promoting college access. This is a neglected tension for staff of color and allies that higher education has not acknowledged. This is the bridging, code-switching, and dissonance that DCAPs face where they are involved in community outreach, possess cultural capital, but hold limited cultural power.

Pam's comments about LCSD recruitment are an example of the complexity and conflicts of being a DCAP. She states:

Uhm so I feel like we shouldn't give kids false hope. You also shouldn't set kids up for failure. But maybe that's where [colleges] do more to help those students up their potential. Uhm so maybe that's where they start younger or they do camps. We're big camp people at The University]. Uhm we have a camp for everything. We have a one-day camp for PhotoShop camp. Let's do that. Uhm you know because we want to get our name in the community because with 20 campuses, there's a [University] for everybody. Mostly everybody. You know it's really hard to find a branch campus that will say no you can't go.

Where other more selective schools, I don't know if they're going to do outreach because it's not going to pay off for them.

Pam expresses the dichotomy of college admissions. She states that DCAPs should not give false hope yet help students meet their full potential. Although these beliefs are noble, they are not explicitly stated in the DCPs' job description. The traditional role and duty of a DCAP is to increase the enrollment of local and underrepresented students of color. Nevertheless, the DCAPs hold these beliefs and are critical of each other, P-12, and higher education, which is measured by their ability to fulfill the goal of diversity. In her interview, Pam also mentioned how the diversity of students, faculty, and other initiatives helped her job to recruit.

Another example of the complexity and contrasts in admissions is how Mustafa maintained his office's highly selective admissions policies while also trying to be involved in the community to improve college access. He explained the assignment of LCSD schools as a recruitment territory for an admissions counselor. He explains, "So anyone, that just depends on the travel schedule. We have some people who certainly do a good bit of the LCSD recruitment but it's not limited to just one, one person." He is explaining that other professionals are involved in LCSD recruitment rather than just DCAPs like him and his team. He wants to include everyone to interact with LCSD, besides DCAPs. In this way, the strategy of inclusion enables any and everyone in the office to take part in targeted diversity recruitment. Essentially, he is saying that being a DCAP is not required and that everyone can assist in recruiting LCSD students. This creates allies within the office to maintain diversity recruitment as a priority.

Yet, after talking with him about the recruitment strategy for other major cities, there is a different approach to assign only one professional, especially a DCAP, in order to build relationships with the schools and students. In addition and throughout the conversation, he comments that communication and relationships are important. Therefore, it seems that the best

strategy is to assign one person to maintain communication and relationship within a territory or urban city. Furthermore, from interviewing another DCAP, the special populations team is primarily in charge of LCSD recruitment.

Therefore, there is an expectation to being a DCAP where DCAPs are given multiple duties but they are primarily expected to advance diversity recruitment. Mustafa believes that all staff should recruit students of color in all territories; however, he also complies with the admission policies and practices of the general office to utilize DCAPs for targeted diversity recruitment. So, while college admissions would like the entire office to be inclusive and recruit ALL students, DCAPs are hired to primarily recruit students of color and it is a major responsibility. There are other examples where the DCAPs will explain one policy or idea but, in practice, will use a different racialized strategy or concept.

This becomes even more complex since the DCAPs often share the same race/ethnicity of the students they recruit at LCSD. The DCAPs share that they have a responsibility to reach out to LCSD and underrepresented students of color. Yet, time, human capital (DCAP), the office's budget, and other resources limit college access outreach. Similar to institutional claims of striving for diversity and inclusion, the DCAPs' explain that they have vested interests to recruit LCSD and underrepresented students of color to improve college access. However, just like institutions, they still maintain laissez-faire inclusion and racism, which contributes to the college access gap. Therefore, the targeted recruitment efforts are not enough to overcome the racial/ethnic disparities in education. I will discuss this further in the following sections and continue discussion in the next chapter.

6.2.2 DCAPs Reconciling Race/Ethnicity in College Admissions

DCAPs have a unique perspective because they are an intermediate between P-12 and postsecondary education. They are advocates for LCSD students. To help recruit LCSD students, colleges/universities insist that administrators like DCAPs share the same cultural and racial/ethnic backgrounds as underrepresented students of color. Although colleges/universities do not discriminate in its hiring practices, this emphasis helps to ensure that staff operates, as a matter of principle, from a pedagogical perspective that affirms the local racial/cultural identities of LCSD students (Tierney, 1999). It also helps in community involvement to accomplish its objective of gaining trust and providing students with suitable role models. As a result, the students are given opportunities to work with and learn from individuals who come from similar backgrounds or who, at the very least, understand and value the importance of multiculturalism.

Although, the DCAPs depict the urban public schools' low college-going culture, they are also gatekeepers and pose challenges in racial/ethnic diversity recruitment. Again, the DCAPs explained the limitations of time, money, and power to promote college access. Many of the DCAPs are staff of color in entry-level positions. So, oftentimes, they are not able to make logistical decisions based on the policies of the office of admissions. The DCAPs identified the cost restraints in recruiting underrepresented racial/ethnic minorities. For many of the DCAPs had to rationalize their participation in outreach such as College Success 101 apart from the altruistic reason of addressing LCSD's low college-going culture.

Another point is that college admissions is formulated with the goal to admit the most intelligent and promising class by looking at the numerical GPA and SAT scores. DCAPs are not in the business of building academic capital, but to rate it. Swail and Perna (2002, p. 1) state that, "One reason for the persisting gaps may be that traditional approaches to increasing college

access have focused too narrowly on the issue of college enrollment, without sufficient attention to the steps required to be academically, socially, and psychologically prepared to enter and succeed in college.” DCAPs are not responsible for improving college readiness and impact the college-going culture on a macro-level and the interconnection with P-12. Yet, it has a direct impact on construing the college admissions process that every LCSD student faces to go to college.

6.2.3 Communities of Color’s “Double-Consciousness”

In analyzing the DCAPS role in college access, I uncovered a tension reflective of Du Bois’ 20th century discussion on the struggle of having a sociocultural “double-consciousness” (DuBois, 1903). Part of their habitus as a person of color, the DCAPs have a dual nature to his/her identity. For example, many are upstanding citizens of their communities of color while also serving as the face(s) of diversity at their respective colleges/universities. He/she serves as a representative of his/her community at the university as well as a representative of the university in his/her community. Jaune states, “I think that a lot of times in my life, I have been that person. That is ok to be the face of diversity. You know so it was a role that I accepted and embraced with no problem.” It is a responsibility, privilege, burden, and tax all wrapped in a single person’s identity.

Tyrone also adds that students see the DCAPs as role models:

So I think that if you are actually honest with the students, have the goal of actually helping them instead of uhm you know of having other motives, I think it’s uhm it can go a long way. As far as them listening to your perspective and seeing you know, ‘ok where you come from this you know you come from a similar back ground like me (students). I (the students) never knew it until I actually talked to you (DCAP).’ You know so things like that, I guess, we have a responsibility to do as well.

Since a DCAP often has the same sociocultural background and/or race/ethnicity, then LCSD students are able to relate more and be more apt to seek college knowledge.

Colleges/universities use the DCAPs' identity to their advantage while enabling him/her to give back to his/her communities of color. Their role as DCAPs is a strategy under the targeted diversity recruitment using the argument that you can greatly recruit underrepresented students of color by employing a staff member that comes from the same communities of color. There are also other strategies such as targeted city/state recruitment. Using publications that reflect diversity, and sponsoring events or recruitment programming that demonstrate campus diversity. Yet, these recruitment activities and strategies hardly demonstrate inclusiveness. Like the CS101 summit, they are often one-time or occasional events that do not lead to continual discussions of the state of campus diversity and inclusion. As I analyzed the racialization of the DCAPs, I contemplated the ability of the colleges/universities to implement Bensimon's (2004) diversity scorecard and/or Williams' (2006a, 2006b, 2007) inclusive excellence model. Few colleges/universities have tried and succeeded. Also, success is relative due to the belief that the U.S. is a post-racial society. A few of the colleges/universities have chief diversity officers. However, few have power that extended to enrollment and the admissions office. Therefore, diversity recruitment is often the most popular form of diversity initiative but lacks the ability to enact sociocultural change in higher education.

6.3 DCAPS' CULTURAL HABITUS AS THE CS101 COLLABORATIVE

There is a collective nature of habits among the DCAPs. They exhibit many group-specific characteristics of regularity, unity, and uniformity in their admission practices (Bourdieu

& Passeron, 1977). For example, all of the DCAPs are participating in local recruitment as part of their diversity recruitment. Secondly, most of the DCAPs share socio-cultural characteristics with LCSD students such as social background, residency, and/or race/ethnicity. Third, all of the DCAPs believe it is their responsibility to assist LCSD students and provide college outreach. Fourth, the DCAPs struggle with reconciling their sense of duty for the LCSD students with their need to uphold their respective college's diversity enrollment strategy and for job security.

After reviewing the DCAPs' beliefs and the tough reality of recruiting LCSD and underrepresented students of color, we can begin to understand their cultural habitus. Perna's (2006) conceptual model assumes that students' educational decisions are determined, at least in part, by their habitus, or the system of values and beliefs that shapes an individual's views and interpretations (Paulsen, 2001; Paulsen & St. John, 2002; Perna, 2000; St. John & Asker, 2001; St. John, 2003; St. John, Paulsen, & Carter, 2005). In the same way, we can apply the concept of cultural habitus to understand how the DCAPs, as the CS101 Collaborative group, recruit underrepresented students of color.

I apply Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural habitus to discuss how the DCAPs' cultural systems and beliefs influence their roles as diversity recruiters and counselors (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Crisp & Nunez, 2012; Freeman, 1997; McDonough, 1997; Perna, 2000, 2006; Tierney, 1999; Yosso, 2005). Nunez and Crisp (2012, p. 79) define "habitus as an individual's internalized set of perceptions and expectations of his or her educational opportunities that have typically been shaped by family, schooling, and community." This is particularly salient for DCAPs from urban underrepresented racial/ethnic groups such as African Americans. More importantly, culture (at varying levels such as the individual, institution, and community) affects

how the DCAPs recruit (such as high school visits, reviewing applications, and community outreach). In other words, culture, race, ethnicity, SES, etc. matters.

In addition, researching the DCAPs cultural habitus shows the micro patterns among the DCAPs who specialize in diversity recruitment and work daily to promote college access. College access is a social concept in which the DCAPs work and live daily. They have certain beliefs that help and hinder their work.

6.3.1 Integrating Personal and Professional Identities

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, due to the complexities of being a DCAP at a predominately White institution that reinforces socio-racial stratification in its admission policies, the DCAPs reconcile their identity as a person of color or ally with being employed at an institution that reproduces racist and classist admission policies and practices. In other words, their decisions to recruit are determined by a system of values and beliefs that shapes his/her own individual's views and interpretations (Paulsen, 2001; Paulsen & St. John, 2002; Perna, 2000; St. John & Asker, 2001; St. John, 2003; St. John, Paulsen, & Carter, 2005). This is evident from Martin's critic of students and Frankie's sympathy for guidance counselors to Tyrone's advocacy for students and Pam's outreach to community organizations. Yet, The DCAPs also weighed the benefits and costs of recruitment and counseling relative to their professional networking, expectations, knowledge, preferences, and challenges (Paulsen, 2001; Paulsen & St. John, 2002; Perna, 2000; St. John & Asker, 2001; St. John, 2003; St. John, Paulsen, & Carter, 2005). In other words, Mustafa, Jaune, Pame, Sasha, and others discussed the reality of balancing the DCAPs' main priority of local recruitment with the secondary duties of outreach.

Although the DCAPs have agency and are strategic improvisers, they are greatly affected

by racialized admission policies as well as the institution's identity and mission. For example, in experiencing college life and being trained in college admissions, the DCAPs and their respective institutions reproduce cultural capital and socio-racial stratification in P-16 education. The DCAPs work in a top-down hierarchy based upon the institution type and selectivity

However, the cultural habitus adjusts personal aspirations and expectations according to the probabilities for professional success or failure common to the DCAPs. This reinforces behavior for professional success (i.e. recruit the most academically achieving students of color from LCSD schools) but discourages behavior that openly questions racially biased admission criteria or recruitment activities. I looked at the perceptions, expectations, and practices that correspond to the structuring of the DCAPs' socialization. In other words, a DCAPs' habitus is an active residue of his or her sociocultural past that functions in the present to shape his or her current perceptions, thought, and actions. It includes the individual agency and histories of the DCAPs. There are inherited as well as innovative aspects in the cultural habitus. College admissions is, in reality, a place of negotiating, bargaining, violating, and compromising the DCAP's identity to not only the institution's organizational habitus but also integrating his/her personal interests, desires, and competencies. Therefore their execution of diversity recruitment is adaptive, strategic, and constitutive of cultural standards to maintain their personal as well as their professional identity. There is dissonance as expressed by the DCAPs criticisms. Yet, overall, the DCAPs professional practices are governed by personal dispositions and meanings and vice versa for a consonant DCAP identity.

In analyzing the DCAPs perspective of college admissions and P-12 college-going culture, I have been able to unearth the cultural habitus amongst the CS101 Collaborative. There is a collective nature and professional networking amongst the group based not only on shared

interests but also shared experiences. Secondly, the DCAPs constantly reconcile their personal sociocultural identity with their professional identity due to the racist reality of socio-racial stratification within the P-16 educational system. The DCAPs are passionate and want to work towards increasing enrollment but also improving college access among underserved students of color.

6.4 CULTURAL CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

All of the DCAPs are examples of the fluidity of using different approaches to recruit students. They rotate on being critical, gatekeepers and/or advocates. For example, Sasha and Mustafa are critical of LCSD schools where Jaune and Tyrone are critical of LCSD schools but also college admissions as well as colleges/universities. Martin, Pam, and Verunike illustrate gatekeeping when reviewing college applications yet, they sponsored many college outreach programming such as SAT prep workshops and college trips. Feliz and Frankie display advocate traits when working with students and guidance counselors but, believed that students need to be more responsible to follow up and complete applications. Throughout Chapters 4 and 5, the DCAPs gauged LCSD's college going culture and higher education's local recruitment efforts to show these multiple approaches to LCSD and diversity recruitment.

Arising from calls to advance multiculturalism, diversity, and social transformation in higher education, Rhoads and Black (1995, p. 413) argued that a critical cultural perspective, "helps student affairs practitioners understand the power of culture and, in so doing, enables them to engage in campus transformation intended to dismantle oppressive cultural

conditions.” It is important for educators and cultural workers like the DCAPs to culturally critique current systems and diversity programs to make sure that institutions of higher education are working towards an intellectual and activist "new" cultural politics of difference (McCarthy & Crichlow, 1993).

Cornel West (1993) states that, “The new cultural politics are constituted by a rejection of status quo forms of self-representation, a keen sense of the flow of history, and an alignment with counter hegemonic struggles for empowerment on a global scale” (p. xxii). Therefore, cultural workers such as the DCAPs need to be the critical theorists within his/her college/university to question and reveal the production of cultural power and capital. The DCAPs seemingly conducted their own form of participatory action research where 1) they actively participated in the co-construction of knowledge; 2) they promote self- and critical awareness for individual, collective, and/or social change; 3) and built alliances between stakeholders (McIntyre, 2007, p. ix). As stakeholders in college access, the DCAPs can take ownership of their part of the educational system and racial stratification in order to change it and be changed.

Throughout the DCAPs narratives, they were critical of every layer of college access including the student, schools and guidance counselors, DCAPs/admissions, colleges/universities, and the greater community. As a group, they were most critical of the students and P-12 schools but they also criticized themselves, the CS101 collaborative, and the CS101 program. Some evaluated the greater community as well as their respective college/university. However, there was minimal analysis of their own respective admissions offices for shortcomings in improving college access.

In the next sections, I will describe the different traits of capital gatekeepers, community advocates, and gatekeeper advocates. They are all amalgamations of the concept of DCAPs as critical gatekeeper advocates. Among the DCAPs represented in the CS101 collaborative, there are differing opinions that I hope to highlight through Jaune, Tyrone, and Verunike's narratives.

6.5 CULTURAL CAPITAL GATEKEEPING

College admission is a gatekeeping method to permit the right of entry to high-achieving and well-rounded students. This condones the racial/ethnic stratification in higher education through meritocracy that was discussed earlier in the literature review (Hagedorn & Tierney, 2002; Gandara & Bial, 2001; Knight & Oesterreich, 2002; Oakes, et al., 2002). DCAPs are also gatekeepers that perform the college/university's policies and practices, which often limits racial/ethnic diversity recruitment.

For example, DCAPs from public universities such as Jaune, Martin, and Verunike discussed the transfer process to their institutions as an alternative college admission. This is especially geared towards LCSD students who attended schools with low college-going culture, lack college readiness, as well as need college knowledge to understand the college application process. While smaller liberal arts DCAPs such as Frankie and Feliz described options such as test optional admissions, interviews, and the borderline review process. These descriptions show the extra steps that most LCSD students face because they lack college knowledge and readiness. Furthermore, in the case of transferring, there are particular recruitment challenges at two-year institutions like Sly's where the academic rigor and message of transferring is unappealing. Yet, these options for students reflect the poor college-going culture and low educational expectations

of LCSD schools.

6.5.1 Profile of a Capital Gatekeeper

Jaune is an example of a capital gatekeeper because her admissions office sponsors few college outreach programming. Also, her general viewpoint is a tough realistic opinion of LCSD students' capability to attend a 4-year institution. Also, she explains some of the gatekeeping practices in her diversity recruitment. Jaune states:

But for a lot of LCSD kids [the University], is not uh [the University], is just not realistic to them. Uhm Just when you get down to the nitty gritty, look at the test scores that they're producing and, you look at the grades that they're producing, the course that are available in those schools. Uhm So instead of maybe the [the University] being so present, it's almost like I need to and/or other counselors representing my university need to better tailor the conversations to the options that are available. So maybe looking at schools like [another college] or really any of the community colleges in the area or even our [The University] branch campuses, our regional campuses. Discuss that those options with students, let them know that [The University] definitely can be an option but more is going to be needed to get to that ultimate you know [The University].

She further states why she is not involved in more college outreach, "I have no problem dedicating my time to that. But the little return makes other people in the office less inclined to want to send somebody out for an event like that." Yet, Jaune really clarifies the role of a gatekeeper in college admissions when she states:

Uh And I I I think also, You know also, for those students who do have the grades and test scores, sometimes the money's not there. And I think that's more heart-wrenching than anything, at least for me. You know see these kids who worked so hard and you know we don't have bountiful scholarship money. You know the top of the top are getting the scholarship money. You know so what do students do who are at those average. I mean they're getting financial aid. Everything else is kind of left to them (there's a gap). So that makes things really hard so.

She explains the tough reality that even if a student from LCSD is admitted they have other challenges such as gaining enough financial aid to attend Jaune's college/university. This

statement is a real glimpse of the reality at her college/university. It almost justifies, Jaune's gatekeeping stance on recruiting LCSD students since college is a harsh reality for LCSD students. It is difficult to access because it is difficult to navigate. In other words, why recruit students who are not admissible or, if they are, cannot attend the college/university due to financial hardships. Furthermore, if LCSD students attend, they are still vulnerable because they have to do well or lose their financial aid to continue to go to college. Jaune is essentially saying why lead students through this harrowing process if they are not going to be successful in the college system.

Jaune is doing her duty to the students versus gathering as many applications as possible to meet the college/university's enrollment numbers. Again, very similar to the other gatekeepers, this is another insight on how college/university systems and policies limit recruitment and hinder college access. The problem is not always on the student, schools, or the DCAPs, but the higher education system. She continues to discuss her role as a DCAP to assist LCSD students:

As far as professionals at the higher education level in my experience here at [The University], I don't, I don't necessarily know if we're sending that message. Because we work with quite a few transfer students, I would like to think that our admissions team. We of course predominately recruit incoming freshman students but we do have a decent population of transfer students. And we see nothing wrong with that, as long as students are meeting our criteria in terms of the courses we want to see. Uhm you know GPA, all that kind of academic stuff.

This is a popular view among the DCAPs such as Mustafa, Sasha, Sly, and Jaune that work as gatekeepers. Although, there are alternative options to the traditional college application process, it is still a gatekeeping strategy. Mostly, low-income and students of color, particularly African American students, attend community college without college knowledge which leads to remedial classes and high attrition rates so that they don't graduate or attain credits to transfer

(Aud et al., 2010; Attewell & Lavin, 2007; Antonio & Muniz, 2007; Grodksy & Kalogrides, 2008; Meyer, et al., 2008). Also, students of color, particularly African American students, attend for-profit colleges where credits do not transfer. There are also comments that students can go anywhere to go to college but, the reality is that most students will stay in the city or immediate region. This means that their college search will most likely comprise of the 15 - 20 schools in the immediate area. Again, institutions have an impact on the ability of LCSD students accessing college.

6.6 CRITICAL COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

DCAPs are advocates and it helps in community involvement to accomplish its objective of gaining trust and providing students with suitable role models. As a result, the students are given opportunities to work with and learn from individuals who come from similar backgrounds or who, at the very least, understand and value the importance of cultural integrity

They are holders of college knowledge as well as benefits of higher education. One prerequisite for being a DCAP is to have character traits such as a collaborative, passionate, and concerned nature. In every discussion, the DCAPs showed their nature of caring for the students gain information about college. Many of them discussed their desire for students going to college, even if it wasn't their respective colleges/universities. They are aware of the college readiness, college access, and college-going culture which leads to informed college admissions. They are also aware of community efforts to promote college access.

The DCAPs felt that students should have college information and understand their responsibility in college admissions. They felt that students should have college information and

understand their responsibility in college admissions. Also, they believed that they should offer information and provide resources and tools.

6.6.1 Profile of a Community Advocate

Tyrone reflects the DCAPs who feel that it is their personal responsibility to help students and be an advocate. He states:

That uhm one of my responsibilities is to kind of boost local recruitment in our office. So I do have some plans in the works. Uh hopefully they can be implemented over the next couple of years that would help those efforts. I would definitely say that this is something that we're definitely going to be focusing on soon.

He continues:

I think that uhm people who are in our position, we have that responsibility to not only help them when they're about to apply but help them you know help them make the best decision. Even if that decision may not be your university or your college but the important thing is to know that you know I've helped them kind of start the path towards their own destination for higher education.

In a lot of his narrative, he talks about his personal responsibilities. He expresses that he is supported in his efforts. Yet, he never refers to LCSD or diversity recruitment as the office's efforts or a "we" effort. He often says, "I." This is the same for many of the other DCAPS that they are the only person responsible for local recruitment. Yet, admission offices are comprised of many people who do the same jobs and have the same duties. He also states, how he believes it is a personal conviction:

And I think at some point, you know you can give them information about the university that you work for or what they're going to have to do and what the requirements are. But at the end of the day, you know I'm gonna try my best, you know speaking for myself. I'm going to try my best to really try to make you understand what it is that you want and where it is you're trying to go.

Even as an advocate, Tyrone also believes in being realistic with students:

I think Uhm from my experience with guidance counselors, I think my view of them is really to get all of the information based on what the student has told them they're interested in. Be realistic with them based on their transcripts, Ok so based on your transcripts where we are from this point, here are your options. You know let's work on what we can get for you.

He adds that being unrealistic is not part of the DCAPs responsibility in admissions:

Saying well or even be unrealistic and saying well you can do that with no prerequisites or no experience or no education, Yeah you can do it, cuz that's not being realistic, that's not really helping them out. Uhm so I think having those conversations with them getting down to what they really want and then helping them understand where to begin, I think that's part of our responsibility too.

Student advocates such as Frankie, Feliz, and Tyrone state that LCSD students need attention, motivation, encouragement, and hand-holding to succeed in not only the college admissions process but throughout college. Also, from many of the advocates' comments, sometimes this requires DCAP to go above and beyond his/her job duties of reading applications. For example, like Frankie in the case of the homeless student that she counseled to apply and enrolled.

6.7 GATEKEEPING ADVOCACY

The overall sentiment of the DCAPs narrative is complex. All of the DCAPs showed various combinations of being a critical gatekeeper advocate. Many times these three traits were impacted by the DCAPs' cultural habitus of individual beliefs, institution, and autonomy/independence. Yet, some DCAPs showed both traits of gatekeeping or advocacy, more so than others.

By their involvement in CS101, the DCAPs showed that they were advocates for college access. Many of the DCAPs were involved in community outreach. They sponsored events, worked with community organizations, and were knowledgeable about LCSD and neighboring

communities. However, outreach was often small and inconsistent one-time opportunities like CS101. They were also confined by their roles as recruiters, admission recruitment efforts, and institutional policies to offer community outreach to the maximum level of full community engagement. Therefore, college outreach such as College Success 101 is not able to have great community impact.

6.7.1 Profile of a Gatekeeper Advocate

Verunike represents the gatekeeping advocates who participate in gatekeeping policies and practices, yet they offer college outreach programming to help students meet the admissions criteria. She considers the multiple factors that may influence a student's college knowledge, "Uhm and that's the thing I think that for some students get the general overall idea. Uhm but they don't sort of understand the little nuances." For example, she talks about the lack of financial literacy to apply for financial aid and understand the federal loan programs. Yet, overall, Verunike thinks that the student is responsible for seeking out college knowledge:

And so I think on the backend sort of falls more on the student to follow up. Uhm, which I actually think is good for them cuz it allows for students to be more proactive in their college decision-making process. Only because you know for some students especially students who are first-generation and lot of this process is going to be on them. Because their parents aren't going to understand it as well as the, the student who has siblings or parents who have already gone to college. So you are a little bit more alone in navigating the process.

Yet, she also discusses the ways in which her college/university assists students:

Uhm no it's kind of funny cuz I just did a visit at P_School yesterday and a big part of, well a big driving force of our conversation was how much it actually cost to go to college. Uhm and for many students the idea of even taking out any kind of loan is just a non-idea to them. And they're just like no I don't want loans. Well if you have to take out loans and if you don't want to do that then how do you expect to go to college. So I think that instilling this idea into students is that your education is an investment. An investment that you should be making. Uhm goes a long way."

She adds that it is crucial to have these important conversations:

So really explaining to students the planning of college goes you know much further than just simply filling out a college application and being accepted somewhere. You need to understand how you're going to pay for it and you need to understand how to read your financial aid package. So, that way when you do go to pick a school it's not only a school that is a good fit for you as a student but also a school that's going to be a good fit financially. So you know that's always a hard conversation to have with a student when you're like I know that you really want to go to this school but can you really afford it?

Verunike as well as other DCAPs like Martin and Pam know that there are many factors that impacts the student's college access. Verunike and others declare that although college admissions can be a complex, confusing, and socio-racially stratified enterprise, it is up to the student to ask questions and seek help. To the gatekeeper advocates, DCAPs and guidance counselors are resources of cultural capital that LCSD students can and should utilize. The gatekeeper advocates represent a type of "tough love" in order to help students understand the enormity of going to college. In addition, they reflect the "cold" institutional climate of higher education where underrepresented students of color gain admissions but it is difficult for them to culturally transition to a privileged white patriarchal academic institution (Hurtado et al., 1997, 2012). They feel it is important for students to understand the need of acquiring cultural capital by taking initiative and being proactive in their education. These are crucial skills to succeed in college, especially for underrepresented students of color.

6.8 SUMMARY

The current research has shared the DCAPs' narrative as an authority on college access. When analyzing the roles of DCAPs, I found that the DCAPs utilize various approaches to

counsel students. One, they are critical of every aspect of college access in order to see the areas of needed improvement. Secondly, the DCAPs engage in gatekeeping practices because they are not able to admit every student that applies to their respective colleges. The gatekeeping may seem harsh, especially since LCSD students come from a poor college-going culture. Yet, the DCAPs have to rate a student's college knowledge and cultural capital because these are the tools needed to be successful when attending college. The climate of higher education is too harsh to admit students, if they don't exhibit at least some college knowledge. Thirdly, the DCAPs serve as advocate for LCSD students as well as college outreach efforts to promote college access. For example, many of the DCAPs employ "tough love" towards students because, although they can be conflicting in their messaging. They sponsor events, conduct presentations, and share materials to assist students in the college admissions process. Therefore, the DCAPs in the current study exemplify their roles as critical gatekeeping advocates.

In general, the DCAPs critical gatekeeping advocates habitus had some correlation with the DCAPs' institution type and involvement. Martin, Verunike, and Pam all worked at the same institution and were designated as gatekeeper advocates since they are highly involved in the community. Likewise, Frankie and Feliz are DCAPs at small liberal arts colleges and considered critical student advocates. Yet, there are some exceptions. For example, Tyrone's private research university had average involvement yet, he was a strong critical advocate. In contrast, Sasha and Mustafa are both capital gatekeepers and work for the same institution that has an average involvement in the community. Also, there was no seemingly connection with the presence of diversity on the campus.

6.9 DCAPS' RECOMMENDATIONS OF COLLABORATION: COMMUNICATION, CONSISTENCY, AND PARTNERSHIPS

6.9.1 Gatekeepers Call for Communication

Mustafa and the other gatekeepers believe that there is need for district-wide changes. Mustafa explains:

Are there collaborations? I mean yes [The Local Council of Higher Education], [Local College Success Forum]. That's opening more dialogue. Uh obviously CS101 is another way we're all trying to collaborate. Now having it rotate I think increases the level of collaboration, not just one or two organizations.

Mustafa believes that CS101 is building that collaboration. He continues by adding:

All of the other local schools... All played a part in it in one way or another. Uhm but at this point, it's been transitioning to [another university]. Next year it's supposed to be at [another university]. And we're hoping that this keeps coming up. As it rotates now from school to school, which I think is a huge benefit to the students and the counselors to be exposed to other campuses. While we would like to have them here, I think it's good to have them visit other places as well.

Mustafa also claims that, "Some colleges are loving the area because they're seeing a lot of students going their way. While some of the other schools see it as we have some work to do."

Essentially, the DCAPS feel that LCSD need college information so that it is important to communicate and interact more frequently. The DCAPS make recommendations about how to improve the sharing of information and the bridge between P-12 and colleges/universities. For example, Mustafa believes it is the responsibility of DCAPS to serve as consultants. He also explains that:

Uhm the other part is, is personally as local universities. It's part of our responsibility. Uh to make sure that we're doing what we can. Talking about admissions generically or about our institutions. Or talking about financial aid whatever. Uh to particularly [LCSD], is we recognize that the resources may not be there for them to hire outside consultants or educational folks to come in and do those things.

He adds that it is also a matter of communication:

Uh I think there's just a lack of understanding. What schools (colleges) are maybe looking for. Uhm and again I think we can do a better job to communicate that. Uh in particular students not knowing what pre-reqs, not just requirements are needed. But the pre-reqs that schools need for certain majors. And you know how do we do that with the schedules that we all have and limited resources uhm that we all have. And we gotta figure that one out cuz there's a disconnect with some of these students in regards to what they're hoping to do. Uhm and this goes back to so what, what are we telling these kids? Is it not just about, 'Ok you should be looking at two-year or four-year.' But what are we telling them about, 'Alright if you want to major in this, then this is what you should be. This is the track that you should be on to get there.'

Other gatekeepers such as Jaune also agree that collaboration and communication are great methods to address the college access gap.

6.9.2 Critical Advocates Call for Consistency

Student advocates were inclined to take a bottom-up approach where they increased their participation with students and schools. For example, Tyrone states:

Because you know they see a lot of people come and go. But if you can come back and really maintain that connection with them, they know that you're not just there for one, one minute and gone the next. For consistency, it's good to keep going and really follow up on your promise to really helping them through the process because it's really, it's a long year your junior and senior year to be really thinking about the all of the decisions that they're gonna have to make. So continuing to go back and really doing um programs to really help them out make whether it's talking, giving them information or helping them walk through the application I think uh those things speak volumes as far as really helping them out.

Tyrone further articulates the narrow mindset that affects LCSD students. He talks about, "and I think part of our job is to kind of break, break that down, break that stereotype, that that stigma down, that mindset down."

Frankie expresses her wish that there was more assistance for LCSD:

I wish that there was more support for the teachers. I mean I wish that [The Local Council of Higher Education] was a more organized and hands-on college presence in the schools.

Even finding grant funding for positions in the schools to be that college liaison or something like that. I wish that there was that extra piece.

Frankie acknowledges that more needs to be done to improve college access for LCSD students.

Feliz and Frankie also agree that it is important to expose students to different types of colleges/universities on a continual basis. Feliz explains, “It helps students by exposing them. Uhm I know it’s only once a year... I just wish we could be with them like once a month. You know what I mean to constantly see them.” Frankie has also mentioned the importance of sponsoring more than one CS101 per year to continue the conversations on the college admissions process.

6.9.3 Gatekeeper Advocates Call for Better Partnerships

The gatekeeper advocates believed that it takes the sum of its parts to come together and help each other in sharing college knowledge. For example, Verunike explains:

Uhm I think that it’s largely just one step at a time, kind of deal. Only because you can only do as much as you can. Uhm you know so sometimes it takes a little bit more legwork on our end to really be able to follow-up with a counselor. So one day I just need to stop by and say, ‘Hey, you know I left a couple of messages. I know it’s kind of hectic for you. I just figured if I stop by that would make it easier.’ You know, for some counselors, you know, they appreciate that, you know, ‘I’ve been looking at your message, I meant to call you back, I just haven’t gotten there yet.’ You know, we understand that because the Fall is hectic for everybody and the year in general is a lot. You’re shuffling a lot of things at one time. It’s definitely something that we understand.

Verunike adds that counselors and DCAPs should work together because:

I think that it’s because we have a common goal. We want to see the students succeed because it’s sort of a group that we share. So you know they say it takes a village to raise a child. You know we’re all apart of that village.

Pam states that community organization partnerships are even more important than collaborations with P-12, “You know uhm but I do think that you know the partnerships with

external organizations uhm that we have a better chance to impact the community and then we impact the people that the community talks to on a regular basis.”

6.9.4 Local Community Outreach: Small and Lack of Coordination

Although the college admission officers’ were very knowledgeable about the college-related events in the city, they expressed that these efforts were small and were not very well coordinated. There is an inconsistent message of the necessary information, process, and/or attitude to transition from high school to college. For example, colleges/universities will visit high schools, sponsor visits to college campuses, and/or host pre-college events/ programs to inspire students to go to college. Likewise, many community organizations visit college campuses, offer internships and scholarships, and invite college representatives to speak at special events in order to expose students to college. In addition, colleges and universities have community outreach to support LCSD students through summer programs, tutoring, fine arts collaborations, academic competitions/contests, etc. (Hallinen, Bethea, Anderson, & Walton, 2009). However, these initiatives lack stability as well as a city-wide partnership to go beyond traditional recruitment policies and practices to capture different communities and meet LCSD students where they are. Another challenge is the community misperceptions and lack of trust towards colleges/universities due to their reputations as elitist and affluent locations. This also limits college/university community involvement (Hallinen et al., 2009; Iriti et al., 2012).

Sasha gives a great example of the lack of coordination in some community events:

Like for example when I went to I_school’s college fair. It was the School-to-Career program and it was you know, it was best run as it could be. Considering the circumstances, the program was taking place on a half day and I don't think that the school communicated to the program coordinators well enough that the students would be leaving. So they brought counselors for the fair and there were probably about 8 students

there. So I mean just things like that where they're not being able to accommodate programming. And I was happy to go but it was just you know it was clear that the people around me were not happy to be there because it was really an unfortunate circumstance.

6.9.4.1 DCAPs warn about pros and cons of outreach

Pam gives a great caveat about outreach that others mirrored:

You know uhm what we could do better I think we could do more outreach. Uhm I feel like and I think that most [colleges] in general could probably up their outreach. Outreach is tricky though because what outreach says is, 'I want you to pay a lot of money to try this knowing that it's probably not going to work.' If it does work it will probably take you four years to see a return of investment. So we want you to pay all of this money and wait a long time and keep paying, knowing you're not going to see immediate return. And that's for a lot of [colleges]. When we're tuition-driven, we don't get no students, we close down. You know uhm we probably won't close down but our donors are not happy if we don't meet our numbers. Uhm so I think that schools have to weigh out outreach with enrollment. I also think that there are schools that have the capacity for outreach and they just don't because it's not like the outreach wouldn't benefit them because their outreach isn't to students that they would ever realistically accept.

Pam's description of outreach is packed with rich examples of the dichotomy in local recruitment and college outreach.

Sasha also gives a strong sentiment about the connection between P-12 and higher education for CS101:

The fact that we can get people's time for CS101 on a workday and that the institutions are supporting them is a big one. I think it's the high school side that's maybe not as equipped to take advantage of those collaborative opportunities. I think if we had confidence that 300 students were coming to CS101 this year. You know I would take two days off of work and I would show up and do everything that needs to be done to make that happen. And our university would be behind us and you know I could take a week off to make sure that event went well. Uhm I think that holds true with a lot of the people that we work with in CS101. I think the product that we have is good. I don't think necessarily the response that we receive is maximizing the potential of the event.

Sasha further explains her need to weigh the good with the bad:

I probably get some like notices for some but we have to pick them carefully and it's difficult. Because that School-to-community you're constantly weighing doing a public service versus you know the best use of your time. You know, and so that's sometimes, maybe people sometimes feel that way about CS101. I don't know. I think it's important to

just understand that its part of you know being committed to a certain initiative is taking the bad as they come then working with the ones that could be improved. And relishing the good ones so you know.

Again, many of the DCAPs mirrored Pam's and Sasha's observation that they participate in college outreach efforts that can be justified, cost effective, and reasonably aligns with traditional recruitment activities.

6.9.5 DCAPs General Call for Better Collaboration

In general, Mustafa furthers the thought of increasing communication, which mirrors Verunike, Frankie and other DCAPs sentiments that communication could be better to improve the P-16 pipeline. Generally, it's missing the level of communication that constitutes a relationship to share information to close the gap between P-12 systems and higher education.

Pam gives a great example of the need for collaboration and communication:

I think that when you have admissions professionals and external organizations or when we volunteer or we're not in a place where we have to represent a school that we work for. Uhm we're also able to bridge that gap. You know we can tell people what is important for them to focus on and what they can ignore. You know so you don't need me to tell you all of the majors, you can read that in the list but you want to know what's your class size like? What's your student to faculty ratio like? What's the percentage of financial need will you meet? You know the kind of stuff that's important and then the stuff that doesn't really matter or change.

Pam further states:

Cuz we're only having conversations with 12th grade. We're having big conversations about how to apply. We're having little conversations on hand in your transcripts, hand in your SAT scores. And then we're having a conversation usually by mail, 'Hey you got or no you didn't.' uhm but that's not a conversation. That's a bunch of little lights you know whereas community organizations have conversations. I think people have more conversations with banks than they have with us. So I think that's the kind of stuff that higher ed could really have to impact P-12.

Sasha also mirrors this sentiment:

Uhm it's an interesting balance because we're not certainly recruiting uhm at that point. So turning the salesperson off a little bit and uhm focusing more on the need of the student. And I think that's refreshing you know when you're at a college fair and you're not necessarily trying to sell students on [The University] but trying to help them through the process, and understanding what their goals are. So it's certainly necessary I'd like to see it grow as we both would. Uhm and where we can do that is what we're going to have to focus on. I think it's a great program.

Mustafa also elaborates on the lack of partnerships, consistency, and communication:

As I said earlier, could there be better communication? Should there be better communication? Yes, uh cuz there are definitely times we miss because there's not that level of communication. You try to plan something and you realize last minute, 'Oh wait there's this going on,' and you know, no one said anything.

Mustafa, Frankie, and Verunike express ways to improve but overall they are satisfied with their partnerships. Yet, there are missing links that contribute to the college access gap. The DCAPs' narrative shows the good working relationship between stakeholders. Yet, more can be done.

There needs to be communication and trust between not only two people, but the interconnection between P-12, community, and higher education. These entities are working together to assist students in their future endeavors.

Many of the DCAPs stated it is necessary to open lines of communication between stakeholders to ensure that students are able to succeed and go to college. The DCAPs made it clear that it is important for LCSD students to know and understand the college opportunities available to them. Although College Success 101 and other programs provide a lot of college knowledge and some exposure to a campus environment, the DCAPs felt that more can be done. They believed that activities should be collaborative in nature, occur year-long, and include workshops with college faculty/administrators.

7.0 DISCUSSION OF CULTURAL CAPITAL AND RACIALIZATION IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Due to the socio-cultural influences of race/ethnicity and socio-economic status, in order to conduct meaningful research of the DCAPs' impact on college access, it is best to utilize a sociological approach. Furthermore, the DCAPs' viewpoints illustrate how college access is a sociological issue based on the racial stratification in education, race-conscious admission policies, and institutional racism. The previous chapter discusses the DCAPs cultural habitus as various configurations of "Critical Gatekeeping Advocates." This chapter discusses their interpretations of cultural capital, race/ethnicity, and college access. By researching the DCAPs' perspective of the socio-ecological system that impacts student's college choice, we can better understand some of the underlying themes in college access. I am addressing research question 4 to analyze how DCAPs and diversity recruitment perpetuate cultural capital and racialized policies and practices. Although college access research is mostly based in sociological theories, such frameworks still lack ways to analyze the DCAPs position and role as a bearer of cultural capital through a socio-racial lens. Since analyzing the DCAPs' role, it has brought to light some of the institutional racism that has hindered diversity initiatives concerning diversity recruitment in the college admission field and staff of color.

In order to build a sociological framework, I analyzed the DCAPs using cultural capital and critical race theory. First, to understand socio-economic forces such as the capitalistic nature of college access, I analyze the DCAPs' views of socialization and cultural capital in the college admissions process. Secondly, I utilize CRT to critique the hegemonic theories and models in order to account for the racialization in college admissions. For example, college knowledge about the admissions process varies by race/ethnicity and income (Bell, Rowan-Keyon, & Perna, 2009; Perna, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009; Roderick, Coca, Nagaoka, 2011; Venezia et al., 2003). I will discuss cultural capital in this section and expound on utilizing CRT in the next section of this chapter.

7.2 DEFINITION OF CULTURAL CAPITAL

College admission can be thought of as a form of cultural capital as well as social mobility. Cultural capital theory explains college access as a student's access to resources, adequate college counseling, college knowledge, etc. (Cabrera & La Nasa, 1999; Conley, 2009; Perna, 2000, 2006; McDonough, 1997; Nunez & Oliva, 2009). Social theories of education explain higher education as the means for social attainment and maintains higher education's role in U.S. markets by acknowledging a postsecondary degree leads to higher socio-economic status (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Coleman, 1988; Schultz, 1961). The college admission process is an example of gaining cultural and social capital in the form of information to gain college access. This concept of college access further affirms college admissions is not an automatic process because students have to consciously and purposely seek resources for the college admissions process.

In addition, Roderick et al. (2006) found that college knowledge is an area of college access that moves beyond academic and behavioral skills to acknowledge the role of cultural capital in college access and success (Roderick et al, 2006). Overall, “college knowledge” includes the information and skills that allow students to successfully navigate the complex college admissions and financial aid processes, as well as, develop an understanding of college norms and culture (CollegeBoard, 2012; Conley, 2010; Corwin & Tierney, 2007; Freeman, 1997, 1999; McClafferty et al., 2002; Perna, 2000, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Tierney, 1999; Tierney & Hagerdon, 2002; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Venezia et al., 2003).

The DCAPs understand college access as cultural capital, which matches sociological theories of college being a social and economic investment (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Perna, 2006; Tierney, 1999). For example, they defined college access as not only admission to college but also academic and financial opportunity; or, in other words, a form of social attainment. Similarly, the DCAPs expressed their concerns of students having the resources and cultural capital to gain college admission.

Yet, as mentioned in the previous chapters by the DCAPs, not all students have equal access to college knowledge (Perna, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009, 2011; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Venezia et al., 2003). The socio-racial stratification and disjuncture within our educational system results in some students possessing greater college knowledge to gain access to college; while, students that do not possess this capital do not (Grotsky, 2007; Grotsky & Kalogrides, 2008; Perna, 2000, 2006; Roksa, et al., 2007; Venezia et al., 2003).

This explains why some students of color gain (or possess) cultural capital and college admission; but the majority does not. Most often underrepresented students of color lack the social attainment, social mobility, and high socio-economic status similar to their White

American peers. When the ability to acquire such capital is challenged by institutional racism and discrimination; then, there are barriers to college access as well as social and economic empowerment. Therefore, cultural capital theory discerns how underrepresented students of color access social attainment and mobility, socio-economic status, and power to go to college. In other words, socio-cultural factors such as race/ethnicity affect cultural capital and vice versa (Freeman, 1997, 1999; Perna, 2000; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009; Solorzano & Ornelas, 2002).

7.3 DIVERSITY COLLEGE ADMISSION PROFESSIONALS (DCAPS) AS CULTURAL CAPITAL

The DCAPs wanted to provide a service to students who do not traditionally have access to college knowledge. The DCAPs emphasized gaining college knowledge about the SATs, admission requirements, and academic resources are just as essential to go to college as high GPAs and strong academic rigor. In other words, college admission is a process of gaining cultural capital in the form of college knowledge to gain college access. It is important that someone with cultural capital have conversations with LCSD students about the college admissions process. In an earlier quote, Verunike explains that it is important that students are having conversations about college access with someone that has cultural as well as social capital like his/her guidance counselor, family members, community leaders, and/or DCAPs.

The DCAPS understand their role as “proprietors” of college knowledge and desired to share this knowledge with the most marginalized and disenfranchised students. DCAPs are a representation of the cultural capital theory because they are keepers of college knowledge. They have a role in the important concept that has helped to maintain higher education’s role in U.S.

markets. Having a college degree is viewed as a way to achieve higher socio-economic status and, therefore, a better lifestyle. The DCAPs explain that their primary duties are to share information about the university and the admissions process. Information is disseminated through brochures, social media, high school presentations, counselor meetings, college fairs, campus visits, advertisements, phone/email communications, etc. However, from talking with the DCAPs, I glean that the most important component in these exchanges is the DCAP themselves.

The DCAPs often explained CS101 as a way to improve cultural capital. The DCAPs explained that it helps to motivate and expose students to different colleges and vital information. For example, The DCAPs stated some central themes as the goals of CS101:

- To serve as a catalyst to be college ready and highlight the importance of college readiness;
- Sharing information on how to go to college and understand possible college options;
- Promoting attendance and practicing other good habits of academic achievement;
- Preaching personal responsibility and a high school diploma is the beginning of your adult life and independence;
- Advocating college preparation is a standard of academic success.

The central themes show the DCAPs' concerns and understanding of the local urban school district's challenges in promoting college access. In listing these themes, the DCAPs show that CS101 and the collaborative holds cultural capital to help students gain college access.

Feliz explains the importance of DCAPs sharing their cultural capital, "But you can't wait to explain like a college can. Uh you know. Expose to people like us and financial aid people. It's beneficial for them." Yet, she continues to explain that is hard work to assist LCSD student to gain college knowledge, "Like you can do all of the promotion and marketing, all that you want. Like, "Oh yeah I know the name like [of a university]." Ok I know it but it's the next step of actually getting them to actually to feel comfortable to apply to any school."

In order to counteract the challenges of LCSD's poor college-going culture, the DCAPs tried to devise ways to continue recruiting LCSD students, while still conserving resources. They also sought to sponsor college outreach as minimally as possible. Similar to the arguments of educating students of color to go to college, there are debates about whom and how should they be recruited. Since the DCAPs felt it was important to recruit LCSD students, they had to create plans that would be approved by senior administration. Some colleges/universities had comprehensive plans while others lacked such documents. Yet, it was obvious that the DCAPs tried to capitalize as much as they could to recruit LCSD students.

Many of the DCAPs recognized that marginalized LCSD students of color are often the students who need the most attention. Yet, this often did not fit with the DCAPs' recruitment activities or his/her admissions office policies. Pam and other DCAPs explained that the enrollment strategy is to travel to high schools that have the most academically achieving students with highly involved guidance counselors. The DCAPs utilized calculated resources to recruit the most students as quickly as possible. Therefore, in the short term, it is costly for most admission offices to sponsor college outreach events. Yet, to fulfill long-term goals of improving college access, the DCAPs recognized the need to devote some resources to work with LCSD and the greater community. Due to increased competition and declining enrollments, colleges/universities sought to contribute to efforts to improve college access. Yet, who is responsible to promote college access?

For example, Tyrone makes a good point about the return of investment concept in college admissions:

But I feel as though when it comes to connecting with [LCSD]. I feel that you know the representation comes, goes to the schools where they feel that they will get the most students. And that's understandable but I feel as though the rest are kind of pushed to the wasteland because well maybe they feel it's a waste of time where it could be some real

gems in those schools that we skip over and maybe it's that we don't go into the schools. I mean even participating in some of the fairs or going to any of the recruitment events where you can connect with some of the students or how we can connect a little bit better. I don't know if that's happening. I would call it a disconnection. You know outside of college success 101 and maybe [CHE], I dunno how involved we are with each other with kind of combining our efforts to do better in those, in that sense.

Tyrone is explaining how diversity recruitment and admission policies are not helping students but creating obstacles to college access. It is almost as if Tyrone is explaining that DCAPs have to choose their battles in order to help students. Pam also explains, in a direct quote in a previous chapter, that outreach is a cost and a benefit that can only be seen overtime. It is a cost because it uses time and resources and it is not a direct recruitment activity. Yet, it is also a benefit since it helps with institutional visibility and increasing the college pipeline.

The DCAPs also indicated that some of LCSD's high schools were not be able to provide equally to students of color, low-income, and first-generation students. In other words, they are not able to provide an equally supportive culture with high expectations, current information, and holistic guidance about college to all students. Again, the issues are inadequate college resources, poor connections with postsecondary institutions, and lack of college admissions information for all students.

7.3.1 Cultural Capital, Power, and Locus Of Control

Most of the DCAPs felt supported and had autonomy/independence to decide which high schools or community organizations to establish partnerships. They were able to compare/contrast schools in order to decide which high schools to target. This is where the DCAPs have power over how they shared the cultural capital of college knowledge. Although the DCAPs are known as disseminators of college information, they understand the undergirding

purpose of their role and duties is to interact with LCSD students and students of color that are admissible. Again, the DCAPs interacted with schools with better college-going culture. Jaune and Mustafa discuss the idea of return of investment (ROI) when working with students and schools. They state that LCSD students and schools need to improve the college-going culture in order to gain college access. In addition, Verunike, Pam, and Martin use “tough love” to assist students in the admissions process while also making students accountable for their future.

College admission is a competitive arena, or field, of struggle over different kinds of capital. More importantly, college access is a part of this capital competition. The concept of cultural capital explains that the DCAPs construct admissions events where, even marginalized LCSD students compete for valued capital, or college knowledge. In addition, whether LCSD students possess or lack college knowledge, DCAPs are able to enhance or hinder a student’s college admission process from sharing information such as the application website link to the official admission decision.

Yet, there is also a power and locus of control to determine the functioning and structure of the DCAP’s habitus. More importantly, it is highly determined by the hierarchy within academia. Also, many of the DCAPs are staff of color and, oftentimes, are not in leadership positions to make logistical decisions based on power, time, money, and resources of the office of admissions to participate in college access outreach. Therefore, DCAPs may be bicultural middle managers between the community and senior administration in higher education.

DCAPs are limited if they are not given support, which further impacts LCSD and underrepresented students of color to be disadvantaged. For example, if DCAPs are limited to visit a certain number of high schools, then students are unable to obtain relevant information and cultural capital from DCAPs. If students aren’t able to access DCAPs, then they are less

likely to receive the support and knowledge to complete the college admissions process. DCAPs are an important and compassionate resource but also serve as a sporadic source of college knowledge for LCSD students.

For example, Mustafa and others explain the miscommunication that happens between DCAPs and guidance counselors. The disjuncture impacts the college-going culture, which in turn affects college access. Yet, what is the college/universities role in improving college access? DCAPs' diversity recruitment mirrors the administrative duties of guidance counselors and teachers because they hold the cultural capital in the college admission process. Essentially, DCAPs share their college knowledge through direct interactions with preferential schools and students. Concerning cultural capital, the DCAPs often perpetuate the socio-racial stratification as well as the dominant culture of power in interactions with students and P-12 staff. Delpit (1995) talks about the "cultural capital" where students with middle class values or some understanding of the culture of power are at an advantage if the status quo is maintained. The cultural capital in college access is defined as the codes of knowledge that are enacted between the DCAP and the student for participating in cultural power. Often the codes or rules are a reflection of the rules of college admissions strategies and policies established by college/university. Delpit (1995) discusses the effect or power that authority figures have as part of the culture of power. Essentially, DCAPs can have a great effect on a marginalized student's ability to bridge their own culture and cultural capital for success in college. Furthermore, higher education is within the realm of the dominant culture of power.

7.4 CHALLENGES TO CULTURAL CAPITAL: INEQUITABLE COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

In every conversation, LCSD and students of color are disadvantaged in the admissions process due to lack of college access, poor college-going culture, and low levels of college readiness. The DCAPs felt that students need to gain college knowledge. The amount of knowledge that a student has about the college application process tends to vary by school, which often reflects the student's race/ethnicity, income, and parental education attainment (Bell, et al., 2009; Perna, 2006, 2007; Roderick, et al., 2008, 2009, 2011; Venezia, et al., 2003). Again, cultural capital among schools is socio-racially stratified. Consequently, these students rely on the school to provide information about college (Cabrera & LaNasa, 2001; Horn, Nevill, & Griffith, 2006; Perna, 2006, 2007; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009, 2011; Venezia, et al., 2003; Vargas, 2004). Therefore, the socio-racial stratification in P-16 can explain the variability of resources and college knowledge among the high school in LCSD.

For example, the capital gatekeepers of the group contend that the poor college-going culture is the greatest challenge in recruiting LCSD students. They comment that until college readiness and college-going culture improve, then college access will not. The capital gatekeepers were more likely to be critical of the local city school district. However, Jaune was also critical of her admissions office as well as the university and CS101. From her narrative, the gatekeeping that is done in the admissions office outweighs the advocacy. Jaune explains how it might be important to tailor one's college/university's presentation because most LCSD students will not go directly to a 4-year college/university. She believes that DCAPs should give all of the available options to students. She also indicates that LCSD students need to understand that more is needed to go to college.

As in the previous section, the gatekeeper advocates felt that the biggest challenges were the student's or guidance counselor's inactions in the form of not contacting DCAPs such as not showing interest, not submitting documents, and/or not establishing communications. Martin explains:

I think they should always have each year in your school a time to talk to college representatives. So that they can say, look this is what you need to be doing this year, this is what you need to be doing next year, and now that you're a senior here's what you need to do if you're interested in [The University] talk to this person so that that person can tell you about the two plus two system... This is what we do, so they need to be exposed early because what's happening now you getting these kids now those who are talking about, I'm getting serious now in my senior year and in senior year it's too late to be serious.

The critical advocates of the group were critical of themselves, schools, guidance counselors, institutions, and other DCAPs concerning LCSD and diversity recruitment strategies and policies. The DCAPs felt that colleges/universities can overlook students due to lack of college knowledge and poor college-going culture. Frankie states, "I mean we have, we have a lot of [colleges] here in [the city]. We have some really great schools that may kind of overlook the College Success 101 student and so that's where we kind of wanted to fit in and play that part."

Due to the poor college-going culture at their respective high schools, low-income and students of color face barriers to college access beyond their qualifications (Perna, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009, 2011; Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Venezia et al., 2003). In other words, successfully enrolling in college requires college knowledge. Yet, to affirm Venezia et al.'s (2003) disjuncture theory, high schools may not be able to provide equally to racial/ethnic minority, low-income, and first-generation students. In addition, they are not able to provide an equally supportive culture with high expectations, current information, and holistic guidance about college to all students.

Overall, the current standards for college readiness at LCSD schools are not sufficient to be on the path to college (Roderick et al., 2008, 2009, Savitz-Romer, 2012; Venezia et al., 2003). More importantly, getting all students college-ready is a goal that has never been met and even performance compared to the district, state, and national averages is not sufficient (Roderick et al., 2008, 2009, Savitz-Romer, 2012; Venezia et al., 2003). Therefore, Roderick et al. (2008, 2009) states that students have little chance of reaching college-ready benchmarks unless they enter high school exceeding state and national standards.

7.5 THE CULTURAL CAPITAL DEBATE OF RESPONSIBILITY IN COLLEGE ACCESS

Throughout this study, each DCAP states their personal and professional goal of helping LCSD and students of color go to college. Furthermore, the DCAPs expressed their concerns of LCSD high school students needing the resources and cultural capital to gain college admission. The DCAPs' view college outreach as imperative to improve the college access for LCSD students. Some of the DCAPs even explained the ability to share cultural capital as their own responsibility. Tyrone is a great example of DCAPs that feel personally responsible and socially conscious to help LCSD students

Even the capital gatekeepers like Mustafa and Jaune explain that they are interested in improving college access. Jaune states, "You know I of course want to do something like college success or InvestingNOW. I have no problem dedicating my time." The gatekeeper advocates worked within a polarity where they felt that students needed to take responsibility to seek out college knowledge yet, they offered a lot of services to assist students in the college admissions

process such as SAT prep workshops and college trips. They often spoke with working knowledge about student trials such as not completing applications. They also discussed that some of the biggest challenges in college outreach is students following up or asking questions. Yet, some of these trials are often the result of LCSD's poor college-going culture and lack of college knowledge. Again, it is a complex issue where some of the DCAPs believe, idealistically, that all students should go to college and then others, realistically, believe that there are many life options besides college.

Frankie and some of the other advocates were also adamant about colleges/universities taking responsibility for helping LCSD students. There were discussions about addressing college access as a personal responsibility. Many times, the DCAPs participated in College Success 101 as a personal and not professional venture. Often DCAPs are front-line college/university staff members that are employed to share information about the college admissions process to LCSD students. They are also the college/university representative that interacts with high school staff and faculty on a continual basis. Yet, Frankie, Martin, and Rafael also talked about lack of institutions and the senior administration to implement more college access outreach. There is a clear hierarchy within higher education where DCAPs are not in power to dictate the enrollment strategy to recruit LCSD students. However, in these conversations no one was ever to state that it is entirely up to colleges/universities to change the application process in order to be more equitable in the face of LCSD's low college-going culture and the socio-racial stratification in the P-16 educational system.

7.6 CULTURAL CAPITAL SUMMARY

College admission eligibility is a cultural capital and not based on socio-culturally or socio-politically neutral standards of academic excellence (Grotsky, 2007; Grotsky & Kalogrides, 2008; Perna, 2000, 2006; Roksa, et al., 2007). The socio-racial stratification within our educational systems results in majority students possessing social and cultural capital to access college; while underrepresented students of color are disproportionately not gaining access (Perna, 2000; Solorzano & Ornelas, 2002; Freeman, 1997, 1999). The concept of college access is a systemic and cultural issue where there are discrepancies in access to cultural capital for underrepresented communities of color to go to college. Researchers like Cabrera et al. (2006), Freeman (1997), McClafferty, McDonough, and Nunez (2002), Perna (2000, 2006), Roderick, Nagaoka, Allensworth, Stoker, Correa, and Coca, (2006), Tierney (1999), and Venezia, Kirst, and Antonio (2003) found that underrepresented students of color often lack the traditional type of social and cultural capital to gain access to college.

DCAPs are a part of the cultural capital needed to go to college. As this debate continues, nothing is reconciled since college access has not improved and, more importantly, underrepresented students of color often lack access to DCAPs. However, reviewing the ability to attain cultural capital through the viewpoints of stakeholders, such as DCAPs, may help in the discussion of promoting college access. DCAPs and college access outreach can be viewed as helping to develop agency. Therefore, addressing the institutional racism within diversity recruitment strategies could change the habitus of this group and others away from becoming a deterministic structure that merely reproduces social inequities (Tierney, 1999).

Assessments of the benefits and costs are shaped not only by the demand for higher education and supply of resources to pay the costs but also the DCAPs' habitus within the higher

education context and social, economic, and policy context (Perna, 2006). By drawing on cultural capital theory, we can understand the complexity of race/ethnicity in college access and admissions.

7.7 RACIALIZATION IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

It has been over fifty years since the historic Higher Education Act of 1965 to promote college for all. Yet, we are still grappling with issues of racial, ethnic, and cultural impact on higher education. On almost every indicator of college access such as high school curriculum rigor, SAT/ACT scores, high school grade point average (GPA), graduation rates, etc., African American, Latino/a, and Native American students lag well behind White American students and also some Asian American student peers (Aud, et al., 2010; Spellings, 2006; Snyder & Dillow, 2010). Researchers have also found that there are other more substantial barriers contributing to the college access gap such as the lack of college knowledge, insufficient college readiness counseling, and K-12 and higher education disjuncture theory (McClafferty, et al., 2000, 2002; McDonough, 1997; Perna, 2006; Perna, et al., 2008; Roderick, et al., 2008, 2009; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Venezia, et al., 2003).

In this section, the DCAPs shared their perspective on the college admissions process and talked explicitly and implicitly about race/ethnicity. More importantly, the DCAPs synonymously grouped local recruitment with race/ethnicity when discussing LCSD, since the majority of students are African American. Research supports the notion that race/ethnicity, culture (Freeman, 1997, 1999; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Perna, 2000, 2006), and urban high schools (Roderick et al., 2008, 2009) are factors in college access. Most studies felt it was

important to analyze the strengths and deficiencies for different racial/ethnic groups to better understand the factors affecting college access, readiness, and enrollment/transition. For example, Freeman (2005) states that, “[Students] are influenced by the type of high school, the type of experiences within high school...” The current study supports that DCAPs are aware of how race/ethnicity (and other sociocultural factors/identities) plays a factor in college access.

In the previous section, I discussed the need to analyze DCAPs’ roles as bearers of cultural capital and impact through the cultural capital lens. Through the DCAPs’ perspective, I analyzed the role of race/ethnicity in college admission using CRT as a theoretical lens in this section. Due to the impact of race/ethnicity on college access, a cultural approach is most effective to study college access. For example, sociologists assert that a cultural change concerning the college-going attitudes, beliefs, expectations, knowledge, behaviors, etc. is important to promote college access (Freeman, 1997; McClafferty et al., 2002; Moses, 2001; Perna, 2000, 2006; Tierney, 1999; Tierney & Hagerdon, 2002; Tierney & Jun, 2001).

7.8 RACE IS CENTRAL

Critical race theory (CRT) examines race/ethnicity at the center of its social critique through: (1) establishing the centrality of race in the socio-historical context of institutions and systems; (2) rejecting notions of objectivity and neutrality; (3) recognizing that racism is endemic within US society; (4) employing intersectionality to provide a more complete analysis of people of color; (5) incorporating communities of color’s ‘experiential knowledge’ to posit that ‘reality’ is situational and socially constructed; and (6) working towards the elimination of racial and all other forms of oppression (Bell, 1995, Crenshaw, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate,

1995; Matsuda, 1993; Solorzano, 1997).

One fact that is clear in this research study is the central issue of race/ethnicity in areas of education such as college admissions. In order to analyze sociocultural and racial stratification in college admissions, it is important to view race/ethnicity as a socio-historical construct and the current state of racial discrimination is a result of the racialized P-16 educational system. The sociological framework finds sources of discrimination in the history, organization, language, and ways of seeing or not seeing in a racially divided society (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Wellman, 2007). LCSD's college-going culture among high schools is a prime example of socio-racial stratification. College admission is racist and discriminatory when DCAPs will recruit at one high school and not another due to poor college-going culture, which is a result of racial segregation. These and other examples of race-conscious admission policies further reproduce the college access gap. Whether passive or active, institutions of higher education, specifically DCAPs, impact LCSD's college-going culture.

Very similar to Bell (1992) and Ladson-Billings' concept of property rights. Bonilla-Silva (2001) argues that the racialization of the world created "racialized social systems" where the dominant race has developed various practices and mechanisms to maintain its social standing and subjugated racial groups have struggled to attempt to change their position in the social order. As the College-Ready scholarship program showed, LCSD and college admissions have developed the P-16 college admissions process in order to sustain the cultural capital of higher education. Recipients of the scholarship were already likely to go to college with or without the scholarship. They are more likely to be White American and from a higher socio-economic status. Racism is embedded in the educational system and has a structural foundation to the point where "race matters" in the interests and/or conflicts of all groups (Bonilla-Silva,

2001; Bonilla-Silva & Baiocchi, 2001; West, 1993). The socio-racial stratification and cultural power is perpetuated from higher education's passive and tacit support of LCSD's poor college-going culture. In other words, racialized social systems work to preserve white privilege, whether implicit or explicit. The current study is analyzing the role of DCAPs as privileged stakeholders for advocacy and social change. Yet, they usually function to reinforce the racialized social system of predominately white institutions of higher education.

Feagin and McKinney (2005) then explains the current low college-going culture of communities of color as systemic racism. It emphasizes the structural, institutional, and systemic elements in LCSD's racialized and oppressive college-going culture. Feagin, Early, and McKinney (2000) argue that the college access gap is a result of a system that has deep socio-historical roots in preserving white privilege through the exploitation and discrimination of people of color. Systemic racism is also ever changing so that institutional racism against people of color continues to evolve, and therefore persist, within our educational system (Feagin, Early, & McKinney, 2000; Feagin & McKinney, 2005). Therefore, education as a major institution in the U.S. continues to hold on to racial/ethnic stereotypes and engage in racialized policies and practices that negatively impact the lives of communities of color.

7.9 ENCAPSULATING RACE/ETHNICITY

For this study, I aim to encapsulate the terms of race, cultural capital, stratification for research, while also understanding they are fluidic and dynamic terms that are lived everyday by the DCAPs. They are ideological yet interactional terms that shape the DCAPs, how they work, where they come from, and what they do in different contexts, people, and situations. This is

evident from Pam, Mustafa, Rafael, Sly, Jaune, Tyrone, and Sasha's comments about how their personal experiences and race/ethnicity has impacted their jobs as DCAPs. These terms are so important to our existence; yet, as educators, we often don't understand or reflect on the causes and/or the effects. This is even more evident through conducting this research study since race/ethnicity was viewed and discussed in a myriad of ways.

Race/ethnicity matters in that communities of color live in a world dominated by their racial/ethnic category. Moreover, they must deal with overt as well as implicit forms of racism, stereotypes, discrimination, and marginalization of their status as minorities. Researchers have framed the argument that the deficits of urban high schools (where most underrepresented students of color live) often limit the college access of students of color (Moses, 2001). Yet, there are relatively few articles on the impact of race/ethnicity on the college admissions process such as the role of DCAPs. It wasn't until Freeman's (1997, 2005) African American college choice theory that further examined sociocultural factors such as race and the impact of community context on college access.

The majority of the DCAPs did not directly discuss race/ethnicity until I, as the researcher, brought it up in my questioning. Some of the DCAPs such as Pam, Mustafa, Rafael, Sly, Jaune, Martin, Sasha, and Verunike openly discussed race/ethnicity in college admissions. Yet, there were code-words (which I will discuss later) that I was able to unearth through supplementing their accounts with LCSD and admissions statistical data. I also relied on my position as an insider and emic researcher to critically analyze their statements.

Nevertheless, race/ethnicity became apparent from analyzing the DCAPs' narratives. It was mostly evident in what was not said or "unconscious racism" (Wellman, 2007). For example, in discussing the high schools with a better college-going culture, the understated

observation was that these schools had largely White American and affluent student populations. These schools also utilized selective admissions, especially for some of their magnet programs and/or college prep and advanced classes. Furthermore, the schools with poor college-going culture were predominately African American and/or in poor socio-economic neighborhoods.

7.9.1 Race as Sociocultural Reality

Race/ethnicity shapes and influences perceptions so that racial inequity becomes reality. In other words, White dominant ideology becomes the norm and other races, ethnicities, and cultures are deviances. This example of the adverse effects of racialization in our society can explain how a problem like the college access gap exists. Scholars such as, Prudence Carter (2005), William Cross (1995), etc. corroborate Ogbu's (1994) theories of racial stratification and oppositional collective identity. For example, Cross' (1995) Nigrescence model states that African Americans' racial identity develops in an oppressive system. While, Omi and Winant (1994) explain that the racialization of Americans is a social construction that impacts institutions such as education.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, LCSD recruitment is synonymous with diversity recruitment. The strategy is that because most underrepresented students of color reside in urban metro areas, there is targeted diversity recruitment in urban school districts. It is in this way and many others that college admission is race-conscious. Also, colleges/universities are aware that they are more likely to recruit more underrepresented students of color if, they employ staff of color to interact with them. It also helps with institutional visibility where a picture of a DCAP presenting to LCSD students of color is worth more than one thousand words.

Yosso (2005) states, that race is, "often coded as 'cultural difference' in schools and culture influences how society is organized, how school curriculum is developed and how

pedagogy and policy are implemented.” College access research using a cultural deficit view places value judgments on communities of color that often do not have access to White American, middle or upper class resources (Delpit, 1995; Freeman, 1997, 1999, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Yosso, 2005). Yet, communities of color are places with multiple strengths such as collective identity, community cultural wealth, multicultural experiences, and community organizing. As the debate on how to better educate African American students continues, cultural capital theory is not enough to address the racial/ethnic complexity of college access of underrepresented students of color. Reviewing the various social and cultural contexts of race and racism in college access may help to promote educational opportunity for students of color.

Current research has begun to investigate the impact of race/ethnicity, collective identity, and cultural affinity on college access. One response of people of color to the racial/ethnic stratification and discrimination is a collective identity. Collective identity refers to people’s sense of who they are, their “we feeling” or “belonging” (Ogbu, 2004). Collective experiences and actions demonstrated in the 1960’s and thereafter can explain the collective identity. People of color have always aspired to succeed in a white supremacist patriarchal society; yet, have always been aware of the obstacles of being the “Other” and the “burden of acting White” (Ogbu, 1978). In a vicious socio-historical cycle, the relationship between the collective identity and that of the White dominant group, determines to some degree the difficulty people of color have in crossing social, cultural, and educational boundaries or learning for college access, economic opportunity, and social mobility (Ogbu, 1994).

Although most college access research studied the inequality of socio-economic status among students, few analyzed the impact of race/ethnicity and student background on college choice (McDonough & Fann, 2007). Freeman’s (1997) study on African American high school

student college choice, Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth theory, and Perna's (2000) integrated college access model researched the themes within college choice for urban, low SES, and racial/ethnic minority students. These studies also help to understand higher education's role in the college access gap of African Americans. The studies' analyses provide a sociological lens to understand the larger systematic barriers to college access. Also, it shows the interplay between the different levels of education that perpetuates the racial/ethnic disparities in college access.

Many researchers have begun to analyze race and racism and its impact on higher education. Research such as Tierney's (1999) study of cultural integrity were the first to counter the deficit and pathological view of underrepresented students of color and their impact on college campuses. Tierney (1999) found that race/ethnicity as culture has the capacity to influence how student learning is organized, teaching pedagogy, and how teaching methods are implemented. Furthermore, the model assumes that a child's socio-cultural background is a critical tool to be channeled for promoting success (Tierney, 1999; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002; Tierney & Jun, 2001).

Therefore, an analysis of how sociocultural factors pertain to college preparation and college preparatory programs is integral to our understanding of how to improve college access. Tierney (1999) established the cultural integrity model on aligning a student's culture with academics in order to improve access and retention. Race/ethnicity, urban residence, socioeconomic status, and parental education level impact major decisions around college such as college enrollment. Tierney (1999) found that culture plays an important role in students' lives that was missing in important theories that apply to higher education. Yet, Tierney (1999) and other scholars have not fully addressed or defined the specific characteristics of culture that can

promote college access.

7.9.2 Institutional Racism as Socio-racial Stratification

The following section will offer insight on how race and institutional racism affect the P-16 educational system. When the ability to acquire such capital is obstructed by institutional racism and discrimination; then, there are barriers to social and economic empowerment. This is due to the inherent racial/ethnic stratification and discrimination as well as lack of cultural awareness in education. It's not enough to just present the P-16 pipeline statistics; but, it is more important to look at the educational system for possible causes of the college access gap among African American youth. By looking at the works of Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), Ogbu (2004), Carter (2005), and Delpit (1995), I hope to outline the problem.

Again, many studies have found that underrepresented students of color such as African Americans and Latina/o have lower family incomes than White Americans (Perna, 2000; Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, & Pascarella, 1996; Pascarella, & Terenzini, 2005; Tsui, 2003). On average, African American and Latina/o students' parents have attained lower levels of education than White American students' parents. African American and Latina/o high-school graduates have lower levels of academic ability than their White peers. Average test scores are lower for African Americans and Latina/o than for White Americans Only about one-third of African Americans (37%) and Latina/o (33%) participate in academic curricular programs, compared with nearly one-half (46%) of White Americans (Nora, et al., 1996; Pascarella, & Terenzini, 2005; Perna, 2000; Tsui, 2003). The majority of White Americans (87%) were eligible for the College-Ready scholarship compared to 65 percent of African Americans. Again, developing a sociological approach to address persistent inequities from the perspective of higher education is important.

Even more so, since institutions through the college admissions process largely influence the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic composition of their incoming undergraduate classes.

Due to socio-racial stratification, race/ethnicity is a central factor in college admissions. As stated in the literature review, Bell (1992) and Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) have found that the concept of individual rights to access college is directly connected to property rights. Thus, despite decades of civil rights gains, most underrepresented students of color remain disadvantaged and deprived because of socio-racial discrimination and stratification. Moreover, the ability to define, possess, and own intellectual property, academic capital, and college knowledge has been a central feature of educational power in America (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Wellman, 2007). In other words, social benefits such as opportunities to learn based on state-of-the-art technologies, well-prepared teachers, abundant resources, and good curriculum accrue largely to White American privileged students (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Wellman, 2007). For example, schools that serve poor students of color are unlikely to have access to college resources and, consequently, students will have little or no opportunity to go to college despite the attempt to mandate standards. Furthermore, the great drama of affirmative action is the tensions and struggles of capitalism and who has the capital to go to college.

Marginalized and disenfranchised students of color (African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans) find themselves at the bottom of the socio-racial stratification structure of education. This has been observed for centuries in this country, as these groups were initially incorporated into American society (Saenz et al., 2007). Saenz et al. (2007) explain that, “The corrective measures achieved during the Civil Rights gave way to forces that attempted to bring back the white-privilege model, which set people of color back to the end of the line.” Bonilla-

Silva's (2001) further argues that the shift in the post-civil rights era resulted in the American lexicon of racial code-words such as color-blindness, inner-city, "at-risk" and reverse discrimination to overturn the limited gains that minorities made during the short-lived civil rights era.

Using Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995)'s critical race theory, race conceptualized can be an important tool to understand the college access gap. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) created a set of criteria about race and cultural capital in education. For example, race continues to be a significant factor in cultural capital in college access. The intersection of race and capitalism creates an analytic tool to understand educational inequity. There is institutional and structural racism that has created subordinated positions for racial/ethnic minority students that requires specialized recruitment to enroll in college. Moreover, there is the victimization of people of color; but, there is also the construction of whiteness as the ultimate valuable property, which only promotes the cultural practices of White Americans and the culture of power.

Again, socio-racial stratification is built into the institutional structure of U.S. society (Antonio & Muniz, 2007; Wellman, 2007). There are cultural and organizational rules, whose implications and consequences affect the individual along with his/her family background, identities, and community. Therefore, there are many examples of socio-racial stratification in colleges/universities' admissions such as the excellence and equity debate, lack of college knowledge, alternative college admission options, institutional type classifications. All of these factors affect college access. Yet, as individuals use their social and cultural capital, he/she becomes aware of the rules that govern their lives and opportunities. Furthermore, he/she can try to acquire needed capital in the expansion of their cultural consciousness, abilities, and orientations. Nevertheless, the ability to expand one's social and cultural capital is impacted by

the same socio-racial stratification in a vicious racist and discriminatory cycle.

Roksa, Grodsky, Arum, and Gamoran's (2007) find the biggest factor on racial/ethnic stratification is not only historical inequity but also socio-political climate and labor market changes. First, the intentional laws and policies to grant equity and diversify campuses led to narrowing the college gap for underrepresented students of color (Roksa et al., 2007). Then, the reverse of these trends in the last two decades comes from the increasing financial strain of colleges/universities, privatization of college counseling, and challenges to affirmative action. This has led to the persistent inequality and stratification in access to higher education. The great demographic changes, the expansion of enrollment in nonselective universities and community colleges, and the challenges to affirmative action, have led to the current socio-racial stratification in higher education (Roksa et al., 2007).

The college access gap is a reflection of the discrimination and racism in the educational system. Students of color face the same debate about education, historically, due to their collective identity and membership in their socio-economically marginalized and disenfranchised communities. It becomes important to educate about the perceptions of race, ethnicity, and culture in America and to acknowledge the existence of socio-racial hierarchies within the U.S. P-16 educational system.

7.9.3 Implicit Forms of Racism: Unconscious Racism

Wellman's (2007) chapter on unconscious racism, is a great explanation of the LCSD's college access gap where African American students' racial grouping mediates their status and treatment within the district and college admissions. The socio-racial stratification within the district and students of color experience inequalities in social institutions as "institutional

discrimination.” This type of structural discrimination is sanctioned by higher education’s use of college admissions to reproduce the norms and values of P-12 and the college/university’s racialized system. Also, it is part of the everyday operations of the institution and a pervasive feature of “business as usual” that even manifests in the gatekeeping practices and policies of DCAPs and diversity recruitment (Marvasti & McKinney, 2007).

More importantly, race-conscious admission policies are a reality in enrollment management. Colleges/universities utilize DCAPs as their agents to actively engage in disguising and distorting racism and discrimination. The present study analyzed the institutional discrimination and racism rationalized by admission practices and policies. This is done in conjunction with the discourses and rhetoric to explain the larger issues of institutional racism. The DCAPs reveal what is not traditionally voiced and seen. The current research study shows that racism and discrimination are not always overt and it is a complex matter.

Then the harder question is whether or not racism is recognized and so labeled, particularly by DCAPs and other institutional authorities that are in the position to address the problem (Wellman, 2007). In other words, the DCAPs were aware that college admission is racialized. Yet, the DCAPs show how and under what circumstances racism and discrimination is misrecognized. In the next two sections I define race to give the appropriate context for the CRT analysis of the DCAPs’ narrative.

7.10 RACE IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

In this section I will go over the various ways that diversity recruitment was enacted or hindered due to race as a reality and institutional racism. The DCAPs roles and duties as well as

personal beliefs are also analyzed because they are also impacted by race and racism in college admissions. Diversity is of great importance at colleges/universities. Race/ethnicity is considered in admissions as well as many of the DCAPs were hired because of their race/ethnicity, socio-cultural backgrounds, and experience with communities of color. In addition, a big part of the role and duties is to conduct LCSD recruitment and college access outreach in the greater community. Then, DCAPs are often the primary contact that colleges/universities have with communities of color in the city.

Students of color utilize social and capital networks, while supportive of their everyday activities, often do not have knowledge of how to understand and cope with the rules of the college admissions process. Furthermore, DCAPs are less accessible within the social and capital networks of LCSD students apart from the occasional high school visit. Lacking such resources, underserved students of color find themselves vulnerable in societal institutions as they are forced to interact directly with entry-level occupants of higher education such as DCAPs. In addition, the entry-level staff of color have little power and positioned to apply college admission rules in a rather narrow manner. The current research study suggests that while the educational system is designed to assist marginalized students of color to improve, it may also serve to keep them in their place. Although institutions value diversity and these ideal values or beliefs call for equal treatment and equality, actual practices vary considerably from these ideals.

Therefore, the racial inequality in college access is seen as a system of power and exclusion, one in which White Americans accumulate advantages at the expense of African Americans and Latinos (Wellman, 2007). In this way “accumulation” refers to the way in which college access, as small economic and social advantages compound (i.e. an investment), and can have large cumulative effects over many generations (Wellman, 2007). In other words, access to

college leads to accumulation of economic advantage. Whereas underrepresented communities of color are experiencing a parallel universe in the process of “disaccumulation” where there is denial of resources and opportunity (Wellman, 2007, p. 58). Wellman (2007) describes the process of “disaccumulation” can produce related consequences that do not involve intentionality. It denies groups’ access to an equal share of the fruits of socio-economic growth. For example, African American may make gains in college access but still lag well behind White Americans.

There is a vicious cycle or “circular causation” of college access within the P-16 educational system that is complex and has yet to be sorted out by researchers (Wellman, 2007, p. 58). Unfortunately, only limited data and studies exist on how economically oppressed minority group members cope with, understand, and/or achieve within these organizational complexes and larger racial issues. A student of color’s ability to overcome the college access gap while still embedded in their community and without the assistance of college preparatory interventions is rarely seen.

7.10.1 DCAPs’ Minor Concessions

Colleges/universities want to promote diversity as a benefit of education and diversify the student body. They participate in what Grodsky (2007) explains as “compensatory sponsorship,” yet, there is not enough compensation or sponsorship to address all of the challenges due to the racial/ethnic stratification in college admissions. Underrepresented students of color have different access to college knowledge, apply differently, apply for financial aid differently, and enroll differently.

The DCAPs give voice to the disparities and stratification in LCSD’s schools, yet, they

make minor concessions for students of color. Despite acknowledging the challenges that students of color face, the DCAPs uphold the admission policies that benefit the affluent and wealthy students. The DCAPs missed the point that LCSD students are marginalized, which impacts their college access. LCSD students do not have the capital to meet the merit-based college standards; therefore, they're not able to meet self-actualization goals such as going to college. Oftentimes, they did not discuss how college admission is racialized, in spite of the need for diversity recruitment as well as affirmative action.

Inequality is, however, embedded at varying places in education, what Hochschild (2003) refers to as "nested inequalities." The schools where students of color disproportionately attend, the curricula that guide their studies, the courses that they take, and the school environments all work to marginalize students of color at many levels. They tend to be marginalized from the larger society, due to the schools they attend, the academic performance of peers, and teacher/staff expectations. Underrepresented students of color tend to bear the stigma of their segregated schools and their lower academic tracks.

This is the critical impact of institutional racism within college admissions on college access. For example, colleges/universities are aware of the need for diversity to utilize DCAPs as marketing strategies. So, they attract a multitude of students, but during the entirety of the college admissions process, they will reject the majority of students in order to admit a small minority of students of color to go to college. They are imposing unintentional barriers in order to meet meritocratic admissions criteria and conserve institutional resources such as office budget and financial aid.

7.10.2 Racial/Ethnic Code Words

Again, race/ethnicity is a subtle affair, especially within the institution. So in analyzing race/ethnicity in college admissions, there were ways to document the use of race without exactly stating it. For example, the language reserved to the problems in our educational system represent the inequity: "gaps," "disparities," "differences," "underperformance," "dissonance," "bias" (Aud et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Freedle & Kostin, 1997; Freedle, 2003; Noguera & Wing, 2006). Solorzano and Yosso (2002) further explains that:

The unspoken discourse is that White American communities are “good” communities that house ‘good’ schools, and these ‘good’ places do not experience such tragedies. Furthermore, ‘Other’ communities, ‘colored’ communities, or those ‘bad’ communities are the ones who experience such ‘bad’ events such as low academic proficiency and achievement, less prepared teachers, large class sizes, high rates of truancy, high drop-out rates, low graduation rates, low college-going rates, etc.

This allows Americans to address issues generated by disputes related to race without using language that invokes race/ethnicity. Competent actors know when race/ethnicity is being invoked even when it is not mentioned.

Many of the DCAPs such as Jaune, Pam, Mustafa, Martin, Sasha, and Frankie used this very language in their own descriptions of LCSD schools, students, guidance counselors, etc. Frankie used the code word of CS101 student to indicate a student in need and marginalized in the school system. Jaune and Feliz referred to students’ class rather than racial disparities yet, after further investigation, the high schools in need mentioned in their narratives were predominately African American. Mustafa and Martin referred to particular high schools that are known for good college-going culture as well as the mostly White American student population. Martin explains a lot of the social ills and challenges that face students, teachers, and teachers/guidance counselors. Sasha and Pam also explains that the college access gap is a

systemic issue of LCSD's socio-racial segregation. Although the issues were discussed differently, every DCAP recognized the local P-16's racialized educational system.

In the era of high-stakes testing, many bear the label of "below proficient" or "failure" either directly or through the schools that they attend. This is evident from the DCAPs' explanation of LCSD's college-going culture and targeted recruitment. In addition, students of color tend to be sorted into lower academic tracks. LCSD students bear the label of "failure" either directly or through the schools that they attend. Undoubtedly, these labels influence the opinions and expectations of the DCAPs. Because students of color tend to lack mainstream forms of social and cultural capital, they are unable to change the low opinions and expectations of educators such as DCAPs. Accordingly, students are taught at the educational and skill levels that will make them reliable and obedient workers who will hold low-skill, low-wage jobs when they leave school (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

Studies of discriminatory behavior have found that race, culture, and class matter in how a student is perceived and how well they perform in school. Researchers have investigated the theories of social learning and labeling where students of color or low SES internalize social patterns of hierarchy established by the culture of power. Rist (1970, 2000) and other studies show that teaching is based on the cultural views and stereotypes of students, especially students of low SES and students of color. This is the same in college admissions. The DCAPS were more attentive and helpful at schools with higher college-going rates. In other words, the DCAPS' expectations are shaped by what and whom they recruit. This inadvertently determines which students are valued and who is not valued in the classroom. As we can see in Rist's (1970, 2000) study deviances from the "ideal type" were ascriptive descriptions based on appearance such as code-words for race/ethnicity rather than academic. Furthermore, students, guidance

counselors, and families will likely internalize these expectations and values in the future. Therefore, race, culture, and/or class influence a student's perspective of school and his/her performance in the classroom.

7.10.2.1 Racial silence

There is racial silence among the DCAPs. For example, the DCAPs had code-words for talking about race without mentioning it. Furthermore, this new discursive dimension of discrimination is taken for granted and unintentional. Wellman (2007, p. 61) describes, "It is part of the routine language of race rather than a dodge or a method for disguising racially motivated goals. In addition to color-blind ideology, coded languages, strategies for minimizing race, and silences about race constitute a significant change in the ways Americans talk and think about race." This is clearly seen among the DCAPs. Neither Frankie nor Feliz mentioned the race of the student examples that they give. Yet, from their descriptions, we can more than likely picture an African American male and female in the student scenarios. In her story Feliz mentioned the high school and, at P_high school, it is 99% African American. Although, the DCAPs did not explicitly state race, the reader can almost make the connection between the student's behavior and challenges with their race/ethnicity.

Another discursive script that minimizes the significance of racial discrimination occurs when speakers remove themselves from the organization of racial privilege, while at the same time placing responsibility for eliminating racial disparities with students of color (Vera & Feagin, 2007). Many of the DCAPs, especially the gatekeeper advocates, used this type of script in their descriptions of the schools or students failing to meet the standards of the college/university. Using this language, the DCAPs portrayed a student's ability to climb or fall off the ladder of academic success was dependent on their own individual efforts and not

sociocultural factors. In other words, the students' future rests squarely on their own shoulders. Yet, as I explained in the last section, cultural capital is attained through social connections in family, school, and community. In the post-civil rights era, as Bobo and Smith (1998) simply state, people of color such as African Americans are the "cultural architects of their own disadvantage." This is known as "symbolic racism or laissez-faire racism" (Bobo & Smith, 1998). Instead of looking for the causes of racial inequities within the historical and racial stratification of social institutions, this discourse looks for inequalities in the actions of self-interested and self-motivated individuals on either side of the color line. In this frame, race/ethnicity in the post-civil rights era is a problem of individual (mis)behavior and not sociocultural factors (Bobo & Smith, 1998; Vera & Feagin, 2007; Wellman, 2007).

7.10.2.2 Perceiving student's socio-cultural background and context

Frankie comments, "I like being able to talk to a counselor – to get a student's background and context." From Frankie's statement, DCAPs analyze more than GPA and SAT scores when making college admission decisions. They consider a lot of factors such as initiative and family life. In retelling the student examples, critical advocates like Feliz, Tyrone, and Frankie shared insight they gained from talking with the students about their future goals and college. The DCAPs show that most of these considerations in the college admissions process happens on a case-by-case scenario. Yet, LCSD students that come from poor college-going culture often do not even apply to college because they lack the ability to access college knowledge, if they do not interact with DCAPs. In other words, they also lack social capital among parents/family, guidance counselors, and community members to go to college. They often have the inability to access DCAPs because their schools are less likely to be visited. Likewise, DCAPs do not have access to the student's story or records that comes through the

formal application. Therefore, most LCSD students are facing adversity that the DCAPs could recognize in the admissions process as overcoming challenges to college access. Yet, due to the lack of access, the connection to go to college is lost and falls into the P-16 educational chasm known as the college access gap.

Jaune explains how college admission counselors need to understand the context and background of students in order to better assist in the college admissions process:

So as guidance counselors as well as admissions counselors, we all need to understand maybe put more of an effort into understanding where our students are coming from. Understand the context of the students and I kind of have coined the term “conditionally counseling” students. Sometimes it can be a good thing and sometimes it can be a not so good thing. Uhm but an important key is understanding where the students are coming from, therefore to effectively counsel these students on the options that they have. For example if a student is barely breaking a 1000 on their SATs and have Bs and some Cs so, encouraging that student to apply to [The University] may not be in their best interest and having them look at one of the branch campuses or regional campuses that would be something to do. Uhm but to just kind of get back to you know the point of being a high school guidance counselor and the point of being an college admissions counselor.

Although Jaune is expressing the need to know a student’s background, school context, etc., it has little affect on the college admission decision. In other words, even with this information, most college admission offices and DCAPs will still deny access based on low test scores and/or grades that are influenced by the student’s school and/or sociocultural background.

Perez (1993) and Grodsky (2007) explain that students of color gaining access and success in academic achievement are recruited as exceptions of their communities. The DCAPs conditionally counsel and recruit in order to compensate the LCSD student’s lack of college knowledge and readiness (Grodsky, 2007). This is a result of the lasting effects of socio-racial discrimination and gaps in social, cultural, and human capital among communities of color. Communities of color are still fighting to attain civil rights that affect their opportunities for social attainment and mobility in education such as access to college knowledge. For example,

Perez (1993) states that, "educational affirmative action policies have been made to function as double-edged swords, a door to opportunity and empowerment that is nonetheless stigmatized (p. 272)." Students of color are seen as "welfare recipients" receiving free handouts based on their minority status as opposed to their merit or ability to overcome adversity (Perez, 1993). This creates a vicious stereotype where minorities are only seen as 'welfare recipient' minorities whether they are educated or not. No matter the college/university, students of color are seen as perpetrators and/or marginal rather than as part of society. For most minorities, "Americanization" in the educational system or college admission process does not mean equal status (Perez, 1993, p. 276).

7.10.3 Diversity begets Diversity

Race and ethnicity should be seen as relevant qualifications for admission (Gutmann, 1987; Moses, 2001). As Moses (2001) states in her article about the means in which to increase college access, race-conscious admission policies improves the social context of college choice of students of color. An individual's culture and community are important; as well as, acknowledging the essential role of people's cultural, racial/ethnic, and social contexts, within which contexts is framed by socio-political climate (Moses, 2001). Therefore, race, ethnicity, and cultural background are considered in the admissions process.

Diversity recruitment strategies are used as one of the primary ways that applicants can show interest and gain information about the college/university. All of the DCAPs agreed with the title of diversity college admission professionals as well as they understood that, as a staff of color, they are the face of diversity.

Yet, it is a struggle for DCAPs. During one of the focus groups, one Private DCAP,

Rafael, states that, “I find it very difficult sometimes to get excited. I mean, Yes, the outreach is important and yes, the recruitment is important. As multicultural coordinator of recruitment, you know this is what I’m supposed to do... But as an institution, we’re not helping them to get there.” He further explains:

We try so hard to get them there. You know sometimes we’ll pay to get them on our campus. You know give them a ticket or whatever and it creates this expectation that we’ll take care of them. But we really won’t... And you know they kind of wonder why I’m not excited about the upcoming program.

Rafael and other DCAPs acknowledge the ineffectiveness of race-conscious admissions policies to truly recruit underrepresented students of color. The DCAPs also recognized that students would face many obstacles to gain college access. Therefore, DCAPs work towards counseling and reaching out to students in high schools or through community-based organizations.

However, there are transition and retention issues that most colleges/universities continually fail to address for marginalized and disenfranchised students of color. The DCAPs statement is, again, a testament to the inner struggle that DCAPs have to recruit LCSD and students of color as part of insufficient institutional diversity initiatives.

7.11 RACIALIZATION OF CULTURAL CAPITAL AND POWER

Given the importance of postsecondary education to occupational outcomes for young adults today, college access practices in higher education should be a central concern to address socio-racial/ethnic stratification in education. Also, diversity matters in higher education. More and more underrepresented students of color are entering college; thus, changing the demographics of today’s colleges/universities. Overall, colleges and universities are struggling to

accommodate the unique needs of diverse populations; while also, maintaining structural diversity initiatives and campus climate. Yet, as a dichotomy, higher education preserves the cultural capital of power and conserving resources; while simultaneously promoting college access (Tierney & Hagerdorn, 2002). The current struggles and dichotomy further explains the complexity of diversity recruitment in college admissions.

Many of the DCAPS explained the differences in working with the local city school district students and students of color. For example, many of the LCSD students waited until senior year to start preparing for college, which is late for most students. Then they are rushing to find colleges/universities that will admit them. They require more attention and time than students from high schools with good college-going culture. This can also explain how and why there are so few LCSD and students of color in college. The DCAPS like Feliz and Frankie talked about the success stories but what about the many students who fall through the cracks of the college access gap because they didn't know the timeline of admissions and/or financial aid. An example is Frankie's description of CS101 students (who are primarily African American) needing additional supports to succeed academically and go to college.

The cultural capital and power in higher education maintains the status quo that higher education is a means to build capital that many students of color do not have access. Higher education maintains the racial /ethnic stratification within school districts as well as upholds the meritocracy that limits the enrollment of students of color. Even though the local city high school students (who are mainly students of color) are underprepared and come from poor college-going culture, they are held to the same standards as their White American and affluent peers, who are more prepared and come from schools with good college-going cultures.

7.11.1 Institution Type

To better understand the impact of institution type, one private college, public university, regional campus, and community college, all discussed how criteria was in place that more or less addressed the challenges that marginalized students (students of color, first-generation, low SES, etc.) face in gaining admissions. Generally, students are held to the same standards and criteria, however, there are instances where applications are read case-by-case due to the unique nature of the student's background or identities. These accommodations are also dependent upon the institution type. For example, the private colleges/universities had more autonomy and independence to make admission decisions. The public universities did not. Selectivity also affected college admission decisions as well as college outreach.

Compensatory sponsorship can take many forms in race-conscious admission policies. The public universities provided college outreach workshops or events to attract as many marginalized students to come to campus and interact with the DCAPs. There is less emphasis on one-to-one interaction yet, events and programming were offered continually throughout the year students to attend at any time.

For the private research university, it meant creating a relationship with the student and being an advocate for the student. This relationship is most likely initiated and created by the DCAP after a targeted high school or campus visit. Even though some of the universities had high criteria for admission, it exercised a lot of sponsorship from traveling to a student's high school, conducting an interview, making monthly phone calls/emails, inviting the student to the college campus for diversity day, sharing the admission decision and enrollment process, and finally answering financial aid questions. It is often a year-long relationship so the student has the DCAP as a resource to navigate the admissions process. Yet, as soon as the student enrolls

that relationship ends and is only maintained, if the student continues the relationship. There is little if any formal transition from admissions to retention, which is problematic. Especially when many marginalized students were given special considerations and this should continue once they enroll.

It was represented to the community college DCAP by its open enrollment and accessibility. The DCAP discussed being a constant presence in the schools and with the guidance counselors. Whereas 4-year institutions primarily recruited in one part of the year, the community college recruited throughout the year. Students are then able to apply at anytime and anywhere whether at their high school, on the internet, or on campus. Yet, there were drawbacks that students could apply and enroll without talking to anyone, which is problematic if students lack information about college course requirements, costs, financial aid, etc.

Borderline review and admission interviews were a common example of compensatory sponsorship for the private liberal arts colleges. Overall, the liberal arts colleges were less selective institutions but had smaller enrollments. In theory, the less selective institutions were less likely to need to compensate. However, in reality, they still used admission policies like the borderline review and test optional interviews to compensate for LCSD students' lack of college readiness. Also, because LCSD students lack the capital to gain admission from more conventional ways, like GPA and SAT scores, the private liberal arts colleges devised ways to holistically review applications on a case-by-case basis.

7.11.2 Lack Of Cultural Power

Furthermore, DCAPs do not have the power or resources to fully engage in the community. For example DCAPs are often an entry-level position. For most of the DCAPs, the

DCAP position was their first real job out of college. Therefore, most of the DCAPs, although had specialized duties were hired at the base salary and required to complete the same duties as their other non-DCAP or CAP colleagues. They received some special recognition of their role in promoting diversity. Yet, they were not given opportunities to be involved in higher level meetings to impact policies and practices that they would enact.

Due to the entry-level position and lack of diversity in leadership, there is large turnover, often within two to five years in the position. Again, after seventeen years of CS101, only one DCAP remained in the same position and at the same college/university from the original committee. The DCAP is really a middle manager of diversity that has to address the incongruities between the racial/ethnic stratification in P-12 education with the small measures of compensatory sponsorship by colleges/universities. While the DCAPs serve as an advocate for underrepresented students of color, they, simultaneously, serve as gatekeepers for colleges/universities.

In addition, the lack of power and capital within higher education speaks to the lack of stability in diversity initiatives that often waver and limit the ability for building capacity. Without building capital and power to address diversity and college access, colleges/universities will continue to lack the ability to incur lasting change for campus diversity and inclusion.

7.11.3 21st Century Post-racial Ideology

The 21st century definition of race/ethnicity has morphed into beliefs that we should ignore the differences in sociocultural communities as well as sociopolitical stratification to move towards color-blind, post-racial, and race-neutral ideology. The shift to reject Cornel West's (1993) and other scholars' views of the new cultural politics of difference is complicating

the very argument of diversity. These beliefs seem to say that difference does not matter or more telling that differences matter, except race/ethnicity. The same proponents of race-neutral policies would argue for same-sex marriage laws, title XIII provisions, and/or the extension of the ADA act. Even more telling is the fact that race/ethnicity is more than a sociopolitical designation but it is a part of a person's identity matrix. It is as influential as age, religion, sexual orientation, ability, gender, and socio-economic status.

We can see these beliefs by the DCAPs' comments on race/ethnicity or lack thereof. Mustafa, Verunike, and Martin explain the need to be inclusive in their recruitment. For example, Martin states:

Uhm, our outreach office here, our focus is all students of color. However, we help all students because we know that there are many majority students who are disadvantaged and some majority students just unaware in terms of being well-informed of what it takes to be admitted to a college institution.

In discussions, like the one above, once race/ethnicity is discussed there is a pause and then the DCAP rushes to be inclusive. Mustafa described that all of the admission counselors participate in local recruitment yet; it is the primary responsibility of the DCAPs to coordinate it. It reflects the neo-conservative political climate as well as the backlash of recent litigation against affirmative action. There is hesitancy and sensitivity in college admissions to discuss race-conscious admission policies, hence the need to be more inclusive. Yet, this is affecting how diversity recruitment is able to fully engage underrepresented students of color. It's almost taking the "diversity" out of "diversity recruitment."

7.12 COLLEGE ACCESS THROUGH A CRT LENS

Most college access research uses a cultural capital theoretical framework, although the theory does not fully address the affects of race and racial disparities in college access. Research that has analyzed collective identity development and community cultural wealth theory challenges traditional notions of cultural capital theories that have a culturally pathological view of students of color. Yosso (2005) explains that often theories researching phenomena like college access have a deficit view of underrepresented students of color as “at-risk,” “disadvantaged.” This is only telling half of the story about our students. Yosso (2005) argues that critical race theory (CRT) is important to acknowledge not only the obstacles and barriers that underrepresented students of color face but also how their unique voice greatly impacts their access and success to college. She eloquently argues against the deficit views of some of the earlier works on college access. Being that cultural capital is a major theory in college access research, Yosso (2005) argues that we have to contend the traditional notions of cultural capital. This would counter the white dominant ideology in education. Therefore, critically examining the educational system and finding ways in which we reward students for their racial/ethnic background as opposed to punishing them.

7.12.1 Race/Ethnicity Matters

Overall, whether implicit or explicit, permissible or prohibited, race/ethnicity is a factor in college access. Race/ethnicity in college admission is often a reflection of disparities due to socio-racial stratification in the U.S. educational system (Grotsky, 2007; Grotsky & Kalogrides, 2008). The consideration of race/ethnicity in admissions is one feature of a postsecondary

structure shaped by the varying goals and practices of colleges/universities (diversity and access) and the contextual factors (socio-racial stratification) that constrain their behavior. The gaps in college access has spurred researchers to look at ways in which to promote diversity in a way that benefits both underrepresented students of color and majority students. Again, due to low college knowledge, underrepresented students of color face barriers to college access beyond their academic performance (Perna, 2006; Roderick et al., 2008, 2009, 2011; Savitz-Romer, 2012; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Venezia et al., 2003).

We can't ignore race/ethnicity as culture because it is part of the student's as well as the DCAPs' capital habitus and therefore should be embraced. Yosso (2005) supports that race/ethnicity as culture can empower underrepresented students of color in ways such as funds of knowledge or the new cultural politics of difference. This is also extended to explain the role of the DCAP and diversity recruitment. In other words, race/ethnicity, sociocultural factors, and community influence college admissions and vice versa. Similar to Yosso (2005), the current research study refutes blaming communities of color for the racial/ethnic stratification and institutional racism that occurs in education and, ultimately, impacts college access.

7.12.2 Countering Dominant Ideology

CRT is also concerned with revealing the counter-hegemonic ideology of narratives. There is a continued struggle that students and families of color face in accessing an equitable education that does prepare students for college (Martinez, 2013). College preparation has been coined the "civil-rights issue of our time" because schools in communities of color and low income communities often lack the capacity to prioritize college preparation and planning (Boo, 2004, p. 165; Farmer-Hinton, 2008, 2011, p. 73). Communities of color are making due with the

reality of limited educational opportunities; while striving to attain capital and increase college access. To illustrate the counter-narrative direction explored, researchers are using counter-hegemonic ideology such as community cultural wealth, critical race theory, and funds of knowledge to advance college access research.

There is a dominant ideology surrounding higher education and college admissions as white privilege. I will explore this tenet in order to challenge the status quo concerning institutional diversity initiatives and, more specifically, the use of race in college admissions. Moses (2001, p. 26) states that, "Because higher education is a privilege that one must earn, rather than a right that everyone has, qualifications matter." Furthermore, qualifications are impacted by race/ethnicity and institutional racism. For example, the variances of college admissions criteria and policies produce widely disparate socio-racial stratification in LCSD (Chapa & Horn, 2007; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Moses, 2001; Saenz et. al, 2007). The literature on the college access gap suggests that no admission policy, programming, and/or strategy is race neutral. Therefore, a tenet of CRT is to devise ways in which to challenge the dominant ideology of race neutrality as well as white privilege. There are significant policy changes that could equally distribute the trend and privilege of White American students in terms of access and representation for underrepresented students of color (Moses, 2001). For example, college enrollment shifts should reflect demographic shifts in the population.

Through my analysis the DCAPs narrative did corroborate with enrollment strategy literature. They agreed that a big part of college admissions is to devise strategies in order to utilize the best resources in the best way possible to garner college enrollments. Yet, the current study also countered local strategies, policies, and practices that did not sponsor more community advocacy and college outreach efforts. One thing that enrollment management

research lacks is the compassion and hope of opportunity that the DCAPs embodied. The DCAPs were passionate about their work to recruit LCSD students as well as critical of ways to address college access.

7.13 WORK TOWARDS A RACIAL CONCEPTUAL MODEL

7.13.1 More than Cultural Capital

Scholars like Tierney (1999) and Perna (2006) acknowledges Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural capital enables analysis of DCAPS' micro-practices to reflect broader social and cultural forces that reproduce inequities. Yet, in accordance with the sociological framework of Bourdieu's cultural capital theory, Tierney (1999) argues that there needs to be an alternative viewpoint where the idea of culture IS the theoretical framework for defining capital and identity. Similar to CRT concepts like Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth theory, Tierney (1999) explains, "a cultural view of issues of college access and retention interprets the world differently from those notions which contend that an individual's success or failure in college is dependent upon singular variables such as financial need, affirmative action, attrition, etc."

Tierney (1999) explains that by institutions accommodating a cultural view, students from marginalized communities should, "find ways to have their cultural backgrounds affirmed and honored on their respective campuses. By so doing, the habitus of students who do not have much in the way of economic or traditional modes of cultural capital is less deterministic and more fluid." Students are thus able to act as social agents and produce the conditions for change

and improvements in opportunity (Tierney, 1999). College access should be framed as not merely a concern for generating cultural capital but also by its attention to issues of cultural identity and integrity that was found in the DCAPs cultural habitus.

The DCAPs exhibit the need to develop Tierney's (1999) theory of cultural integrity to analyze the racism and discrimination within institutions of higher education. The DCAPs did examine the integrity of their respective college/university's enrollment strategies. They tried to work within their own agency and habitus to extend opportunity and college access to communities of color. Yet, they did not challenge the senior administration to implement cultural integrity for recruiting urban students. Therefore, DCAPs can be considered bicultural middle managers between communities of color, P-12 schools, and senior administration in higher education.

7.13.2 Furthering The New Cultural Politics of Difference in College Access

Race matters when DCAPs operate within new politics of difference such as conditionally counseling LCSD students or devise alternative admission practices, strategies, and policies for diversity recruitment. Current research has begun to investigate the impact of race, collective identity, and cultural affinity on college access. There are growing shifts to focus on and learn from racial/ethnic communities' cultural assets and wealth to improve college access. Since Freeman's (1997) research on African Americans' behaviors towards college access, studies have found that the community's agency and various support systems facilitates a student's college aspirations and access to college (Engberg & Wolniak, 2009; Farmer-Hinton, 2008, Jayakumar, Vue, Allen, 2013; Martinez, 2012; Nunez & Olivia, 2009). Theories such as community cultural wealth is an alternative conceptualization of cultural capital where

communities of color have an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized to survive and resist forms of oppression (Yosso, 2005).

7.14 CRT SUMMARY

The centrality of race/ethnicity is important to understand why LCSD and underrepresented students of color are not accessing higher education. Research has begun to explicitly analyze the interplay of communities of color and the dominant culture of power (Engberg & Wolniak, 2009; Farmer-Hinton, 2008, Jayakumar, Vue, Allen, 2013; Martinez, 2012; Nunez & Olivia, 2009). It is not only the student's but also the DCAPs' cultural and collective identity that is being affected and the results are failure to improve access to the cultural capital of higher education.

Researchers agree that education does build capital for many students of color. Educators can also agree that a cultural habitus that includes culture, race, and ethnicity has a major impact on capital. Yet, in the case of many underrepresented students of color and DCAPs, race/ethnicity is viewed to have a negative impact. For example, race/ethnicity is often attributed as the cause for underachievement and educational disparities and not the racial stratification, institutional racism, and White dominant ideology that persists the U.S. educational system.

To further examine the racialized views of the DCAPs, I connected the present study with CRT theory to focus on the implicit and explicit, silent and overt forms of institutional racism and discrimination in college admissions. For example, the numerous examples of socio-racial stratification clarifies that college admissions is racialized.

Furthermore, the researchers highlighted in this chapter, show that there is a need to

counter the deficit view of students of color as well as advocating their collective identity, community cultural wealth, and the new cultural politics of difference. Achinstein et al. (2014) state that to do such work, researchers must also cross boundaries, immersing themselves in communities, drawing data from school, community, and intersectional spaces. Martinez et al. (2013) contribute that there is a continued need to work toward a collective understanding of this concept that takes into account multiple stakeholders' perspectives. This leads to a new model that takes into account the sociocultural and community context to analyze various stakeholders and levels of education. New research using an innovative model can better analyze the holistic impact that community and culture play on educational opportunities such as college access.

As scholars like Ladson-Billings (1995) and Delpit (1995) have found a person's cultural background can be an asset in education. It can change the social and cultural dynamics of educational opportunity. Sponsoring campus events and high school visits for underrepresented students of color is not enough to address the college access gap. Learning happens best when one's cultural identity becomes integrated as part of his/her educational experience (Delpit, 1995; Freeman, 1997, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Tierney, 1999; Yosso, 2005).

8.0 OVERVIEW OF DCAPS' PERSPECTIVES OF COLLEGE ACCESS IN A LOCAL URBAN CONTEXT

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The current study is a qualitative glimpse in the perspective of DCAPs in a local urban context. They work within a cultural habitus as critical gatekeeping advocates, maintain cultural capital of college knowledge, and are an authority on college admissions. They are experts who continue to do their work with the belief that they are assisting students the best way that they can. Yet, they are constricted by socio-racial stratification within the educational system as well as institutional racism that limits their efforts.

8.2 OVERVIEW

In this chapter, I will do a brief overview of the questions as well as summarize the generated themes. The four research questions and themes that guided the current study:

1. In what ways are DCAPs an authority on college access and describe the higher education context within Perna's (2006) integrated college access model?
 - DCAPs are an authority on college access
 - They were able to define three key areas in college preparation: college readiness, college-going culture, and college access
 - They were able to describe LCSD's low college-going culture concerning

- socio-racial stratification among the schools, the scholarship program, guidance counselors, and students
 - Although colleges/universities have different institutional characteristics, there are great similarities in the goal to promote campus diversity as well as the challenges to achieve campus diversity
 - Similar DCAPs' role/duties, race-conscious admission policies, and diversity recruitment strategies
 - Different institutions
 - LCSD recruitment is a component of diversity recruitment strategy
 - DCAPs are specialized admission counselors to recruit underrepresented students of color
 - There are specialized activities, policies, strategies that are specific to DCAPs and local diversity recruitment
 - This is in response to the poor college-going culture and/or high need for college knowledge
 - Diversity recruitment and DCAPs are part of college/university's diversity initiatives
2. Through the DCAPs' perspective of P-12 and community context, how do DCAPs describe college access for local and underrepresented students of color?
- There is low college-going culture, lack of college readiness, high need for college knowledge, and socio-racial stratification among the high schools that impacts college access in the form of diversity recruitment
 - They were able to describe LCSD's low college-going culture concerning socio-racial stratification among the schools, the scholarship program, guidance counselors, and students
 - From the perspective of the DCAPs there is interconnection, miscommunication, empathy, and lack of understanding within the integrated college access model
 - There are programs such as CS101 for college outreach efforts as well as networking
 - It is mainly in the form of small and uncoordinated community involvement rather than engagement
 - The DCAPs also describe the benefits and challenges of CS101
3. What is the narrative and cultural habitus of DCAPs in relation to personal and professionals beliefs concerning college access?
- DCAPs serve as a bicultural middle manager between P-12 and higher education as well as higher education and communities of color
 - This creates a "double consciousness" identity that leads to social navigation skills such as code-switching, negotiation, assimilation, accommodation, dissonance, reconciliation, and integration
 - The cultural habitus of the DCAPs is a hybridization of roles that varies between critical gatekeeping advocacy
 - Some of the DCAPs showed characteristics of critical advocates, capital gatekeepers, and gatekeeper advocates
 - DCAPs have capital but limited power since most of them are in entry-level positions

and work within the college/university's hierarchical power structure
DCAPs are charged with DOING diversity but without the support to BE diversity

- Recommendations are increasing college knowledge with collaboration
Communication, consistency, and partnerships
4. From the DCAPs' narrative, how does diversity recruitment conform to the capitalistic and racialized system of P-16 college access?
- DCAPs offer a counter-narrative to diversity as a mission of higher education
 - They show the limitations of diversity recruitment to fully address the socio-racial stratification in education, the lack of cultural relevancy in college policies, as well as the lack of inclusiveness in staffing and leadership
 - Race/ethnicity is an all-encompassing factor resulting in race-conscious admission policies
 - Race/ethnicity is the white, black, brown, red, and yellow elephant in the college admissions office
 - It was in most conversations whether implicit or explicit
 - Discussion of race in admissions mainly resides in codewords, racial silence, and implicit policies/practices
 - There are alternative admission options as well as little conditional counseling and affirmative action that is at play due to the numbers and policies that DCAPs work within to recruit underrepresented students of color

In this chapter, I will also present implications for diversity recruitment. The discussion comes from synthesizing previous research with the DCAPs recommendations. As a policy implication, many researchers recommend promoting college access by creating a comprehensive P-16 college access system. This is mirrored by the DCAPs. Another policy implication in higher education is tying college access with retention efforts. Suggested praxis implications include addressing socio-racial stratification and institutional racism by 1) empowering DCAPs to be culturally critical advocates and 2) developing a culturally relevant admission strategy. A research implication is to conduct college access research with a critical research paradigm to address the oppression, disenfranchisement, and marginalization that is systemic in P-16 education.

8.3 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THEMES

8.3.1 Research Question 1: DCAPs as Providers of a Viable Perspective on the College Access and Higher Education Context

8.3.1.1 RQ1: DCAPs are an authority on college access

DCAPs were able to define college preparation in three key areas: college readiness, college-going culture, and college access. Although they do not have direct influence on LCSD students' college readiness, they are knowledgeable of the factors that impact college preparation. Also, they understand the interaction between stakeholders and among the different levels of education.

Overall, all of the DCAPs observed that LCSD had low college-going culture that is also reflected in the data presented about the school district. LCSD's low college-going culture is affecting the way that DCAPs interact with the school district and recruit students. Since they are authorities on college access, DCAPs have an important role and impact on the school district's college-going culture.

8.3.1.2 RQ1: Integrated college access model

Since DCAPs are knowledgeable about college-going culture and college access, they are able to offer insight on the interconnection among levels in Perna's (2006) integrated college access model. They offer their viewpoints of the school district, high schools, guidance counselors, and students. They also shared their interaction and how each group influences the other throughout the model.

The DCAPs commented on the college readiness and college-going culture as outsiders

who work closely with school staff and students. While DCAPs are knowledgeable about the characteristics of good college readiness and college-going culture, they are only directly involved in college access efforts. Therefore, in the absence of a satisfactory college-going culture and college readiness, their jobs are highly affected. Primarily, DCAPs are limited in their resources and capacity to properly counsel all LCSD students about college admissions.

8.3.1.3 RQ1: LCSD recruitment as diversity recruitment

LCSD recruitment is synonymous with diversity recruitment. Since DCAPs recruit locally, the DCAPs also took the opportunity to address the college access gap. Their jobs are two-fold: to fulfill their jobs as DCAPs as well as help communities of color. For example, a big part of their duties is to sponsor community outreach. They aim to increase visibility of their respective college/university while also sharing college knowledge. There is a need for consistent communication as well as counseling to better inform students about college options.

The DCAPs are considered to play a specialized role since they primarily work with communities of color, LCSD staff, and underrepresented students of color. The specialization also ensures that the DCAPs are a middle manager between their respective office of admissions and communities of color. They possess cultural capital of college knowledge as well as receive support and autonomy. Yet, they work within the parameters of the admission budget and university policies. In this way, the DCAPs do not have the power to change diversity recruitment strategies or, even more importantly, college access in the city.

8.3.2 Research Question 2: DCAPs' Perspectives of College Access Contextual Layers

8.3.2.1 RQ2: DCAPs' perspectives of LCSD's low college-going culture

The general perspective of the DCAPs explains that the interactions between P-12 and higher education are interconnection, miscommunication, empathy, and lack of understanding. Again, the DCAPs are an authority on college access and are able to offer insight on Perna's (2006) integrated model and the multiple contexts that impacts college access.

The DCAPs give examples of LCSD's low college-going culture, lack of college readiness, high need for college knowledge, and socio-racial stratification among the high schools. They emphasized LCSD's low college-going culture concerning socio-racial stratification among the schools, the scholarship program, guidance counselors, and students. These systemic challenges hinder diversity recruitment that, ultimately, creates barriers for underrepresented students of color.

8.3.2.2 RQ2: Community outreach in diversity recruitment

Community outreach is one of the primary forms of diversity recruitment for connecting with communities of color. The DCAPs worked with community organizations to share college knowledge as well as motivate students to go to college. College Success 101 is a good example of programming that the DCAPs sponsored to increase college access. Other examples include SAT prep, campus visits, and community presentations.

8.3.3 Research Question 3: Cultural Habitus of DCAPs

8.3.3.1 RQ3: DCAPs as critical gatekeeper advocates

Through analyzing the DCAPs narratives, I was able to construct the DCAPs' cultural habitus. Similar traits included being critical of the school district, college admissions, and themselves. They also participated in gatekeeping activities such as recruiting at schools that had satisfactory college-going cultures versus poor college-going. Yet, they were advocates of college access because they were passionate about their work in CS101 and sponsored programming to help students. It is a spectrum where the DCAPs show one, two, or all three traits.

8.3.3.2 RQ3: DCAPs are a bicultural middle manager

DCAPs serve as a bicultural middle manager between P-12 and higher education as well as higher education and communities of color. This creates a "double consciousness" identity that leads to social navigation skills such as code-switching, negotiation, assimilation, accommodation, dissonance.

8.3.3.3 RQ3: DCAPs have capital but limited power

Cultural capital theory is appropriate for the current study to reasonably explain how college admission is a way to increase socio-economic status (SES). Also, it explains how the pursuit of social attainment status and cultural capital creates socio-racial stratification in education, including the college access gap. Due to the poor college-going culture, underrepresented students of color often do not have access to college resources such as DCAPs. DCAPs are dedicated to increasing college access yet, they often lack the cultural power to

change the educational system and/or higher education structures. DCAPs are charged with DOING diversity but without the support to BEING diversity. Despite being an important part of campus diversity initiatives, race/ethnicity is rarely openly discussed in enrollment management strategies. I found that colleges/universities such as Mustafa, Tyrone, and Sasha's as well as Pam, Martin, and Verunike's had elaborate race-conscious admission plans and policies because they lacked diversity and therefore sought resources to address the low numbers of underrepresented students of color on campus.

8.3.4 Research Question 4: Assessing race/ethnicity and cultural capital in college admissions

8.3.4.1 RQ4: Race is all-encompassing

The DCAP moniker alone signifies that race/ethnicity are a part of college admissions. In addition, many of the diversity recruitment strategies utilized staff and students of color to highlight the critical mass of multiculturalism on campus. The DCAPs' viewpoints serve as counter-narratives to show the reality of diversity recruitment as well as diversity initiatives on campus. As an insider, I was able to analyze the DCAPs comments concerning race/ethnicity in college admissions. I had to examine not only what the DCAPs were saying but also, what they were not saying. The CRT lens was needed to examine the nuances within the DCAPs' narratives. Often the DCAPs used code-words as well as utilized a student's social background, income, and family status in making admission decisions. For example, when talking about CS101 students, schools without money, the school closings, or in the examples, you can picture that these students are disenfranchised and marginalized, especially African American students.

The colleges/universities operate in a stratified system but work with school districts as best they can.

The biggest example of racialization in college admissions is the socio-racial stratification of college resources and opportunities. Similarly to the DCAPs observations, Meyer et al. (2008) give examples throughout the P-16 educational system such as the same effects occur where students who attend secondary schools that do not confer access to higher education are obviously unlikely to go to college. Meyer et al. (2008) also indicate that stratification occurs in college access by higher education types (e.g., four-year college vs. two-year). Mustafa and other DCAPs commented on the poor college-going culture because of the emphasis on attending community college rather than four-year colleges. But, as Meyer et al. (2008) explain, community colleges have weaker positive effects on their graduates than do four-year schools. Therefore, from college readiness and access to retention and graduation, students are stratified by race/ethnicity as well as college type, major, etc.

8.3.4.2 RQ4: DCAPs' counter-narrative of diversity mission in higher education

DCAPs offer a counter-narrative to the general proclamation that diversity is an important mission and goal of higher education. The DCAPs' "double-consciousness" narrative shows the limitations of diversity recruitment to fully address the socio-racial stratification in education, the lack of cultural relevancy in college policies, as well as the lack of inclusiveness in staffing and leadership. Although it is a noble gesture, social inequities such as institutional racism are neither fully addressed, attempted, nor achieved in higher education diversity initiatives.

8.3.4.3 RQ4: There is little, if no conditional counseling

Even though there are specialized diversity recruitment strategies, there are few concessions in college admission decisions. Despite the low college-going culture, the DCAPs did not directly discuss affirmative action policies. Yet, they did discuss the concept of conditional admissions and counseling. For example some of the DCAPs discussed alternative college admission options such as test-optional, interviews, transferring, and borderline reviews. Similar to Grodsky's (2007) concept of compensatory sponsorship, the DCAPs would counsel students about alternative options or policies because LCSD students are often not well-prepared for some of the four-year college/university. Some of the DCAPs questioned the system for offering few options. Other DCAPs commented on the need to be realistic by offering college options that appropriately match the LCSD students' college readiness.

8.4 IMPLICATIONS

In this section I will discuss the current studies' suggestions to improve diversity recruitment as well as promote college access. First, I will give a recap of the DCAPs recommendations. From synthesizing previous research with the DCAPs recommendations, I gleaned the following areas for improvement. Implications include developing university-wide connections between admissions and retention to ensure greater success for underrepresented students of color. Secondly, diversity recruitment needs to be more than window-dressing or lip service, so DCAPs could develop culturally relevant recruitment and admissions. It also requires staff to be critical thinkers about diversity recruitment as well as other diversity initiatives. The majority of the implication will discuss college access practices but I will also share research and

policy ideas.

8.4.1 Recap of DCAPs' Recommendations and Implications

Overall, there is a lack of a comprehensive system for college access in the city. Although the DCAPs were knowledgeable about LCSD's college-going culture, they also indicated that outreach efforts were small and not well coordinated to reach a wider audience. The most popular recommendation is improving communication between high school guidance counselors and DCAPs. Also, colleges/universities need to be more engaged in the community through collaboration and community partnerships.

It takes constant conversations with multiple stakeholders about many of the sordid details about college. Therefore, cultural capital is not only important for students to attend college, but it is also necessary for students' family members and community as well (Freeman, 1997, 1999, 2005; Perna, 2006; Tierney, 1999; Venezia et al, 2003).

8.4.2 Practice Implications: Improving University-Wide Diversity Initiatives

8.4.2.1 Address the policies and practices of institutional racism

To go beyond the “window dressing” and “lip service” that occurs in diversity recruitment, the DCAPs show that there is conformity in language and practices concerning underrepresented students of color and college access. Therefore, it is important to change the language and discursive scripts that limit our students and enable the institutional racism in the P-16 educational system.

Even in higher education, we need to analyze, “how and where we research, when we

publish, and what institutions we graduate from or currently work” (Perez, 1993, p. 274). In other words, challenging elitist assumptions about the quality of one's education and scholarship is fundamental to the security and support of critical race theory. The old and new strategies of discrimination affect the quality of learning in all levels of education and bar minority students from full access in our society. For example, as in high school, colleges/universities are able to influence a student's college choice based on college readiness to meet admissions criteria. College access is also highly influence by the racial stratification of high schools and college choice.

Transformative change is necessary "at the very sites of institutions' ideological and material production of minorities as culturally inferior and socially disempowered subjects (Perez, 1993, p. 269)." The message in many of the gatekeeping narratives is that many LCSD and/or students of color are not prepared for college and are not admitted. In a limited capacity DCAPs assist prepared students to apply. Yet, there is no guarantee of admission. To improve college access, it is important for students to understand that DCAPs are allies and should construct a safe place so that students can voice their hopes, fears, struggles, and desires. Also, students need to be able "to articulate their own cultural values in a critical context” (McGee, 1993, p. 286). Since students have to learn the dominant culture then it is our responsibility to promote social justice through giving them an opportunity to learn and be college-ready.

Higher education institutions can align standards and share the work of college counseling. An effective college transition translates to postsecondary institutions working with high schools to build a culture where going to college is the norm and all resources are geared toward students' admission and success in higher education (Bauman et al., 2005; Bensimon et al., 2004; McClafferty et al., 2002; Milem et al., 2005; Oakes et al., 2002; Perna, 2006; Roderick

et al., 2008 2009; Vargas, 2004; Venezia et al., 2003; Williams et al., 2005). School-college partnerships should seek to smooth the transition to college with objectives to improve interpersonal skills, increase academic readiness, and expand educational options (Adelman, 1999; Gladieux & Swail, 2000; Milem et al., 2005; Swail & Perna, 2002; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney & Hagedorn, 2002; Venezia et al., 2003).

8.4.2.2 Empower DCAPs to be cultural critical advocates

As educators and cultural workers, the DCAPs critique current systems and diversity programs to work towards an intellectual and activist "new" cultural politics of difference (McCarthy and Crichlow, 1993). Cornel West (1993, p. xxii) states that, "The new cultural politics are constituted by a rejection of status quo forms of college representation, a keen sense of the flow of history, and an alignment with counter hegemonic struggles for empowerment on a large, global scale." The DCAPs could be critical theorists to question and reveal the production of power and knowledge in college admissions. It is key to highlight the DCAPs role as part of the educational system to change it and be changed.

The new cultural politics of difference needs cultural workers like DCAPs that will be more than oppositional but an ally to empower and enable social action in college opportunity. Another scholar Michael Apple (1993, p. 34) argues for the "crucial role of intensive educational work, aligned with social movements and multiracial coalitions, in sustaining the collective struggle for equality and civil rights in societal institutions." There is a need for vigorous critique and dialogue in order to directly address the racial and cultural stratification in college access. To improve, it is important to incorporate radical rethinking of the linkages of knowledge, culture, and association among people in different levels of education, including higher education and admissions. We cannot afford to balkanize and exacerbate racial and ethnic inequalities,

especially when colleges are more international and globalized yet, racial/ethnic ghettoization still exists (West, 1993).

The DCAPs take their role as cultural worker seriously due to their involvement in CS101. However, they should also see the need to be a stronger critic and advocate leader. It is important to fight against the marginalization within college access. It is crucial that we seek contestation, negotiation, and resistance of any domain that impacts the ever-shifting socio-cultural constructs of racial/ethnic identity formation (Anderson, 2004; Apple, 1993; bell hooks, Omi and Winant, 1993; McCarthy, 2000; West, 1993). The goal is collective and transformative change to expand, freedom, democracy, individuality, and love (West, 1993).

8.4.2.3 Culturally relevant admissions

Diversity recruitment and race-conscious admission policies need to evolve beyond the static definitions of race/ethnicity. These policies and practices should incorporate the multiplicity, hybridity, and diversity within the Native, African, Asian, and Latino diasporas (Mahalingam and McCarthy, 2000). In other words, diversity recruitment has to be as specialized, dynamic, and versatile as the students that DCAPs are trying to recruit.

From the current study and other researchers on the college choice of underrepresented students of color, race/ethnicity and culture impact college-going behavior and college choice. One rationale from the study is that the failure of current college preparatory models and programs to increase African Americans' participation in higher education could be a lack of understanding of the impacts of African American culture on the college admission process for African American students and vice versa. The DCAPs often mentioned how they would like to share college knowledge. Yet, it entails telling students what to do instead of actively listening to how DCAPs could help students and promote college access. One major tactic of diversity

recruitment discussed is to explicitly collaborate with students and conduct one-on-one, panel, and/or roundtable discussions about the skills and facts that are needed to learn how to achieve in a socio-racially stratified educational system. Essentially, it becomes the duty of educators to collaborate and teach students of color on how to make the most of an unfair and oppressive system.

The current study's analysis of the socio-racial stratification in college access indicates there are great barriers not only to college knowledge but also sociocultural knowledge in education. Frankie, Feliz, and other DCAPs did more than the traditional recruitment in order to "socioculturally" know the students' backgrounds and work to overcome adversity. Yes, the grades matter in these circumstances but there was a rich, varied history for each student that reflected a true success in college access. Carter (2005), Yosso (2005), and Freeman (1997, 1999, 2005) emphasized the importance of increasing cultural awareness as a way to motivate more students of color to actively participate in higher education. Most of the students felt that it was important to address how schools are equipped, the teaching staff and administrators, pedagogy, and curriculum as it relates to the students' culture (Freeman, 1999, p. 540).

In order to overcome obstacles to acquiring and transforming the culture of power, Delpit (1995) found that, many professionals of color attribute their ability to transcend challenges (i.e. being disadvantaged as an African American student) by providing support and raise expectations. Similar to Yosso's community cultural wealth, Delpit (1995, p. 89) states, "Until they appreciate the wonders of the cultures represented before them – they can't appreciate the potential of those who sit before them, nor can they begin to link their students' histories and worlds." If the DCAPs are to successfully recruit underrepresented students of color, they must work towards removing the blinders of stereotypical thinking, mono-cultural enrollment

strategies, ignorance, social distance, biased research, socio-racial stratification, and institutional racism in education and, particularly, at their institutions (Apple, 1993; Delpit, 1995; West, 1993). Also, it is important for DCAPs to attain the cultural power to enact such change. They have the cultural capital of college admissions and community knowledge. Therefore, they need the cultural power (i.e. budget, marketing, etc.) to work with communities of color and make important admission decisions concerning LCSD and students of color.

As educators, it is important to teach youth the culture of power, yet we also have to be cognizant that they have a cultural capital and agency that they can teach us. In our stratified society, cultural capital as college knowledge is the culture of socio-economic success; therefore, every student must have access to this culture. In addition, they must be shown the arbitrariness of cultural capital so that they might understand that their own community wealth is equally valued on college campuses. Furthermore, once students teach us what is important to them, then we can teach them a dominant cultural capital that is meaningful to them. Integrating multiple cultural capitals so that underrepresented students of color can use their own respective cultural capital as a bridge to learning the dominant culture of power and others (i.e. college knowledge). There is validity in the student's culture and perspective so it is important to listen and learn in an intimate DCAP-student relationship. Then students can learn important skills such as negotiation, exchange, compromise, conflict, and struggle (McGee, 1993). McCarthy (1994, p. 94) further states that, "there should be an organic link for minority students to the greater community." Such an effort would celebrate the contributions of all and provide students with their own cultural capital (McCarthy, 1994, p. 94).

8.4.2.4 Building interconnections between college access and retention

In recruitment, the group discussed the need to not only explain how to access college and enroll but, also to navigate the resources on college campuses. They discussed the need to involve staff and faculty to talk with students about opportunities and services on campus. Although the DCAPs explained that they have support, there was a lack of discussion on the connection between admissions and retention efforts, especially for underrepresented students of color.

As I mentioned earlier in the study, Martin mentioned that the DCAPs, “gotta talk about survival, survival skills.” Martin further explains the need to talk about retention strategies for students:

College Success 101 is always been about getting prepared. CS102 [another program] is about what are the expectations when I’m here so that I can get out of here. So its gotta be a summary of behavior, skills, what to expect when you get here; what to look out for; [and] the dos and do nots.

Hurtado et al. (2012) calls for institutions to develop multidimensional models in order to address the campus climate, institutional policies and practices as well as student outcomes. This includes embedding diversity in central tasks such as recruitment and retention efforts. There is also a need to connect such tasks and actions so that diversity efforts are systematically maintained through the institution. Again, colleges/universities should use the multi-contextual approach to educating students in a diverse learning environment (Hurtado et al., 2012).

8.4.3 Policy Implication: Need For Comprehensive College Access System

The DCAPs comment that there is a lack of a consistent system to ensure college readiness, access, and success for LCSD students (A+ Schools, 2011; Conley, 2010; Iriti et al.,

2012). In order to open the communication about college access there needs to be a comprehensive strategy that involves all levels of education including local government offices/agencies, private foundations, corporate businesses, nonprofit and community organizations, and higher education. Previous studies agree that in order to address the current opportunity gap and avoid a potential access crisis in the future all stakeholders must renew the nation's commitment to a broad access strategy (ACSFA, 2001, 2006; CollegeBoard, 2007; Ficklen & Stone, 2002; Long, 2008; Wei, Horn, & Carroll, 2002). This comprehensive city access strategy would strengthen early intervention and student support programs at the state and campus levels and reinvigorate the federal, state and institutional access partnerships. (ACSFA, 2001, 2006; CollegeBoard, 2007; Ficklen & Stone, 2002; Long, 2008; Wei & Horn, 2002).

One of the recommendations from Gonzalez et al.'s (2011) study of the effects of the Promise scholarship was to use multiple methods to provide information to students about the college and federal financial-aid application process, particularly younger students. Gonzalez et al. (2011) conducted focus groups of LCSD students and reported that, "Students rely on a variety of sources for information on how to apply to college or financial aid, including peers, family members, and guidance counselors in the schools, and had varied results" (pg. 89). They continue that the district should provide information to students early and often to ensure that they adequately prepared to attend postsecondary education institutions (Gonzalez et al., 2011). The study also suggests that mentoring should be implemented to give individualized attention to students.

In addition, Conley (2010) and A+ School's (2011) reports suggest, the importance of a district-wide college access strategy. A city-wide partnership between LCSD and colleges/universities is important for developing LCSD students' college readiness and access.

Since higher education is the primary means of reducing poverty and achieving a middle-class life, it is important that high school students, especially underrepresented students of color and low-income students, receive the support, information, and financial aid needed to enroll and succeed in college (Aud et al., 2010; Bangs et al., 2009; Conley, Carroll & Erkut, 2009; Gonzalez, 2011; Iriti et al., 2012; McKinsey et al., 2007).

8.4.4 Research Implications: The Sociocultural Contextual College Access Model

The current model expands the cultural capital theory to research race/ethnicity, culture, and context in college access. Since the current study is an in-depth analysis of a local urban context this serves as the main directive. As a stakeholder and authority on college access, the DCAPs were sought to serve as the research site. The model is comprised of three key areas: the community context, the sociocultural context, and the cultural/organizational habitus.

It was important to research the local urban school district because this provides the community context to understand the local college access gap. It behooves educators and social scientists to include the greater community in research because this is often a big component of the problem as well as the solution to college access. In this study the community context included the analysis of the college admission offices and the LCSD's college-going culture.

The sociocultural context is comprised of factors that influence college access such as race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, first-generation status, etc. It also encompasses the byproducts of the racialized educational system such as the race-conscious admission policies, socio-racial stratification, and institutional racism. In other words, race and racism need to be central in college access research to explain the underlying social issues in college access. From

the DCAPs narrative, the sociocultural context has the most overarching influence on college access and has a vast impact on the community context and cultural habitus.

The cultural habitus represents the general perspective of the DCAPs. It represents a person's capacity to construct his/her reality. It includes the DCAPs' beliefs and perceptions as well as past experiences and current circumstances. It is also where one can organize his/her meaning-making about the world. I used the concept of the habitus to understand the groupthink of the DCAPs and how they understand college access.

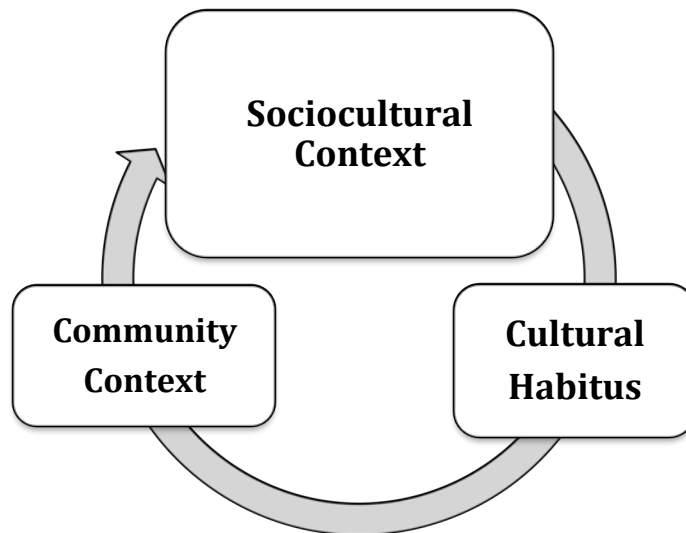


Figure 6. The Sociocultural and Community Contextual Research Process

To explain the figure, the wheels represent the constant movement and cyclical nature of sociocultural factors as well as systemic issues in education, especially college admissions. The first wheel is the sociocultural context wheel. It is the largest because it is the most all-encompassing component of researching college access. In other words, race/ethnicity matters in most aspects of college access from cultural capital and the college access gap to college readiness and college-going culture. Therefore, it also drives the other wheels.

The community context and cultural habitus are the same size and move at the same time since they have the same affects on college access. The community context represents external factors such as the school district's college-going culture as well as the college access gap. The cultural habitus represents the internal factors such as the DCAP's professional role/duties and personal beliefs about college access.



Figure 7. The Sociocultural Contextual College Access Model

Similar to Perna's (2006) Integrated College Access Model, I utilize an ecological model to show how internal (i.e. cultural habitus) and external sociocultural factors (i.e. community context, racial/ethnic racial identity, and institutional racism) impact the DCAPs work to promote college access. There is also external and internal locus of control within the community context layer (Moses, 2006). For example, LCSD's college-going culture would represent an external locus of control while the student's relationship with a DCAP is an example of internal locus of control. Again, there is a need for researching the sociocultural and community context as well as stakeholders' cultural habitus to understand college access.

In addition, the current study furthers Tierney's (1999) cultural integrity model to warrant analysis of higher education and particularly equity initiatives such as diversity recruitment. I assessed the DCAPs in terms of not only their ability to be a cultural capital resource but also the cultural integrity of their diversity recruitment in the local urban community. By institutions accommodating a cultural view, Tierney (1999, p. 85) states, "...marginalized communities should find ways to have their cultural backgrounds affirmed and honored on their respective campuses." Therefore, the habitus of diversity stakeholders such as DCAPs, was explored through understanding how college admissions impact socio-cultural factors and vice versa. The DCAPs role is understood within the complex reality of race/ethnicity as capital gatekeepers, gatekeeper advocates, and critical advocates.

8.4.5 Theoretical Discussion of Building a Sociocultural Contextual College Access Model

Overall, a cultural approach is most effective to study college access. Sociologists assert that a cultural change concerning the college-going attitudes, beliefs, expectations, knowledge, behaviors, etc. is important if students are to go to college (Freeman, 1997; McClafferty et al., 2002; Perna, 2000, 2006; Tierney, 1999; Tierney & Hagerdon, 2002; Tierney & Jun, 2001). By drawing on constructs from sociological approaches, a good, working conceptual model generates a more comprehensive understanding of the ecological model of college access for urban, low-income, first-generation, and/or students of color. Being that my focus is on the college access of urban underrepresented students of color, I limited my review of models that focus on race/ethnicity as socio-cultural constructs that impact student's college access.

Sociocultural models discuss how cultural systems and beliefs influence a student's college choice. This is particularly salient for students from urban underrepresented racial/ethnic

groups such as African Americans. More importantly, culture (at varying levels such as the individual, school, and community) affects how a student access' college (such as college knowledge and college choice). In other words, culture, race, ethnicity, SES, etc. matters. For example, measures of cultural capital played a more important role in explaining the college enrollment decisions of African-Americans and Latino/a than White American students (Perna, 2000). Perna (2006) illustrated that Black/African-American and Latino/a American students may be disadvantaged if they are unable to obtain relevant information and cultural capital from their immediate family, school, or community context.

The key strength of a sociocultural college access conceptual model is the assumption that the pattern of educational attainment is not universal but varies across racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups (Perna, 2006). This approach addresses the concern raised by some scholars that practices and policies will not effectively close gaps in student college choice without recognizing the socio-cultural reality of racial/ethnic groups (Freeman, 1997; Tierney, 1999; Tierney & Jun, 2001; Tierney & Hagerdon, 2002). Perna (2000) found that measures of social and cultural capital improved the explanatory power of a traditional econometric model of college enrollment that included measures of gender, race, financial resources, and academic preparation and achievement. Moreover, measures of cultural and social capital played a relatively more important role in explaining the college enrollment decisions of African Americans and Latino/a than of White American students (Perna, 2000). Research states that African American and Latino students may be disadvantaged if they are unable to obtain relevant information from their immediate family, school, or community context (Perna, 2006, p. 108).

Importantly, the sociocultural transfers the problem of educational inequity from the student to the institution and identifies cultural background as an essential element for college

access and success (Tierney, 1999). Other than subscribing to Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) and Bourdieu's (1986) habitus concept is a static and permanent condition, sociocultural models unearth the conditions for creating fluidic capital creation that in turn gets students into college, and ultimately, retains them. The current research study of college access serves to develop new sociocultural viewpoints of cultural capital theory to substantiate the consideration of race/ethnicity in college admissions. There is still a crucial need for innovative research models to promote college access among underrepresented racial/ethnic minority students.

In order to better help underrepresented students of color transition to college, it is important for stakeholders to understand as Swanson et al. (2002, p. 4) explain, "The multifaceted, ecoculturally linked character of human development. This requires understanding how social, political, cultural, and historical contexts interact with and influence identity formation. Identity lays the foundation for how youths view themselves and their future prospects." In other words, communities of color such as the DCAPs have complex identities, which are a matrix of race, socio-economic status, educational background, and/or urban residence. Inevitably, this diverse matrix impacts college access. This research study shows that DCAPs are part of this ecological model and aware of these challenges and strengths in recruiting underrepresented students of color for college.

8.5 SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

The overview of the study gives a comprehensive description of the overarching themes in the DCAPs' narrative. The themes show the complexity of college access with multiple stakeholders and multi-contextual layers. Within the field of higher education, there is growing

concern over the educational inequality in college access. To address the current college access gap, most P-12 and college/university staff/faculty, like DCAPs, have to address the persistent social inequities in education. This is most evident in the result of low numbers of matriculation, persistence, and graduation of students from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups.

By recognizing the multiple layers of context, including higher education, the current study explored the DCAPs' perspectives of the college access gap. In addition, the research shows that DCAPs are aware of the preparation and challenges to support student's postsecondary goals. The DCAPs are an authority and knowledgeable about the local district's context as well as sharing a counter-narrative to higher education's diversity mission. The current analysis advances the importance of promoting college preparation in order for underrepresented students of color' to gain college enrollment. Also, without addressing the college access gap, colleges/universities will continue to struggle to promote diversity on their campuses.

From the DCAPs narratives as well as the structures of the educational capitalistic enterprise, it is important to build educational capital and college access through college knowledge. Meyer et al. (2008, p. 210) also discuss that:

All of these kinds of effects are built into the institutional structure of modern societies. They are cultural and organizational rules, whose implications and consequences affect individual life courses independent of the properties of the individuals involved.

In other words, the external views of college access frames higher education, while higher education also frames the views of college access. Drawing on cultural capital theory generates a comprehensive understanding of college preparation as cultural capital. CRT provided an extra lens to analyze the DCAPs narrative for the racial code-words to present race-conscious admission policies and practices in a different light.

The DCAPs' recommend creating a good college-going culture. This requires long-term solutions such as a partnerships between LCSD, city government, community organizations, and local colleges/universities to develop a plan to help students transition from high school to college and, more importantly, post-graduation goals. For example, higher education institutions can align standards and share the work of college counseling. An effective college transition of collaboration constitutes communication, consistency, and partnerships. This translates to postsecondary institutions working with high schools to build a good college-going culture. School-college partnerships should seek to smooth the transition to college with objectives to improve interpersonal skills, increase academic readiness, and expand educational options (Adelman, 1999, 2002; Gladieux & Swail 2000; Milem et al. 2005; Swail & Perna 2002; Tierney & Jun 2001; Tierney & Hagedorn 2002; Venezia et al. 2003). There are also other ways in which higher education can effectively promote college access by creating a comprehensive college access system; addressing the socio-racial stratification and institutional racism; empowering DCAPs to be cultural critics and advocates; developing culturally relevant admission strategy; and tying college access with retention efforts.

The implications indicate that although it is important to link theory with practice, practice needs to dictate research. There is little research on diversity recruitment in college access so the narrative analysis is most fitting to provide insight on higher education's impact on college access. In this case, theory and research is filtered by practice. It is important to examine how DCAPs are knowledgeable of P-12 college preparation; exemplify the educational philosophies of college-going behaviors; and engage with high schools and communities of color in college admission counseling in order to inform college access research (McDonough and Roberston, 1995). DCAPs are higher education professionals that are primarily involved in

outreach and provide substantial support to students going to college. Therefore, researching DCAPs' role is important in the discussion to promote college opportunity to all students and could be fostered to have greater impact on college access. It is my hope that the findings from the present study will inform college access research about the roles of different stakeholders in the college access gap.

8.6 LIMITATIONS

This study contains limitations that are related to common critiques of qualitative research and some are inherent in the study's research design (Marshall and Rossman, 2013). Limitations arise from the restricted sample size, researcher bias, and participants' reactivity (Marshall & Rossman, 2013).

The sample and method of sampling could be more strategic; however, this was not the goal of the study. The sample was purposeful because I felt that this group of DCAPs were knowledgeable about college access issues and was extensively involved in college access initiatives. The size of my data set is small but deep with transcripts from demographic questionnaires, focus groups, and interviews. Also, due to the work nature of DCAPs, I was limited by their schedule as well as turnover issues. I was able to create a limited snapshot of diversity recruitment as a component of college access in the current time and context.

Another limitation of this study is the issue of researcher subjectivity and bias regarding the researcher's own participation as a diversity college admission professional (DCAP) for 9 years. In this study, the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee was collegial and the context was familiar to both parties. The open dialogue approach to interviewing provided a

comfortable emic approach to this research. However, an overall concern is researcher bias in framing the assumption, interests, views, and needs concerning the study's participants. The participants know the researcher; therefore, their responses may have been influenced or affected.

In my methodology, I am trying to achieve credibility, dependability, and confirmability, by using a semi-structure in data collection and analysis (Lincoln, 1995). However, interpretive inquiry also requires flexibility for voice, community, reciprocity, and authenticity (Lincoln, 1995). Recognizing the limitations, I took the following measures. First, in order to assuage researcher bias, I acknowledge my research agenda throughout the study and stated my assumptions in the first chapter and limitations in the third. In addition, coding themes were reviewed by advisors and colleagues. To address the problem of participant reactivity, the researchers continued to reflect on how and in what ways they might be influencing participants. I involved participants in the data collection and analysis process through reviewing the coding themes. I also tried to limit the threats to validity by using a detailed data audit trail, thick descriptions such as the DCAP profiles, triangulation with LCSD descriptive statistics, and reporting negative and/or deviant cases. Furthermore, I made a conscious attempt to create an environment that was conducive to honest and open dialogue. Experience as a qualitative researcher was helpful in this regard.

8.7 CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

There are limitations in the narrow scope of this study to one urban metro city. Yet, due to the narrowness in this research, I was able to concentrate on specific themes in the DCAPs'

views of college preparation. I will be able to use this exploratory study to uncover some underlying factors in LCSD's college-going culture. Therefore, attributing to some reasons for the college access gap. Also, the narrow scope allotted for a clear connection between the DCAPs' perspectives and previous research. The advantages and disadvantages in this current qualitative inquiry will aid in furthering research on the DCAPs' role in college access. Future qualitative research with DCAPs will enhance the data set.

For further research prospects, I would like to interview select college admission professionals from each institution type (Small Private Colleges, Public Research University, etc.) as well as cultural habitus group (Capital Gatekeeper, Critical Advocates, and Gatekeeper Advocates). This way I could better understand the DCAPs' culture to give context to their perspective and the themes from the current research study. This will lead to better authenticity in this line of research. I could also further assess higher education context's impact on college access.

In the future, I would further discuss the concept of intersectionality in college access. Additional research is needed to uncover how intersections between identity, power, structural and cultural forces facilitate the DCAPs' role and duties in college admissions. Ultimately, this impacts opportunity and educational pathways for underrepresented students of color. In addition, I would show how college access research has evolved to contribute to the new cultural politics of difference and community consciousness. The advantages and disadvantages in this qualitative study will aid in furthering college access theoretical framework and qualitative research design to address the issues concerning the college access gap.

8.8 CONCLUSION

The narratives generated from this research show that the topic of college access is a serious one that is lived everyday by the DCAPs. The greatest challenge in the eyes of the DCAPs is the poor college-going culture and lack of college knowledge. Overall, students are academically, socially, emotionally, and financially not prepared to go to college. It affects the lives of many local city school students and families. Yet, there are many more obstacles in the P-16 school system that impede promoting college access outside of the student's and even school's control. Colleges/universities also impacts college access by the socio-racial stratification in local diversity recruitment. It is another form of socio-racial stratification of cultural capital in the P-16 educational system. These challenges are often a result of the de facto socio-racial stratification in diversity recruitment. The narratives give insight on the disparities in college access, especially cultural capital in the form of the DCAPs and college knowledge.

Throughout this study, socio-racial stratification is apparent from how the DCAPs discuss LCSD's college-going culture. They feel that there is potential and they have good relationships with some of LCSD's staff, faculty, and students. However, they feel that the overall college-going culture is low, particularly schools with predominately African American students. The DCAPs viewpoints correspond to Meyer et al.'s (2008, p. 209) point that, "the effects on individual outcomes is where education is itself stratified and categorically demarcated." Many of the DCAPs discussed the polarization among LCSD's schools that had satisfactory or poor college-going culture.

So any educational level, sector, office, or classroom, including diversity recruitment, is racially stratified because it is not only a factor but also a product of the status quo. In other words, diversity recruitment is influenced by enrollment management strategies to increase the

number of underrepresented students of color and campus diversity. Inadvertently, it also shapes college admissions policy that includes community outreach and differentiates from other forms of diversity recruitment.

Current studies are researching college-going in order to address the college access gap. Yet, studies are failing to look at every angle of the problem including college admissions. The current study is analyzing external factors such as colleges/universities' localized diversity recruitment that impact social and cultural contexts that affect students of color.

Although a student's cultural background is often considered a risk, it could become an asset in college admissions. The inequities illustrated here should serve as a catalyst for new ideas for promoting college access through college admissions. The theories of collective identity and Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth could change the social and cultural dynamics of educational opportunity such as college access. Colleges/universities are seen as an important part of our democracy. This could lead to widespread shifts in public understanding of merit, racial/ethnic diversity, and college access. More importantly, ideas to sustain community cultural wealth stem from the ground up, rather than top-down.

Therefore, research could also promote culturally relevant research to effectively analyze the educational experiences of underrepresented students of color, especially African American (Fisher, 2007; Rumberger & Thomas, 2000; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999). Using this approach engages multiple constituencies to reexamine the racial stratification in education and the meaning of college access. Furthermore, through multi-contextual models such as Perna's (2006) integrated college access model and field-level analyses, it is possible to examine college admissions impact on cultural contexts such race/ethnicity as well as community contexts including family and schools.

In the 21st century, individuals will need some form of postsecondary education and/or training. If access to college is to increase, then concerted action should occur in a way that is not readily apparent today (Tierney, 2005). Therefore, the manner in which recruitment activities and policies are done will have changed.

College access is one of the deeper issues in education that the U.S. needs to address in order to decrease the opportunity gaps between underrepresented students of color and their affluent White American peers. There needs to be a plan to understand all types of cultural capital in higher education to allow diversity and access. The condition of college access and educational equity are the best indicators of the overall efficiency and equity of the nation's higher education system.

Again, opportunity is all but ruled out for increasing numbers of racial/ethnic underrepresented students at record percentages. Therefore, it is important to analyze the relationship between race, cultural capital, and college access in order to build a conceptual framework of college-going for students of color. This requires furthering a sociological framework based on the cultural factors that impact college access. Given the importance of postsecondary education to occupational outcomes for students, college access research on higher education should be a central concern to address the college access gap of racial/ethnic minority students and overall diversity in higher education.

APPENDIX A

2015 COLLEGE SUCCESS 101 NARRATIVE



COLLEGE SUCCESS 101

College Success 101 (CS101) summit is a one-day event designed to aid in preparing high school sophomores and juniors throughout the [local] area for the college admission process.

Each year, College Success 101 creates unique opportunities and provides an enriching experience for more than 100 high school students who have yet to reach their full potential, but are highly motivated to go to college. Students are given information on the college search process, admission criteria, financial aid and scholarships, and more. Our college fair offers access to admission representatives from the Western Pennsylvania area. This past year, representatives from nearly 32 colleges and universities were in attendance.

Kathryn Bethea

Vision/Mission

The College Success 101 is a collaborative of college admission counselors and community leaders who want to promote the college-going culture in the urban metro area.

Our vision is to empower students to be college and career ready in order to succeed in the city and today's global market.

Our purpose is to be a community forum to help students' college and career readiness, access, and success.

College and career readiness is not necessarily learned in school, which is focused on academic skills, so it is our responsibility as the community to ensure that our students have a holistic education for a successful future.

History and Organizational Structure

We started hosting College Success 101 after discussions at the 1998 CAC conference to implement a day of college advising for students in the state's urban metro areas. The first CS101 event was held in 1999. Over the years, we have impacted about 200 students every year.

The event is co-sponsored by 13 different colleges, universities, and community organizations to make up the College Success 101 Collaborative. We have four committees: Logistics & Operations, PR/Marketing, Registration, Programs, and College Fair.

Project Description and Timeline

In order to meet our objectives, we hold a wrap-up at the end of May to plan for the future year. We begin monthly meetings in January that last until May.

The schedule includes busing students from their high school to host college/university. Breakfast is provided and we begin the day with an opening speech from a local community leader. Then students break out to different program sessions which include: Financial Aid, What Colleges Should I Apply to?, Prepare for College by Marketing Your Abilities, and Solving the Mystery of Majors. After the sessions students will go to lunch and then attend a college fair. At the end of the day students will get back on their bus to go back to their respective high schools.

After the event, the students' registrations are collected and released to all 32 colleges that attended the college fair so that students are contacted about possible college events and activities.

Targeted Population

Our targeted population comprises of underrepresented students who are qualified to graduate from high school and go to college but they lack the information, support, and money. Sophomore or junior class status, local student, grade point average of 2.0 or above, and desires to go to college directly after high school. We recommend that students have a resume, unofficial transcript, and dress professionally.

The Goals of College Success 101:

Since it is a one-day conference, our strategic priority is to serve as a catalyst for students to consider their future options after high school. We want students to meet their aspirations by raising their expectations that they can go to college. We hope to be a reference for students to take college tours, ask high school counselors and college counselors questions, use internet college searches, understand financial aid, learn to write resumes, etc.

- Invite all local Public High School students for a day at college
- Inspire students to go to college even if they struggle academically
- Provide student's an opportunity to be professional
- Provide information about the numerous college opportunities in the area
- Expose students to a college/university campus
- Present information about the college admission and financial aid process
- Be a resource for high school counselors about college admission
- Expose students to a college fair
- Provide transportation and meals for the day
- Provide educational incentives such as college gift prizes, folder with college materials, and commemorative t-shirt

Objectives

- To fulfill our responsibilities as college admission counselors and community members to the greater public
- Empower students to aspire to college
- To be a resource to high school counselors and [LCSD] on college admission and financial aid
- Build partnerships with local colleges/universities and community organizations

Impact on the Community and Evaluation

We have been sustainable for the past 17 years because we were entirely funded by the college/university partners. We hope to receive funding so that we can secure our sustainability and further help local public school students.

We plan to further our efforts through developing a forum to provide services to schools, students, and families throughout the year. We also hope to host other events and workshops. We would re-apply every year for grants to fund our efforts.

We do conduct evaluations based on a rudimentary nine question survey from students to evaluate each session, the opening remarks, lunch, transportation, registration, and college fair. We also collect demographic information from the student's registration. We receive anecdotal community feedback from high school counselors and volunteers. From the survey results and feedback of the past two years, we continue to have a successful event with students rating the sessions and day above average.

Please check out our Facebook page at College Success 101.

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH DESIGN PLAN

Table 1. Research Design Chart

Research Questions	Subordinate Questions	Reasoning	Information Needed	Method
What is the role of diversity college admission professionals (DCAPs) in increasing college access for urban racial/ethnic minority students?	What are the Institutional efforts to increase college access? How do race-conscious admission practices influence channeling of urban African American students to college? How are DCAPs conscious about helping students?	Create a profile of race-conscious college admissions and enrollment strategies	Institutional profiles and enrollment strategies	Interviews and focus groups

Table 1. Research Design Chart (Continued)

<p>How do DCAPs perceive the cultural capital and racialization of urban students in the college admissions process?</p>	<p>Higher education is viewed as cultural capital; so, how do DCAPs serve as cultural capital? Do DCAPs serve as capital gatekeepers or community agents? Do DCAPs use different forms of capital, racial theories, and consciousness?</p>	<p>To inquire about the impact of race and cultural capital on the college admission process</p>	<p>Forms of cultural capital (i.e. college information) Understanding of race and socio-cultural context</p>	<p>Interviews and focus groups</p>
<p>How do institutions of higher education and DCAPs connect with urban P-12 schools in order to promote college access?</p>	<p>How do CAPs interact and work as an intermediate of P-12 and higher education?</p>	<p>To inquire about the impact of college access on college readiness and college-going culture</p>	<p>Ways CAPs serve as bicultural between higher education, community, and P-12</p>	<p>Focus groups and Interviews</p>
<p>In what ways do DCAPs provide racial/ethnic students in urban school districts with social/cultural capital in the college admission process?</p>	<p>What are the background characteristics of CS101 DCAPs? Who and what are the influences on college access outreach such as CS101? What challenges and opportunities do CS101 DCAPs face?</p>	<p>To inquire about the concept of community outreach to increase college access</p>	<p>Examples of college access outreach</p>	<p>Focus Groups, Interviews and Questionnaires</p>

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Table 2. Participant Demographics Matrix

Members in italics are no longer DCAPs or in CS101

Members in bold were not involved in the focus groups but were interviewed

Members underlined were involved in focus groups but were not interviewed

<u>Pseudonym</u>	<u>Years in Admission (Current Institution)</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Institution Type</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>
<i>Frankie</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>Senior Admissions Counselor</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>African American</i>
<i>Jaune</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Admissions Counselor</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Biracial</i>
Pam	2 (2)	Admissions Counselor	Private and Public	F	African American
Mustafa	16 (1)	Associate Director of Admissions	Private and Private	M	<i>African American</i>
Feliz	4	Admissions Counselor	Private	F	White American
<i>Tyrone</i>	<i>7 (2)</i>	<i>Assistant Director of Admissions and Ethnic Minority Recruitment Coordinator</i>	<i>Public and Private</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>African American</i>
Verunike	3	Enrollment Services Specialist	Public	F	Biracial
Sasha	2	Assistant Director of Admissions and Coordinator of Multicultural Recruitment	Private	F	White American
Sly	19	Recruiter	Public	M	African American

Table 2. Participant Demographics Matrix (Continued)

Martin	25	Director of Recruitment Center	Public	M	African American
<i>Bobby</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>College Zen co-founder and former Assistant Director of Admissions</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>African American</i>
<i>Jerry</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Assistant Director of Admissions</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>White American</i>
<i>Rafael</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>Assistant Director of Admissions and Coordinator of Multicultural Recruitment</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Black</i>
<i>Adam</i>	<i>20+</i>	<i>Student Recruiter</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Black</i>

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (2014 -2015)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. For this study, I am interested in your experiences with the local urban school district and your overall perceptions. I am going to ask you a series of questions. When possible, please provide concrete examples and context. Feel free to answer in any order and if you do not have an opinion on the question asked, please feel free to pass. As stated in the consent form, I will be recording the interview and taking notes. With that, I want to assure you that everything you say will remain confidential. If for any reason you need to discontinue, please feel free to end the interview without any fear of repercussions to you.

Higher Education and College Admission Culture (RQ1)

What is the role of diversity college admission professionals (DCAPs) in increasing college access for urban racial/ethnic minority students?

1. What is your job title and how would you describe your job? What do you do in regards to urban public high school recruitment?
2. Why did you decide to work in Admissions? Why did you pursue your current job at your current college/university?
3. Describe the college admission process.
4. Based on your observations and conversations with others, how would you explain college access in the local urban area?
5. Do you feel it's important for college admission offices to engage in local urban school recruitment? Why?
6. Do you feel that it's higher education's responsibility to recruit from the local urban school district? Why?
7. Do you feel it's a college admission professional's responsibility to recruit from the local urban school district? Why?
8. Do you feel it's your responsibility to recruit from the local urban school district? Why?
9. Does your race or background influence your views on recruiting local urban racial/ethnic minority students?

- a. Why do some schools have the resources and others don't?
- b. Why is there a college access gap between African American and White American students?
- c. How would you describe Diversity CAPs? Are they different from CAPs?
- d. How actively involved are DCAPs and counselors to assist students?
- e. What information can DCAPs provide to increase college access?

CAPs Views of Urban Public School District (RQ2)

How do DCAPs perceive the cultural capital and racialization of urban students in the college admissions process?

10. Please describe your office's local recruitment. Explain? *Please give specific examples (Behaviors, activities, events, initiative, marketing).*
11. In what ways do you recruit urban racial/ethnic minority students?
12. How well do you recruit at the large and local urban school district?
13. Would you say that you have a strategy for recruiting urban racial/ethnic minority students?
14. Why do you recruit urban racial/ethnic minority students?
15. Does your college/university support local diversity recruitment? How?
16. Is local diversity recruitment considered part of your community outreach and/or diversity recruitment? Why?
17. Do you feel supported or have enough resources for local diversity recruitment by your office and supervisor?
18. How would you rank your efforts? Could your office/institution do more? How? Why?
19. How do you view your role as a diversity college admission professional when you're involved in local diversity recruitment/community outreach efforts? What about *college/university diversity initiatives?*
20. How does college-going culture affect your recruitment efforts?
21. Do you think colleges impact the local high schools' college-going culture? How? How does college admission affect college-going culture?
22. On average, how well are college admission professionals involved in college-going culture?

Diversity Recruitment Efforts (RQ3)

How do institutions of higher education and DCAPs connect with urban P-12 schools in order to promote college access?

23. How were the local community college fairs this year? How were your high school visits this year?
24. What are your views of local urban school district's college-going culture?
25. Please describe your interactions with urban high schools. Explain?
26. On average, how well do you recruit in urban high schools?
27. Please describe the college counseling of urban high schools such as the office environment, staff, etc.
28. What would you say is characteristic of your interactions with urban high schools? Students? Guidance counselors? Parents? District?
29. Can you give examples of the college-going expectations you've witnessed at urban high schools?
30. What are some of the challenges that college admission professionals have concerning

diversity recruitment? What are some of the advantages?

College Access Outreach and Recommendations (RQ4)

In what ways do DCAPs provide racial/ethnic students in urban school districts with social/cultural capital in the college admission process?

31. What is college access?
32. Do you participate in outreach and how often?
33. What is college access outreach?
34. Why do you participate in outreach? Do you like participating in outreach?
35. In what ways do you participate in outreach?
36. What current partnerships exist between your college/university and urban high schools?
Please explain.
37. Can college partnerships be made available between your college/university and urban high schools?
38. In your opinion, does the city have the capabilities to create a collaborative "community" for college-going between colleges/universities and the local urban school district?
39. In what ways would you like to participate in outreach?
40. What recommendations would you give urban counselors/teachers/staff? Urban racial/ethnic minority students? Families?
41. What recommendations would you give to other college admission professionals? Your college admission office? Your college/university?

APPENDIX E

FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL (2013)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. For this study, I am interested in your experiences with the local urban school district and your overall perceptions. I am going to ask you a series of questions. When possible, please provide concrete examples and context. The questions will stem from the discussions and theme of the meetings.

Feel free to answer in any order and if you do not have an opinion on the question asked, please feel free to pass. As stated in the consent form, I will be recording the focus groups and taking notes. With that, I want to assure you that everything you say will remain confidential and will not affect your status. If for any reason you need to discontinue the interview, please feel free to exit the group without any fear of repercussions to you.

Since we began the meeting with introductions, we can go right into the meeting as well as answering questions as we go along.

Focus Group 1 - Students (RQ3, 1a)

So far we have discussed the theme, possible speakers, and general direction for this year's program. Generally, we see a need.

1. What do you want students to get out of CS101
 - a. What messages?
 - b. How do we appeal to students?

Focus Group 2 - Community (RQ3, 1b)

So far we have discussed community partners and why partnerships are important.

2. As far as college access outreach, what's going on in the local area?
 - a. What organizations are also involved in college access?
 - b. What's the broader college-going culture?
3. Why do we need to have CS101?

Focus Group 3 - College Access Outreach (RQ4, 1a)

So far we have discussed the logistics and what is needed for this year's event but is there more

that CS101 can do?

4. Is College Success 101 enough to address college access?
 - a. Is it effective?
 - b. What can we do to improve College Success 101?
 - c. What are other possible methods?

Focus Group 4 - Students (RQ3, 1a)

Since the beginning of this meeting we have discussed the programming of the event such as who is the speaker? What are the workshops? Who are the facilitators? What brochures should we include?

5. What do students need to know?
 - a. What should be provided in College Success 101?
 - b. What workshops should we have?
 - c. What do we think they need to provide that they're not getting from school or counselor?

Focus Group 5 – College Access Outreach (RQ4, 1b)

Due to the fact that it is spring and there have been a few local events in the city, what makes College Success 101 possible?

6. What is success in college access outreach?
 - a. Why are community events unsuccessful

What do colleges/universities gain from College Success 101?

APPENDIX F

LOCAL URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOL'S COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE

QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this qualitative research. This is a demographic questionnaire to provide background information to your views on local urban public high school's college-going culture.

The purpose of this study is to research the impacts of the college-going culture for African American students and its impact on local higher education diversity recruitment efforts. I want to capture the college admission professionals' beliefs as to the nature of college access and how their actions will lead to improved college-going. The intent is to better understand the dynamics of college readiness and access. The hypothesis is that the counselors know specific factors that attribute to African American students' academic achievements, college readiness, and college access. This study is an investigation of college admission professionals' views of college-going culture.

College-going culture is creating a school environment that guides students' attitudes toward college (CollegeBoard, 2012). It is a place where opportunities to attend college is expected and encouraged for everyone. It helps all students set future plans, achieve high goals, and generate other important values such as appreciation of academics, desire to succeed, and drive to attend college to become a lifelong learner (CollegeBoard, 2012). It can begin with the smallest change, such as putting up penants in the hallways or having a designated day when faculty wear college T-shirts.

College readiness is, "Knowledge of postsecondary education history, college choice theories and policies, aspiration formation, and barriers to postsecondary enrollment and persistence (Savitz-Romer, 2012, p. 99)." College access is, "College knowledge encompasses an understanding of processes such as college admission, including curricular, testing, and application requirements; college options and choices, including the tiered nature of postsecondary education; tuition costs and the financial aid system; placement requirements,

testing, and standards; the culture of college; and the level of challenge present in college courses, including the increasing expectations of higher education (Conley, 2010, p. 58).”

Kindly, fill out the demographic information and quick survey questions to the best of your knowledge. Please answer the following questions as coherent and specific as possible. Don't answer the last page of sample focus group questions. Questions can be perceived as personal, so if at any time you feel uncomfortable, you can skip or discontinue the questionnaire. Thank you again for participating.

Please note: All information is PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

A. Age? 21 – 25 26 – 30 31 – 35 36 – 40 40 – 50 50 +

B. Gender? 1) Male 2) Female

C. Race/Ethnicity? _____

D. Where were you born? _____

E. Where do you live now? _____
How long? _____ years

F. Did you attend/graduate from local urban public schools? _____

G. What is your income: (please circle one)

10,000-30,000 30,001-50,000 50,001-70,000 70,001 or over

H. Do you attend church on a regular basis? YES / NO
What church do you attend? _____

I. Highest education? _____

J. Name of Undergraduate College: _____
Undergraduate Major/Degree? _____

K. Name of Graduate/Professional University? _____
Degree/Program? _____

L. Current Employer? _____

M. Length of employment at current job? _____

N. How long have you worked in admissions? _____

1. What do you define as college-going culture?
2. What do you define as college readiness?
3. What do you define as college access?
4. How often do you participate in college outreach activities? Weekly? _____
Monthly? _____
5. How often do you work with college prep community based organizations? Weekly? _____
Monthly? _____
6. Is there diversity recruitment at your current institution? _____
7. Does your current institution sponsor college outreach activities? _____
8. Which position/department is responsible for most of the diversity initiatives on campus _____
9. If applicable, how would you rank (1 – 10) recruitment efforts among other diversity initiatives at your institution?
10. Please list your diversity recruitment efforts and college outreach activities.

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

- What is the nature of college readiness and access activities in local urban public schools?
- What strategies are used to prepare students to be college-ready?
- What is the context of the college-going culture?
- What is the relationship between local college admission recruitment and college-going culture?

- How does the relationship between higher education and affect the college-going culture for students
- Under what conditions does college-going factors affect the local higher education diversity recruitment?
- What methods are reported as effective or ineffective by college admission professionals
- What recruitment strategies do college admission professionals use to develop college access and readiness
- How does college admission play a role in promoting diversity in higher education?
- What factors characterize successful college-going culture for African American students?
- What would be the best college access policies and/or best practices?
- What are challenges that high school students face to gain college readiness and access?
- How does diversity recruitment impact college access efforts by higher education?
- What are key practices that could use to support student college readiness and development?
- Are there any additional needs to increase college readiness?

APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Hello all!

I hope all is well and you're enjoying this hot August weather!

I'm emailing to let you know that I'm starting my research concerning College Success 101.

I am asking for your permission to be a part of this research study and I have attached the consent agreement form. If you are consenting, please email or bring to the next meeting on Sept. 12. I hope to interview all of you about your views of college-going culture. I selected this group based on their knowledge of the local urban school district's college-going, so I will ask questions to capture your expertise.

Also, please let me know you're availability in the next couple of weeks so that we can talk. I'm available most days in the afternoon and Tuesdays/Thursdays in the mornings.

The initial conversation will last about an hour and I will meet you at your respective offices. Once we've agreed on a time, I will include the interview questions in the confirmation email. In the future, there might be subsequent conversations that can take place over the phone or email.

The title of my study is "Gatekeeping or Community Outreach: Qualitative Study of Local College Admission' Perspective on College-Going Culture." I chose this title because many people think that college admission officers are gatekeepers when we are student affairs professionals who advise and counsel students about college and college choice.

Once I've completed the interviews and typed them all out (which will take place in October), I will let you review your answers to make sure that I accurately portrayed your perspective/opinions correctly. Then, I will conduct analysis and share with you my ideas of the themes within this research. Throughout the process I will ask your feedback so that I'm correctly using and analyzing the data. The product will be my dissertation but also conference and journal presentations/proposals that will help the local urban public school district's college-

going culture.

As you know I'm very passionate about this topic and enthusiastic to have my research make a difference. That's why I really appreciate your input and participation in this project.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon!

Kathryn

Recruitment Script

The purpose of this study is to research the college-going culture of the local urban public school district and its connection with local college admission recruitment efforts.

As the principal investigator, I will conduct interviews and questionnaires where you will answer questions about your opinions and knowledge as to the nature of the college-going culture of the local urban public school district. I will also conduct observations of events such as executive meetings, college fairs, College Success 101 conference, and other events.

Participation will take approximately 1 hour for each interview. The format will be a conversation with a question and answer exchange. Questionnaires may take 30 minutes to answer but there is no time required for observations.

There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. The effects of participating should be comparable to those you would experience from other conversations you have with college admission professionals. You may find the experience of talking about college access and the local urban public school district's college-going culture interesting and educational. Your input will help make recommendations to research, practice, and policymaking in college access initiatives.

Your name will be disguised, and your identifying details removed, before I turn my notes or research analysis to my advisor and dissertation committee. Also, In order to handle confidential and sensitive information, the study will use synonyms for participants and vague descriptors for colleges/universities. Your interview responses will remain on my computer indefinitely, and I may use them for other research projects in the future, but I will not give them to anyone else without disguising your name and removing your identifying details.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You may refuse to talk about any issue you do not want to talk about, or stop talking about an issue at any time. You may withdraw by informing the researcher that you no longer wish to participate.

If you have questions about this research, please contact Kathryn Bethea at kab194@pitt.edu, 412-715-6243, 5902 Posvar Hall, School of Education. You may also contact the faculty advisor supervising this work: John Weidman at weidman@pitt.edu, 412-648-1772, 5910 Posvar Hall, School of Education. To learn about your rights in this research, please contact the Human Subject Protection Advocate of the IRB at 1-866-212-2668.

By agreeing to participate in this research study, you are complying that you understand the nature and purpose of this research. Furthermore, you have been sufficiently explained to you. If requested, a copy of this script will be provided to you.

APPENDIX H

CONSENT AGREEMENT

College Access and Readiness

Please read this consent agreement carefully before agreeing to participate in this research study.

Purpose of the research:

The purpose of this study is to research the college-going culture of the local urban public school district and its connection with local college admission recruitment efforts.

What you will do in this research:

You will answer questions about your opinions and knowledge as to the nature of the college-going culture of the local urban public school district. Passive observation will also take place during meetings, college fairs, and the College Success 101 day events.

Time required:

Participation will take approximately 1 hour for each interview. The interview format will be a conversation with a question and answer exchange.

There is no time required for observations.

Risks:

There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. The effects of participating should be comparable to those you would experience from other conversations you have with college admission professionals.

Benefits:

You may find the experience of talking about college access and the the local urban public school district's college-going culture interesting and educational. Your input will help make recommendations to research, practice, and policymaking in college access initiatives.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

Your name will be disguised, and your identifying details removed, before I turn my notes or research analysis to my advisor and dissertation committee. Your interview responses will remain on my computer indefinitely, and I may use them for other research projects in the future, but I will not give them to anyone else without disguising your name and removing your identifying details.

Participation and withdrawal:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. You may refuse to talk about any issue you do not want to talk about, or stop talking about an issue at any time. You may withdraw by informing the researcher that you no longer wish to participate.

Contact:

If you have questions about this research, please contact Kathryn Bethea at kab194@pitt.edu, 412-715-6243, 5902 Posvar Hall, School of Education. You may also contact the faculty advisor supervising this work: John Weidman at weidman@pitt.edu, 412-648-1772, 5910 Posvar Hall, School of Education.

Whom to contact about your rights in this research:

Please contact the Human Subject Protection Advocate of the IRB at 1-866-212-2668.

Agreement:

The nature and purpose of this research have been sufficiently explained and I agree to participate in this study. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without incurring any penalty. A copy of this consent form will be provided to me.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name (print): _____

Certification of Informed Consent:

I certify that I have explained the nature and purpose of this research study to the above-named individual and I have discussed the potential benefits and possible risks of study participation. Any questions the individual has about this study have been answered, and we will always be available to address future questions as they arise.

Signature of Principal Investigator: _____

Name (print): _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX I

DATA MATRIX SAMPLE

Table 3. DCAPs' Views of LCSD's College-Going Culture

DCAP	Describe LCSD's college-going culture?	What are your interactions with guidance counselors?
Jaune (Capital Gatekeeper)	PPS aren't necessarily the greatest and is not the greatest system Uhm And changes need to be made And changes continually are being made But it doesn't quite seem like their the right changes	In terms of the resources being labeled I'm meaning That once you walk into the schools it clearly states guidance office, clearly states nurse's office, administrative office, whatever the case maybe Uhm but kind of moving forward in terms of the guidance counselors Uhm I mean definitely in better funded schools You see more of a presence from that guidance counselor, teacher, or whoever is there

Table 3. DCAPs' Views of LCSD's College-Going Culture (Continued)

<p>Tyrone (Critical Advocate)</p>	<p>Uh well my impressions of the college-going culture here is Uh unfortunately is really narrow I mean the mindset is really narrow Uhm when I talk to students uhm within the public school system uhm and the charter schools I mean the the vision is really narrow</p>	<p>They're kind of the gatekeepers in a sense between us and the students I mean they are the ones that round them from day one They're supposed to be the ones guiding them to You know help them get, obtain all of the information that they can</p>
<p>Verunike (Gatekeeper Advocate)</p>	<p>I think for me Coming from being a PPS student To now being the person to recruit PPS students Uhm it's very different Only because the structure Of the district itself is very different now The what it was What 5 years ago uhm when I graduated So you know the schools are a little bit different Uhm what each school looks like is a little bit different now</p>	<p>I mean honestly, I don't even know Only Because I think a great deal of even talking about college in general for students Starts with their guidance counselor Uhm only because you know every guidance counselor's goal Is to see their kids graduate And go on to you know 2 year or 4 year institution A technical school Uhm if not then just go right into The workforce</p>

APPENDIX J

8/27/13 3:39 PM



University of Pittsburgh *Institutional Review Board*

3500 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
(412) 383-1480
(412) 383-1508 (fax)
<http://www.irb.pitt.edu>

Memorandum

To: Kathryn Bethea
From: Christopher Ryan, Ph.D., Vice Chair
Date: 8/27/2013
IRB#: [PRO13070467](#)
Subject: Gatekeeping or Community Outreach: Qualitative Study of Local College Admission Officers' Perspective of Pittsburgh Public School College-Going Culture

The above-referenced project has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board. Based on the information provided, this project meets all the necessary criteria for an exemption, and is hereby designated as "exempt" under section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) Tests, surveys, interviews, observations of public behavior

Please note the following information:

- If any modifications are made to this project, use the "**Send Comments to IRB Staff**" process from the project workspace to request a review to ensure it continues to meet the exempt category.
- Upon completion of your project, be sure to finalize the project by submitting a "**Study Completed**" report from the project workspace.

Please be advised that your research study may be audited periodically by the University of Pittsburgh Research Conduct and Compliance Office.

Figure 8: IRB Approval Letter

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