VALUES, BELIEFS, AND CHARACTERISTICS
OF HISPANIC STUDENTS AT ONE URBAN
SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Laurelyn I. Gaede, B.A., M.S.S.W.
Denton, Texas
May, 1994
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The problem of this study concerns the values, beliefs, and characteristics of Hispanic students attending a large urban southwestern university. The study is qualitative and utilizes the constant comparative research method. Data is gathered from interviews with 21 Hispanic students, campus surveys, university records, a census report, and observation of campus activities.

The literature review spans organizational culture, campus culture and subcultures, as well as studies regarding Hispanic students. The findings introduce the students and report their perspectives in both their own words and in summarized themes for each research question. In summary, Hispanic students and their college experiences are diverse. They major in a wide range of disciplines, come from varying socio-economic households, have parents with varying levels of education, are surprised by various aspects of college, and they do not all speak Spanish.

Conclusions regarding Hispanic college students from this study are:
1. Hispanics do not comprise a single unified and cohesive subculture at this university.

2. If Hispanics are a part of a campus subculture, it is probably due to organized student groups on campus.

3. Hispanics do not, as a group, exhibit low self-esteem.

4. A lack of money remains an issue in many Hispanic households.

5. Increasing numbers of Hispanics are seeking higher education.

6. Hispanics represent a diverse culture just like any other population.

7. Hispanic college students are not fully integrated in mainstream campus life; yet there are few reported incidents of discrimination on campus.

Recommendations for future research include replicating this study on other campuses and with other races; studying public schools and how they encourage Hispanics to attend college; developing a questionnaire and surveying a larger number of students; investigating the climate in engineering programs for female students; and evaluating the effectiveness of campus recruitment and orientation programs for Hispanic students.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Interest in the study of organizational culture began to gain momentum in the 1970s as a result of efforts to better understand management and the improvement of efficiency in industry. Researchers realized that previous approaches such as time and motion studies or the focus on factors such as leadership or motivation were only part of the explanation for what made some companies more successful than others.

Managers and researchers increasingly have observed that the context of work activities has some impact on how hard people work, how much they enjoy their jobs, and also upon the quality of the product. This has brought about the study of organizational culture and subcultures.

However, Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv and Sanders (1990) noted that, whereas there is no consensus on the actual definition of culture, "most authors would probably agree on the following characteristics of the organizational/corporate culture construct: it is (1) holistic, (2) historically determined, (3) related to anthropopolitical concepts, (4) socially constructed, (5) soft, and (6) difficult to change" (p. 286). In regard to
Although the major interest and research activity related to culture and climate has occurred outside of higher education institutions, interest within is also expanding. Growing constituent demands for more accountability and for proof of educational improvement and the inadequacy of specific quantitative measures to reflect performance have increased faculty, administrator, and policymaker interest in developing alternative frameworks for evaluating organizational performance. The concept of culture represents a paradigm for providing a holistic perspective on organizational functioning. (p. 141)

Dandridge, Mitroff and Joyce (1980) argued that "the field of organizational behavior has mainly studied the surface structure of organizations. What has not been studied is what we prefer to call the deep structure of organizations" (p. 82). The purpose is to look beyond describing what occurs and who does it to find out what guides these decisions in terms of values and beliefs. Peterson and Spencer (1991) illustrated this by observing, "For anyone familiar with colleges or universities, culture has face validity. It is the dominant behavioral or belief
pattern that reflects or holds the institution together—a kind of 'organizational glue'" (p. 142).

Dill (1982) noted that "academic institutions possess distinctive cultures which are developed and sustained by identifiable actions of the community members" (p. 304). He also described universities as being more complex than other organizations because belief systems permeate the institution on at least three levels. These include the culture of the university, the culture of the academic profession at large, and the culture of the academic discipline.

In recent years, much attention has been paid to Japanese management techniques in the management literature. Dill (1982) made an interesting observation when he wrote, "Ironically, the organizations in Western society which most approximate the essential characteristics of Japanese firms are academic institutions. That is, they are also characterized by life-time employment, collective decision making, individual responsibility, infrequent promotion, and implicit informal evaluation "(p. 307).

Kuh and Whitt (1988) summarized their search of the literature: "No comprehensive work is available that examines how culture has been and can be used to understand college and university life" (p. 2). They also described what they call four overlapping layers of culture, one of
which is the focus of this study. The layers include (a) the external environment that surrounds the campus, (b) the institution itself, (c) the subcultures within the institution, and (d) key individual actors.

For this study, the subculture of Hispanic students at a large southwestern public university is the focus of a case study analysis. Often, in an effort to understand the whole, it is important to understand the parts. Hispanic students numbered 1,396 out of the total enrollment of about 22,667 students at this university in the spring of 1993, and they are forecast to be one of the fastest growing populations in the United States in the 1990s.

An in-depth understanding of the values and beliefs of Hispanic college students should therefore be important to college administrators who develop mission statements, make policy statements, and set the direction for college campuses in the near future.

Minority students, and, in particular Hispanic students, have historically been overlooked as potential college students. In this period of great social change, it is important to understand the uniqueness of these first generation students in order to better assist them in not only attending college, but in becoming college graduates.

In addition, there presently exists a unique opportunity in the history of this university to pursue this
particular case study. In July 1992, the fifth university president of the university began his term in office, following a president who had set the campus direction for 19 years. According to Wilkins (1983), there are three periods in which an organization's culture becomes apparent. These are: "(1) when employees change roles (become members, get promoted, change functions, and so forth), (2) when subcultures conflict or assign stereotypical characteristics to one another, and (3) when top management makes and implements decisions about company direction and styles" (p. 34). The hiring of the new president has indeed initiated changes in the university's direction and style. There has been much discussion campus-wide about mission and purpose among faculty, staff, and students. For example, one issue that has been discussed and debated since the new president's arrival includes the possibility of raising admission standards and how that could impact minority students, a major concern for many Hispanic students.

A number of researchers have selected for study the specific subculture of Hispanic college students. The preferred research method for the bulk of these studies is the use of surveys or questionnaires. Some of the instruments used include Rokeach's Value Survey (Spoto, 1978); the Cultural Affinity Scale (Domenech, 1977); the Institutional Goals Inventory (Rodriguez, 1984); High School
and Beyond (Hahn, 1990; Urahn, 1989; Van Melis-Wright, 1988; the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Kithcart, 1991); the Cultural Lifestyle Inventory (Ernst, 1991); the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (Sapp, 1991); the Productivity Environmental Preference Survey (Rossman, 1985); the Nelson-Denny Reading Test (Lopez, 1981; Rossman, 1985); the Tennessee Self Concept Scale (Graves, 1979; Maciel de Villarroel, 1986); the College and University Environment Scales (Ramirez, 1984); the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (Markline, 1980); the Assessment of Career Decision Making, the Career Maturity Inventory-Attitude Scale and the Career Decision Making Questionnaire (Martinez, 1980); the Chicano Cultural Acceptance Survey (Romero, 1981), College Student Questionnaire (Faehner, 1980); the 16 PF Questionnaire (Lujan, 1980); the Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status and the Measure of Acculturation (Telles, 1983); the Work and Family Orientation Questionnaire and the Student Role Stress Questionnaire (Lovato, 1981); the Basic English Essentials Test (Barrera, 1981); the Coping Response Inventory-College Student Form (Mendoza, 1980); the Davis Reading Test, the Verbal Similarities Test and Wechsler Adult Intelligence Test (Moran, 1981), and the Comfortable Interpersonal Distance Scale (Fason, 1981).
Many of these studies focus their interest on self-esteem, self-concept, English reading ability, family influence, cultural differences, study skills, discrimination, or stress, as well as factors that affect retention, achievement, or career choice. Each of these studies succeed in telling part of the story about how Hispanic students experience college. Hispanic students have clearly been studied, but primarily through the use of single-faceted, quantitative methods.

De los Santos (1972) described the dearth of ethnographic or qualitative research: "After intensive search, the author has not located a single dissertation written in the United States about the higher education needs and problems of Mexican Americans" (p. 32). Attinasi (1986) explained that, in order to fully understand the nature of persistence decisions by Hispanic college students, "what is needed then is a naturalistic descriptive study guided by a research perspective that emphasizes the insider's point of view" (p. 8). Murray (1972) described the result of this gap in the literature: "In order to provide administrators with information necessary for intelligent planning, a greater understanding of the differences which exist between student subcultures should be acquired" (p. 3).
Statement of Problem

The problem of this study concerns the values and beliefs of Hispanic students attending a large urban southwestern public university.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the college culture experience of Hispanic students. Attempts are made to identify their problems, their expectations, the surprises they experience, and the factors that are helping or hindering their quest toward graduation.

Research Questions

The following questions are addressed in this study:

1. How did the students decide to go to college?
2. How have their career goals changed since they came to college?
3. What do students hear about college before they arrive on campus?
4. What surprises do the students experience in college?
5. How does the family affect their success in college?
6. What has helped the students to succeed in college?
7. What has impeded the students' success in college?
8. How would these students describe this campus to their friends?

9. What problems have the students faced in college and how have they resolved them?

10. What areas do the students still have questions about in terms of succeeding to graduation?

11. How does being Hispanic make their college experience different from that of other nationalities?

12. What could be done by the campus administration to help a greater number of Hispanic students to graduate?

Delimitation

This study is limited to the study of Hispanic students on one university campus. Although there are endless aspects of culture that could be addressed, this analysis focuses primarily on the college experiences and values of Hispanic students from each student's own perspective. The literature indicates that ethnographic research involves a great deal of interpretation and subjectivity; therefore each researcher studying the same subcultures might draw different conclusions. Finally, in undertaking this study, the researcher has both the advantage and disadvantage of not being Hispanic. The advantage can be objectivity, as one who is an outsider to the ethnic culture. The disadvantage could be that of misinterpretation of the
unfamiliar and culturally bound understandings that people of the same culture share.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

An **artifact** is "a material object manufactured by people to facilitate culturally expressive activities" (Chatman, 1989, p. 6).

*Socialization* is "cultural learning, the acquisition of values, knowledge, attributes, skills, and expectations appropriate to a particular culture" (Pace & Stern, 1958, p. 38.).

A **rite** is a "relatively elaborate, dramatic, planned set of activities that combines various forms of cultural expressions and that often has both practical and expressive consequences" (Chatman, 1989, p. 6).

A **ritual** is "a standardized, detailed set of techniques and behaviors that manages anxieties but seldom produces intended practical consequences of any importance" (Chatman, 1989, p. 6).

A **myth** is "a dramatic narrative of imagined events, usually used to explain origins or transformations of something. Also, an unquestioned belief about the practical benefits of certain techniques and behaviors that is not supported by demonstrated facts" (Chatman, 1989, p. 6).
A **folktale** is "a completely fictional narrative" (Chatman, 1989, p. 6).

A **logo** is "an externalized, visible, and concrete representation, standing for the 'symbolic image' (unique identity) of the whole organization" (Dandridge, Mitroff, & Joyce, 1980, p. 80).

A **legend** is "a handed-down narrative of some wonderful event that has a historical basis but has been embellished with fictional details" (Chatman, 1989, p. 6).

A **story** is "a narrative based on true events—often a combination of truth and fiction" (Chatman, 1989, p. 6).

A **saga** is "an historical narrative describing (usually in heroic terms) the unique accomplishments of a group and its leader" (Chatman, 1989, p. 6).

**Symbols** are "words, gestures, pictures or objects that carry a particular meaning within a culture" (Chatman, 1989, p. 6).

**Idiographic research** is "individual-centered, with naturalistic environmental contexts and qualitative methodologies" (Luthans & Davis, 1982, p. 380).

**Culture** is defined as follows:

a social or normative glue, based on shared values and beliefs, that holds organizations together and serves four general purposes: (1) it conveys a sense of identity; (2) it facilitates commitment to an entity,
such as the college or peer group, other than self; (3) it enhances the stability of the group's social system; and, (4) it is a sense-making device that guides and shapes behavior. In addition, the culture of a college or university defines, identifies and legitimates authority in educational settings. (Pace & Stern, 1958, p. 10).

A subculture is "a normative-value held by some group of persons who are in persisting interaction, who transmit the norms and values to newcomers by some communicational process and who exercise some sort of social control to ensure conformity to norms" (Bolton & Kammeyer, 1972, p. 381).

Summary

Whereas organizational culture has been extensively researched, the study of campus culture remains as new territory to be explored. College campuses are complex and multi-faceted environments that do not lend themselves easily to study and generalization. College graduates are not the only product of universities, and the commitment to free speech and scientific inquiry encourages faculty and students to advance in new directions instead of rallying for a single cause or approach. This makes it difficult to identify a common core of values across an entire campus community. For instance, one might find a different culture
in the school of liberal arts as compared to the school of engineering. This points to the importance of studying campuses by understanding each subculture.

Hispanic college students have been selected for this study because they represent a rapidly growing population in the United States and because previous studies have focused on only narrow segments of their college experience. This study seeks a more in-depth understanding of how Hispanic students experience college as viewed by the individual student. There are no a priori hypotheses, and interviews were conducted with the intent of letting the students tell their stories. General topics were selected to offer some structure to the conversations, but flexibility was incorporated to allow the students to initiate topics and to elaborate on areas of importance to them.

Although qualitative research is a respected mode of inquiry and is often recommended for studying culture, to date few studies cited in the literature about campus culture or Hispanic college students use this method. Although case studies are often criticized for their lack of generalizability to other groups or other campuses, an effort has been made here to compare the results of the interviews and values identified in this study to the results from previous studies. This comparison can serve to evaluate how similar this student population is to others.
who have been studied and to pose hypotheses for future research based on either the similarities or the differences.

Because this study incorporates an understanding of Hispanic college students and their college experience, the corresponding research and literature with which to compare the results includes studies about Hispanic college students, organizational culture, campus culture and the characteristics of subcultures. Chapter 2 provides a discussion and summary of the literature on these topics.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter begins with a discussion of the broad field of organizational culture, followed by a survey of research on campus culture and subcultures, and finally narrowing to studies about Hispanic college students. It also includes related theory and a critique of the available research.

Studies on Organizational Culture

Geertz (1973) is one of the most often cited authors on the topic of organizational culture. In The Interpretation of Culture, he promoted ethnography, thick description, and interpretive anthropology. He claimed that the essential task is not to generalize across cases but, rather, to generalize within them.

To complicate the issue even further, over 30 years ago, Kroeber and Kluckhorn (1952) reported 164 different definitions of culture. These reports indicate that there is a need for in-depth case study approaches to analyzing campus life in order to find ways to describe the uniqueness of each environment. There are several advantages in being able to describe the uniqueness of a campus culture. Examples include (a) better marketing to prospective
students and faculty, (b) better informed strategic planning once the attributes and deficits are known, (c) an opportunity to evaluate whether what you have is what you want, (d) a framework for understanding the processes and politics of everyday activity, and (e) an idea concerning how to go about changing things.

Kuh and Whitt (1988) combined the definitions of culture by various authors to create what they considered to be a more multi-dimensional or complete definition. Their concept was that culture provides contextual clues that are often needed to understand the behaviors, events, and statements of members of a group. Culture also reinforces stability and the status quo through the socialization of new members.

Hoy and Miskel (1987) described organizational culture as "another attempt to get at the feel, sense, atmosphere, character or image of an organization. It encompasses many of the earlier notions of informal organization, norms, values, ideologies and emergent systems" (p. 246).

Tierney (1988) wrote that "an organization's culture is reflected in what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in doing it. It concerns decisions, actions, and communication both on an instrumental and a symbolic level" (p. 3).
Other research efforts have focused on the person-situation interaction in regard to culture, whereas others have paid attention to the significance of rites, rituals, ceremonies, folktales, stories, myths, and sagas. Many disciplines have joined the effort to study organizational culture, including, among others, social psychology, sociology, anthropology, and organizational behavior.

The person-interaction perspective has its roots in the 1936 work of Kurt Lewin. He described behavior as a function of the interaction of the person and the environment (Owen, 1981).

The significance of the person-situation fit to the study of campus culture is that, if the underlying values on a campus and how students perceive them can be identified, then areas of inconsistency can be corrected, and others can be reinforced. Until one can describe the nuances of a culture, one cannot know whether the culture or subcultures are reinforcing the mission, or whether, in some ways, they may be undermining it.

Jones (1983) studied the socialization process of newcomers in an organization from an interactionist perspective. The two factors that determine how well a newcomer adjusts to a new group are the products of their
reactions to the group and its norms as well as the group's reactions to the newcomer's behavior.

The study of subcultures is another method used to get a feel for the whole from the sum of its parts. A subculture is a group that holds a normative value system that is different from the parent culture; that it transmits this value system to newcomers through social control in an effort to ensure conformity to norms (Bolton & Kammeyer, 1972).

Campus Culture and Subcultures

A number of researchers have also attempted to create taxonomies for student subcultures on campus. Clark and Trow (1966) noted that students are usually either oriented toward vocational, academic, collegiate, or nonconformist interests. Feldman and Newcomb (1969) listed scholars, creative individualists, wild ones, political activists, social groups, and leaders as the primary campus subcultures. Katchadourian and Boli (1985) wrote that students are either intellectuals, strivers, careerists, or unconnected individuals.

Some of these lists have similar groupings, but each is different enough from one another that there appears to be no consensus among researchers. For this reason, the study of subcultures is indicated in order to better understand
this aspect of campus life and the contribution to its overall campus culture.

Siehl and Martin (1984) identified three general types of subcultures: enhancing, orthogonal, and countercultures. Enhancing subcultures are those in which the assumptions, values, and beliefs of the subgroup are compatible with or sometimes stronger than those in the dominant culture. Orthogonal subcultures accept some of the core assumptions of the dominant culture, but also have some of their own that are different. Countercultures pose a direct threat to the values of the institution.

Gordon (1970) described subcultures: "a world within a world" (p. 33). He is more thorough in the following definition of a subculture:

a sub-division of a national culture, composed of a combination of factorable social situations such as class, status, ethnic background, regional and rural or urban residence, and religious affiliation, but forming in their combination a functioning unity which has an integrated impact on the participating individuals. (p. 32)

Hispanic students, according to this definition, should qualify as a subculture on a college campus.

Cohen (1970) observed that subcultures often form among people who share common problems. These problems, he says,
come from perceptions based on one's frame of reference or from the situations one faces. Also, these problems are solved by changes in either the frame of reference, the situation, or a combination of the two.

Cohen (1970) described the cultural process as occurring when a group validates and rewards a person's values, which causes the interaction between the person and the group to increase. As this occurs, the person often experiences hostility from people outside the group, which in turn reinforces cooperation between the person and the in-group members. The longer this occurs, the more separateness is created. The result is that status within a group is often accompanied by loss of status outside of the group. Cohen (1970) noted that "who associates with whom is partly a matter of 'shopping around' and finding kindred souls" (p. 105).

Yinger (1970) identified a number of ways the term subculture is used. These include ethnic enclave, regional or friendship group; a contraculture; or systems of groups smaller than a society. The way one can tell if a group may be considered a subculture is if it has norms that set it apart from the larger society.

Gordon (1970) used the word subsociety instead of subculture and focused on ethnic groupings of people. He wrote:
Within the ethnic group there develops a network of organizations and informal social relationships which permits and encourages the members of the ethnic group to remain within the confines of the group for all of their primary relationships and some of their secondary relationships throughout all the stages of the life cycle. (p. 153)

These relationships can include cliques, a fraternity, a church, a spouse, a neighborhood, a rest home and even a cemetery.

Gordon (1970) identified three functions of subsocieties or ethnic groups. They can serve as a source of self-identification, as a network of groups and institutions to take care of personal needs throughout the life cycle, and as a frame of reference or set of cultural norms for guiding behavior.

Gordon (1970) also introduced the importance of the concept of social class to how people select which groups to join. He pointed out that, within ethnic groups, people often seek out the company of those who are from the same social class as themselves. He described his concept of historical identification as being the common background or history that people having the same ethnicity share. He described his concept of participational identification as the shared set of values and behaviors that people have in
common who are from the same social class. Gordon used the term *ethclass* as "the intersection of the vertical stratifications of ethnicity with the horizontal stratifications of social class" (p. 160). In other words it is a natural tendency for people to form subcultures along the lines of shared ethnicity and social class.

One term that is often used when referring to subcultures is *socialization*. Louis (1980) described organizational socialization as the process in which people figure out what behaviors, values, and abilities are expected of them in order to assume a role and become a member of an organization. There are a number of ways for people to become socialized on a university campus. Some examples of this might include (a) expectations outlined in a professor's syllabus; (b) peer pressure from friends to join in certain activities and not in others; (c) guidelines stated in campus policy manuals; and (d) ideas communicated by the media, as well as countless other sources that communicate campus norms.

According to Kilmann, Saxton, Serpa et al. (1985), socialization is the process of learning a new culture; and this process happens primarily through two interactive mechanisms. One of these methods includes anxiety and pain reduction or what they call the *social trauma model*. New members are often uncertain about how things are done in a
new group, and they watch closely to identify patterns and ways to predict what is appropriate either to do or not to do. The second method is positive reward and reinforcement by the group or the success model. New members watch to see who is rewarded for what in order to improve their chances for acceptance and positive response from others.

In Ouchi's (1981) often-cited book, *Theory Z*, he observed the following:

Organizational culture consists of a set of symbols, ceremonies, and myths that communicate the underlying values and beliefs of that organization to its employees. These rituals put flesh on what would otherwise be sparse and abstract ideas, bringing them to life in a way that has meaning and impact for a new employee. (p. 41-42)

The significance of this observation to this study is that it is important to know that what groups do as well as what they say is important. Ouchi (1981) also stated, "The only way to influence behavior is to change the culture. A culture changes slowly because its values reach deeply and integrate into a consistent network of beliefs that tends to maintain the status quo" (p. 89). Maintaining the status quo is often the basis for a group's deciding which behaviors of its members it will reinforce or sanction.
According to several authors, the practices that express meaning include rites, ceremonials, rituals, myths, sagas, legends, stories, folktales, symbols, language, gestures, physical setting, and artifacts. Researchers can study these forms to analyze and discern what is important to the people of any given culture. Efforts are made in this study to look for these practices among Hispanic students.

Trice and Beyer (1984) described culture as having two basic components: "its substance, or the networks of meanings contained in its ideologies, norms and values; and . . . its forms, or the practices expressed, affirmed and communicated to members" (p. 654).

Sathe (1983) wrote that "the point is to distill from the 'laundry list' of shared things, shared sayings, shared doings and shared feelings (that is, from the manifestations of the culture) a much shorter list of important shared understandings (that is the culture's content)" (p. 7.). These sharings work together to influence decision-making, levels of cooperation and commitment, as well as the interpretations of messages are interpreted among members. A significant part of the research method of this study involves looking for commonalities among the students studied.
Trice and Beyer (1984) described how various forms relate to each other.

In performing the activities of a rite or ceremonial, people make use of other cultural forms—certain customary language, gestures, ritualized behaviors, artifacts, other symbols, and settings—to heighten the expression of shared meanings appropriate to the occasion. Often these shared meanings also are conveyed through myths, sagas, legends, or other stories associated with the occasion. (p. 654)

This description shows culture as both a product and a process and the methodology of this study is designed to try to capture the essence of both.

Rites and ceremonials are easy to identify because they usually "involve (1) relatively elaborate and planned sets of activities, (2) carried out through social interactions, (3) usually for the benefits of an audience, (4) with multiple social consequences" (Trice & Beyer, 1984, p. 655). This kind of definition has been helpful for anthropologists in sorting out rites from ordinary group activities.

Dandridge, Mitroff and Joyce (1980) discussed the term organizational symbolism as follows:

[It] refers to those aspects of an organization that its members use to reveal or make comprehensible the unconscious feelings, images, and values that are
inherent in that organization. Symbolism expresses the underlying character, ideology, or value system of an organization. (p. 77)

They listed the phenomena that reveal these underlying meanings as (a) stories and myths, (b) ceremonies and ritualized events, (c) the logo of the organization, and (d) the anecdotes and jokes that are passed around in organizations.

Identifying a slightly different list of sources of cultural meaning, Dill (1982) selected "the nurturance of myth, the identification of unifying symbols, the ritual observance of symbols, the canonization of exemplars, and the formation of guilds" (p. 316). By "the canonization of exemplars", Dill means the recognition of faculty scholars who have made significant professional contributions to the academic institution. By "the formation of guilds", he means the formation of a group of academicians who actively work toward the improvement of teaching, research, and scholarship.

Masland (1991) identified what he called four windows on organizational culture. These include sagas, heroes, symbols, and rituals. He wrote, "In a strong culture they work in unison and illustrate the culture" (p. 121). He recommended using interviews, observation, and document analysis to gather insights about each window.
Addressing the difference between climate and culture, Yin-Cheong (1989) observed the following:

Climate is a set of overt, perceptible, and behavioral norms but culture may be multi-level including implicit assumptions, beliefs and values and also explicit behavioral norms. In other words, organizational climate seems to be the overt part of organizational culture. (p. 130)

The purpose of this paper is both to study the overt, expressive aspects of the subculture and to attempt to identify parts of the underlying value system.

In summary, many authors have lists of items to study when trying to unearth the deep structure of a culture or subculture. During the interviews with and observations of Hispanic students, this researcher looked for these types of items and tried to seek out what they meant to the students.

There has been a variety of approaches to studying the overall campus culture of schools, such as the University of California at Santa Cruz, a contrast study of Amherst and Hampshire colleges, a study of faculty morale at 10 different liberal arts colleges, and a descriptive study of Miami-Dade Community College. A comparison of these studies illustrates the main criticism of case study analysis, which is the problem of generalizability. Although one cannot directly compare the 10 liberal arts college study results
to Amherst and Hampshire, it is possible to get a general idea about what is important on each individual campus in order to predict how decisions might be made, where money is likely to be allocated and which activities would or would not be condoned. In studies such as these, the essence is in finding meaning within a campus rather than across campuses.

For example, Adams (1984) captured the essence of the values of the founders of the University of California at Santa Cruz when he wrote, "Santa Cruz was not simply non-competitive; it was anti-competitive, even anti-vocational, and for a time it reveled in that reputation" (p. 20). After this description, Adams detailed the ensuing history of the university, including environmental influences, societal changes, and decision-making by key administrators. He captured the difficulty of culture studies when he wrote, "Like any large and important institution, Santa Cruz is not a simple place, and it is not easy to summarize its history and character fairly" (p. 25).

Meister (1982) summarized the contrast between two campus cultures in the following:

Seen from the hill at Amherst, Hampshire College's curriculum is trendy, its standards lax, its faculty composed largely of ideologues and misfits. From the
frisbee fields of Hampshire, Amherst College looms as a bastian of cultural elitism and authoritarian pedagogy. (p. 26)

These descriptions reveal stereotypes and the strong sense of ethnocentrism through which one college's campus members view the other college's campus members. The study described the values and priorities underlying the contrasts in the practices on each campus.

Rice and Austin (1988) did an in-depth case study of 10 small liberal arts colleges to identify why their faculty members scored higher on satisfaction and morale than did faculty members on other campuses. The researchers selected Eastern Mennonite, College of Notre Dame, Gordon, Greenville, Lenoir-Rhyne, Nebraska Wesleyan, Saint Scholastica, Simpson, Smith and William Jewell. They concluded that each had four key features in common: distinctive organizational cultures, participatory leadership, organizational momentum, and faculties that had "an unusually compelling identification with the institution that incorporates and extends the other three characteristics contributing to high morale" (p. 52). Although this study utilized case study methodology, some identifiable characteristics that they identified that could be generalized to other campuses.
Zwerling (1988) did a non-participant, qualitative case study of Miami-Dade Community College in which he read institutional records, articles, and books written about the school. He also visited the campus and interviewed people there. The article about his study is anecdotal and reads like a description of a vacation itinerary rather than a scientific journal article. Proponents of quantitative analysis would probably question its contribution to research, but the elements of culture, values, and the spirit of the institution are described there.

Some of the statements Zwerling (1988) quoted from the faculty members communicate their sense of pride in their work. One said, "I'm still excited every day. When it's all over, I want to be able to say, 'I was where the action was'" (p. 18). Another said, "I get my satisfaction nurturing students who have not been perceived as college material. I save lives. Just like a doctor. That's my reward. That's why I'm here" (p. 18). A third said, "Everywhere I go people say, 'Oh you're from Miami-Dade.' I feel there's a lot of status teaching here" (p. 18). Recounting statements like these provides the reader with a real sense of how people feel and think about their campus.

There are a few campus case studies that have focused on subcultures and their values. One such study was done by Boschini (1989), who used the constant comparative method to
study the Student Athletic Board (SAB) at Indiana University. He investigated why students joined SAB, how new recruits learned the expectations of the group, what the formal and informal socialization processes were, and which of those processes were most effective in integrating new members. He identified nine themes from interviews with members and advisors of SAB.

Another study was done by Dickerson-Gifford (1990) on the comparison of values of two subcultures in higher education. The subcultures she selected were academic administrators and student affairs administrators. She used the Institutional Goals Inventory, which asks questions about goals that currently exist on campus and goals that respondents believe should exist on campus. She hypothesized that student affairs administrators value off-campus learning and that academic administrators value academic freedom, democratic governance, and research. Analyzing the results with a two-tailed, non-directional t-test for significance, she found significant differences between the two groups as hypothesized; however, no other data were collected in the form of interviews or follow-ups with any of the participants.

Dickerson-Gifford's (1990) study and that of Boschini (1989) show a marked difference in the depth of understanding of human experience in these subcultures.
Boschini could quote people in order to represent personal perspectives, and his open-ended research method allowed the group members to describe the process in detail.

Dickerson-Gifford, on the other hand, provided a framework for administrators to respond to; the question remains whether the provided framework tells the whole story or part of the story or whether people simply answered an inventory to help a graduate student fulfill a degree requirement. A definite contrast exists in the summary of these two kinds of research approaches to studying culture.

Bushnell (1962) studied student culture at Vassar College during the years 1954 to 1958. He described details about the campus setting; student population; residence hall living; academic and extracurricular activities; and daily, weekly, and yearly cycles of events. He also discussed the values and processes of peer groups on that campus.

He wrote that the students at Vassar perceived five natural groupings of peer groups and that they could usually place themselves in one of them. In student jargon, these groups are referred to as science-major types (the studious ones); Yale-weekend girls (the socialites); bohemians (the nonconformists); Joe-college people (the campus leaders); and the normal group (those who achieve a balance of academics and social life).
When reading Bushnell's (1962) description of Vassar life, one receives a general impression of campus culture, student priorities and daily routines. The broad generalizations, however, tend to portray an almost idyllic atmosphere that seems unreal in light of the modern campus reality of activism, racial unrest, violence, political correctness, and the challenge of ideas and the status quo. Some of this could be because the study was conducted in the 1950s, but it also could be that, on any campus, not all students are similar in their views or behavior and that this generalized report smoothed over the variations among students.

Hughes, Becker and Geer (1962) studied student culture and the academic efforts of medical students in a medium-sized state university. They described the process that each class of 100 medical students appears to go through as they progress in the program having to decide what is most important for them to study out of the overwhelming amount of medical information presented.

The researchers identified 4 typical sets of groups that form in each class. One group is called practice-minded; these students focus their efforts on learning the information they think they will need to know in their medical practice. Another group of students is called system-minded; they focus their energies on figuring
out what the faculty thinks is important to know and what will be asked on examinations. A third set of groups forms because they live near one another. A fourth set of groups forms because they are assigned to the same anatomy laboratory. These last two sets of groups tend to form because students spend a great deal of time together, whereas the first two sets form on the basis of personal priorities or world views.

Hughes et al. (1962) concluded from their study that there were four basic consequences of student culture in that particular medical school. One consequence was that subcultures helped students decide what to study. Another consequence was that they helped students figure out how much they could deviate from school standards with the support of fellow students. A third result was that student subcultures set expectations for the level and direction of academic effort. The fourth result was that these directions were the cornerstones of the difficulties the faculty had with students when the student subcultures directed them to deviate from faculty expectations and requirements. Thus, it appears that there are both positive and negative effects of student subcultures. This phenomenon could be an example of the enhancing, orthogonal and counterculture described by Siehl and Martin (1984).
The insights gained through the qualitative studies such as the Vassar College and medical school studies are rich with detail and depth. This depth of understanding can be helpful when working with student groups, when trying to figure out why they do what they do, or when trying to change the way things are done. Since student subcultures set up norms and sanctions for behavior, understanding what these are can help both faculty and administrators to present information and communicate expectations in ways that may be more accepted by the students.

Finally, Kuh and Whitt (1988) summarized the current state of affairs: "Despite the significance of subcultures for understanding colleges, and their cultures, the higher education literature contains little research grounded in a precise definition of subcultures" (p. 93). This statement underscores the importance of this study for the field of higher education.

Studies on Hispanic Students

This section focuses on studies concerning Hispanic college students. Both qualitative and quantitative studies are discussed.

One study conducted similarly to this one was done by Attinasi in 1986. He interviewed 13 persisting and 5 nonpersisting Chicano freshmen from an urban state university in the southwest. All of the students
interviewed were traditional-age students who were going to school full-time.

Some of the things that these students said about their college experience were that they were often amazed at how big the university was. Many described getting lost in a crowd and having a sense of culture shock. They also said that their professors used big words, had inflexible attitudes, and were unclear about their expectations. Some students were surprised that there is no partial credit in college.

Because he also used ethnomethodology to collect his data, Attinasi (1986) posed four hypotheses after categorizing the information. His first hypothesis stated that "background variables for Mexican-Americans such as high school curriculum, parent's education and occupation influence the persistence of college going because they expose the student to modeling and defining experiences relative to college going" (p. 235).

His second hypothesis stated that "for Mexican-American freshmen, the extent and nature of anticipatory socialization for college going has an influence not only on the decision to go to college but, once there, on the decision to stay" (p. 235). Having someone help them to know what to expect can help them avoid becoming disillusioned.
Attinasi's third hypothesis was as follows: For the Mexican-American freshman, the extent to which social integration influences persistence is not the extent to which it promotes the individual's moral conformity to the institution but rather the extent to which it endows the individual with the capacity to cognitively manage the university environment, that is, helps him to perceive the physical, social and academic/cognitive geographies as negotiable. (p. 236)

This underscores the importance of social integration for the students' eventual success.

Attinasi's (1986) final hypothesis was as follows: "For Mexican-American freshmen, persisting at the university is positively related to the development and use of cognitive maps of the physical, social, and academic/cognitive geographies. The persister is more likely to employ strategies that facilitate the development of such maps" (p. 236).

Attinasi (1986) also made a number of recommendations for future research. He suggested interviewing some nontraditional students, adding the observation of students as well as interviewing them and refining and verifying the concepts developed in his study. These items were incorporated in this study. He also recommended doing
longitudinal studies and developing a questionnaire with which to survey a larger random sample.

Probably Attinasi's (1986) major contributions to the literature were his use of a qualitative research design in a field that rarely does so and his formation of concepts that he refers to as "getting ready" and "getting in", which he says are key elements of the college experience for Hispanic students. He outlines five categories that contribute to a student's "getting ready" to go to college. These include (a) their initial expectation (being reared knowing they were going to college); (b) fraternal modeling (observing a relative going to college); (c) mentor modeling (having teachers who talked about college); (d) indirect simulation (taking college preparation classes); and (e) direct simulation (visiting a campus).

The elements of "getting in" include learning (a) the physical geography of the buildings; (b) a geography of social relations between people; and (c) an academic/cognitive geography that has to do with formal instruction. Attinasi (1986) believes that how well students perceive their own adjustments in "getting ready" and "getting in" affects their likelihood of persisting to graduation.

Attinasi also used the terms Chicano and Mexican-American interchangeably throughout his report.
because, according to him, there is no consensus on a preference for referring to Hispanics as a group. This issue was also discussed with the students in the present study in order to learn about their perspectives.

Calderon (1988) studied Cuban-American students in an attempt to understand how they went about staying in college. He interviewed 21 college sophomores at a public southeastern university. The author made two good points in his study: (a) that the high drop-out rate among Hispanics represents both a financial loss to the public and unrealized goals for the students; and (b) that, to date, we have developed a poor reputation for educating our minority population. His position is that we might be able to be more successful in educating these students if we understood them better.

Calderon (1988) replicated Attinasi's (1986) study with the intent to be exploratory rather than to verify. He utilized in-depth interviewing, guided conversations, and allowed the interviewees to freely choose their answers from their own experiences.

From the results of his study, Calderon (1988) formed the five following hypotheses:

(1) For Cuban-Americans, parental expectations play an important role in university matriculation. The students desires are to improve their own living
conditions. (2) Awareness experiences for Cuban-Americans, prior to high school graduation, appear to have an impact on college-going behavior and influence their decision to continue to persist in college or not. (3) For Cuban-Americans, their perceptions of their treatment by superordinates as well as by other students in the university, influences their view of their possibilities to persist through graduation. (4) The Cuban-American persister is one who sees his/her social needs being met and is able to concentrate on his/her academic pursuit, rather than his/her physical or material needs. (5) Cuban-American students perceived themselves as being treated as inferiors by the white, non-Hispanic segments of society. (pp. 178-180)

As a result of his findings, Calderon recommended that teachers needed to be trained to be culturally sensitive and that legislators and administrators needed to provide the funds for this training. He concluded that "the findings of this study suggest that the educational process is not as meritocratic as it is commonly believed" (p. 183).

De los Santos (1972) spent 5 to 10 days on four different campuses interviewing students, staff, and faculty for the following reason:
In conducting scholarly study of Mexican-Americans, writers have tended to pose "either-or" types of questions. The literature abounds with attempts to portray the "typical" or "true" Mexican-American. Few researchers have sought to explore a range of variation. (p. 48-49)

He stated also that, "although scattered and sporadic, there is some hard research relating to Mexican-American cultural values and attitudes toward education in public schools. No studies have been conducted at the college level" (p. 52).

Thirdly, de los Santos (1972) noted that studies often contradict each other, which is another good reason for continuing to study this population. One example he cited was that the use of the Mexican Family Attitude Scale was helpful in San Antonio, Texas but not in Los Angeles, California.

De los Santos (1972) had three main purposes for his study. He sought to describe programs for Mexican-American students offered at four different community colleges, to help administrators to better assist Mexican-American students, and to identify problems and hypotheses for further research. He interviewed 25 students for 40 to 90 minutes each and tried to select student leaders as well as students with a variety of backgrounds. The following are some of his observations:
When describing Cochise Community College, de los Santo observed, "Even though most of the faculty and counselors are sensitive to their needs, students generally can speak more candidly with Mexican-American instructors" (p. 105). He also reported that, "most students communicate with the counseling and financial aid staff but they still don't feel comfortable with them" (p. 105).

In de los Santos (1972) study, the students described two primary barriers that discourage Mexican-Americans from attending Cochise. One barrier was the conditioning they received in the public schools, which told them they were not college material, and the second barrier was lack of funds.

De los Santos (1972) noted that the Cochise students used financial aid only when necessary and chose the school for its proximity and low cost. The students became interested in college when parents as well as friends, counselors, or teachers encouraged them to go. These students saw college as a means to get a good job, and their overall view toward Cochise was positive. They described no incidence of either overt or subtle discrimination.

The second campus de los Santos (1972) described was Texas Junior College, which is located in Uvalde, Texas, 66 miles from the Mexico border. The student perceptions were that admissions were fairly open, that the school has an
image of being a 'cowboy college', and that it does not offer programs that Mexican-American students would like such as plumbing, electricity, refrigeration or bilingual education.

The reasons the students gave for going to college included (a) to get a better job; (b) to receive higher education, which is a necessity; (c) to improve their social and economic status; (d) to compete for higher paying jobs; (e) to have a wider choice of career options; and (f) to help out their family and community. They primarily became interested in the college because most of them knew someone who knew about it. Some had siblings or teachers who went there, and some learned about it from publications, high school counselors or campus visits.

The students reported that they selected Texas Junior College because it was economical, close to home, and convenient. Other reasons they gave were that it was a place to test themselves, that they did not have the money to go elsewhere, and that they could not get a good job with just a high school education.

Other characteristics of this school were that students tended to associate only with their own ethnic group; that inter-ethnic dating was not practiced; and that at one point, the school had a "no Spanish rule" in physical education--students had to do push-ups for punishment if
they were caught speaking Spanish. In addition, the term
Chicano was censored from the school newspaper, very few
Mexican-Americans were employed on campus, and requests for
Mexican-American speakers on campus were denied. De los
Santos (1972) summarized the Mexican-American students' feeling as being that the college atmosphere was unsupportive.

The third school de los Santos studied was California Community College. This school offered a number of nontraditional programs, such as nonpunitive grading, Saturday classes, independent study courses, continuous enrollment, a college-financed book loaning program, and a transportation system. It also celebrates Cinco de Mayo, has three active Mexican-American student organizations, and has had several Mexican-American speakers on campus.

The students perceived the school as sufficiently open concerning admissions, but they also saw as barriers to admittance (a) an inadequate and stifling public education system; (b) lack of funds, and (c) insufficient knowledge about the college. They described the most serious barrier as that of being made to feel they were inferior and inadequate in the public schools.

The students primarily chose California Community College for its proximity to their homes, its convenience, and its free tuition for California residents. They saw
higher education as a necessity. The students described the hiring of Mexican-American faculty and administrators as "like a ray of sunlight in a stormy sea" (p. 190). But they were reluctant to apply for financial aid because the financial aid officer talked curtly to them and left them out of meetings.

The final school that de los Santos (1972) studied was Texas Southmost College in Brownsville near the Mexican border. Some unique characteristics of this school are that, in the year of the study, it had a Mexican-American president, and that 25% of its instructors and half of its clerical staff were all Mexican American. Also, 74.1% of the students enrolled during the 1971-72 school year came from families with an annual income of less than $7500. At that time, Texas Southmost also graduated the same percentage of Mexican-Americans that it enrolled, which was 70%. They also offered an Adult Migrant Education Program for retraining migrant workers.

The students reported that (a) they felt at ease when they enrolled at Texas Southmost; (b) the counselors, instructors and administrators were friendly; (c) many had had friends who had attended the school; and (d) their main apprehension was whether they could make the grades. Those Mexican-American students came to college in order to get
better paying jobs; many had tried the job market without much luck, and they saw higher education as a necessity.

The students chose Southmost because it was close to home, convenient, inexpensive; and they could not afford to go anywhere else. Parents, teachers, counselors, and peers were the most influential in helping the students to decide to go to college.

The main barriers to going to college were personal funds and lack of information about the college and its programs. The interviewees had a positive view of financial aid and described few discriminatory incidents. In general, these students did not feel as though they were discriminated against because they were Mexican-American.

In his conclusion, de los Santos (1972) compared these four community colleges to Arciniega's (1971) classification of public education's response to the Mexican-American student. Arciniega included four classifications of response in his model: the noble poor, the pathological, the more effective copers and the oppressed.

In the noble poor category, Mexican-Americans were viewed as having a superior culture, whose traditions should be enhanced. Respondents felt that only Mexican-Americans could teach their own, and they also promoted having separate schools for Mexican-Americans.
In the pathological category, Mexican-Americans were seen as culturally deficient and were encouraged to overcome their culture. Their culture was viewed as stressing machismo, family ties, living in the present, fatalism, and personalism. Mexican-Americans were urged to adopt Anglo values of achievement, independence, and deferred gratification.

The more effective copers were described as coping with changes in their surroundings and as viewing culture as dynamic and adaptive. To be culturally different was not considered to be inferior, and respondents gave equal status to Anglo and Mexican-American culture and language.

The oppressed response viewed Mexican-Americans as belonging to a once-strong society that had undergone subjugation. Respondents saw the current lifestyles of Mexican-Americans as being due to the negative results of colonialist conditions imposed by the dominant culture.

De los Santos (1972) concluded that Cochise and California Community College were pursuing a more effective copers approach. He viewed Texas Junior College as using a pathological approach and Texas Southmost as not fitting into any of the four groups. In summarizing his findings, de los Santos observed, "None of these community colleges have really implemented a multi-cultural model of education" (p. 255).
Kosuth (1990) interviewed 20 college students and 5 employees at Golden West Community College in order to identify factors that motivated Hispanic students to attend college. He used intensive interviewing in a multiple case study.

From his work, Kosuth (1990) concluded that Hispanics go to college for the same reasons as non-Hispanics: to prepare for a better career or to enhance their quality of life. He found that an early academic orientation and a family environment that promoted educational interest and encouraged students to attend college. He found that insufficient information and motivation in elementary and secondary schools inhibited an interest in attending college.

Nevarez (1982) studied the Rio Hondo College students' perceptions of their campus environment, using three questionnaires to determine what they considered to be the positive and negative qualities of their environment. He concluded that the students viewed the primary function of the college as being transfer education. They considered the staff and academic programs to be strong and their peers to be the most important source of campus information, as well as the most effective recruiters. They viewed the social environment as providing too few opportunities for
interaction with other students, and felt that the academic counseling staff were not as helpful as they could be.

Hernandez (1980) studied nontraditional (25 years old and older) Anglo and Mexican-American college students and their awareness of, use of, and satisfaction with student personnel and academic support systems at three Texas community colleges. Questionnaires were administered to 1,511 persisters and drop-outs.

Hernandez (1980) found that a significantly higher percentage of Mexican-American students were both aware of and used support services. More Mexican-American students reported their needs as being less adequately met than did Anglos, and they were less satisfied with the services. Part-time students of both groups perceived their needs as not being met adequately, and they were less satisfied with financial aid, orientation, career counseling, and tutoring than were full-time students. Dropouts reported having more needs that were less adequately served than did the persisters.

In summarizing her study, Hernandez (1980) supported the idea that a student's perceptions of support services relates to his social and academic integration and eventually his decision to persist or drop out. This provides another reason for the importance of getting a clear understanding of student perceptions and for
monitoring programs in the event that student expectations or perceptions change.

Romero (1981) studied Chicano students' perceptions of cultural acceptance or rejection in the college environment. He used the Chicano Cultural Acceptance Survey as well as college documents and interviews with students, faculty, counselors, and administrators to collect his data at two urban community colleges in the southwest.

He found that teacher and peer group relations were the most important factors affecting Chicano student retention and achievement. For some students who did not feel accepted by peers and teachers, the motivation for achieving the long-term benefits of a college education helped them to persist. Finally, culturally specific factors such as language and ethnicity acceptance were overall not as crucial as academic, financial, or personal difficulties.

Hogden (1990) surveyed 741 Mexican-American high school seniors, 343 junior college students, and 236 teachers (grades 1 to 12) to investigate the importance of a teacher's racial or ethnic background as it relates to the student's academic achievement. Over 70% of the respondents felt that it was not a major factor. Instead, teacher empathy, enthusiasm, and understanding were viewed as more important traits. Hogden concluded that minority students
are more concerned with a teacher's attitude than with their race or ethnicity.

Muro (1986) interviewed Mexican-American students taking English as a second language. Her sample included 60 students who withdrew from college and 60 who persisted. She reported that the groups had similar educational experiences. Both felt socially integrated, had high opinions of counselors and instructors, and felt comfortable with their peers. The reasons for dropping out were numerous, depending on individual needs and problems. Muro recommended that further research be done to better understand the situation.

In a 1972 study, Collymore surveyed 331 black and Mexican-American students in two Colorado community colleges, randomly selecting 114 students to interview both individually and in small groups. He found that 71% of the students had a clear idea of their cultural needs and educational aspirations. Both groups also felt that neither college was meeting their needs. In addition, their family and community cultural values tended to influence their educational aspirations.

As a result of his study, Collymore (1972) recommended that the colleges hire more black and Mexican-American faculty, administrators, and counselors and that they develop multiracial instructional programs that reflect
contributions of nonwhites. For future research, Collymore recommended that, "it may be useful to conduct a study of a similar sample of students, but using completely open-ended questions, to determine whether essentially the same set of student concerns would be discovered " (p. 132).

Vazquez (1990) studied the acculturation process of Mexican-American college students. In his literature review, he made an accurate statement about how Mexican-Americans have typically been studied. His point was that much of the available research focuses on the deficits that Mexican-Americans bring to education.

An examination of a list of the titles of studies shows this to be true. Many refer to low self-esteem, low socio-economic backgrounds, poor English skills, and underdeveloped academic preparation. Vazquez (1990) gave three questionnaires to 120 college students and concluded from his results that his demographic and descriptive data contradict many of the stereotypes of Mexican-Americans, such as having low economic status and uneducated parents with blue collar jobs. He recommended further research with this population to address the conflicting results of previous studies.

Feuntevilla (1981) studied articulation patterns among high schools, junior colleges, and senior colleges in Arizona. He used Menacker's (1975) definition of
articulation as communicating among schools and colleges, emphasizing institutional cooperation and mutual understanding, and viewing education as a continuum. He listed 455 articulation activities, classifying them into 25 categories. Feuntevilla used questionnaires and interviews with 25 personnel and 15 first-year students at the university. He was looking for factors that encouraged or hindered enrollment of Mexican-Americans in the University of Arizona.

Feuntevilla observed that, "Mexican-Americans represent a subpopulation which is linguistically, culturally and philosophically diverse when compared to the dominant society in the U.S." (p. 5). He saw it as a sign for concern that Mexican-Americans comprised 25% of the area population, 29% of the high school enrollment, 22% of the community college enrollment, and only 3.7% of the senior college enrollment in his area at the time of his study.

Out of all the articulation efforts listed, only campus publications were recognized by all of the Mexican-American students, and orientation programs were noted by half of these students. Fuentevilla concluded that the majority of articulation programs were failing to assist the enrollment of Mexican-Americans.

The services the students listed as being very important in helping them were counseling, financial aid,
orientation, personnel, and recruiting. Matters that were important to them regarding curriculum included developing fluency in English and getting help in basic math. Other important items were a need for more qualified university advisors, annual listings of financial aid options, and the availability of more scholarships. In terms of personnel, high school personnel appeared to be the least involved of all three levels in articulation activities, and curricular personnel were found to be doing the least to help all students, including Mexican-Americans.

The students reported that they did not see Mexican Americans being recruited or encouraged to go to college. They also said that finances were the single most important factor in low minority enrollment.

Recommendations made from the results of Fuentevilla's (1981) study were to use more bold and direct methods, such as more personal contact with students, individualized orientation; and to make more use of secondary reinforcers, such as peer advising, early academic tutoring, financial assistance, work opportunities, and parental guidance training. Fuentevilla concluded that traditional articulation programs do not always prove to be effective with Mexican-American students. In fact, he said that, "there should be a continuing search for factors which hinder or facilitate the enrollment of Mexican-American
students as well as all students in institutions of higher
learning" (p. 152).

Campus culture has been described in this discussion as
a type of organizational culture. Various authors have
described the complexity of studying campus culture and the
importance of using qualitative methods with which to study
it. Some authors prefer to view the campus as a
person/environment interaction, whereas a second group sees
it as a collection of subcultures that together create their
own blend of culture. A third group believes that culture
surfaces in sagas, rituals, myths, and heroes. For this
study, a specific student subculture of Hispanic students is
studied in light of how these students interact with their
environment in order to add more depth and breadth to the
current body of knowledge about how Hispanic students
experience college.

A discussion of the literature concerning subcultures
indicates more consensus among researchers on that subject
than exists on the subject of organizational culture. The
key elements include that a subculture is described as a
subset of a larger group with its own set of norms.
Researchers indicate that people in a subculture have common
problems, are kindred souls, or may belong to the same
ethnic group. Hispanic college students, as a group, fit
these criteria. The research regarding Hispanic college
students can be divided into three basic areas: (a) what happens to them before they get to college; (b) what forces appear to influence them; and (c) what happens to them once they are in college.

Researchers report that, before they get to college, Hispanic children in the public school systems, are often stifled in regard to seeking higher education. They receive little information about college, and they often lack the funds to pay for it. As a result, those who do attend college often pick a school that is close to their home and costs the least. Hispanic college students are reported to view college as a necessity, as a means to get a good job, as a way to improve their economic status or have a wider choice of career options, and as a way to help their families or communities.

Once in college, some students are surprised at how large the university is; they feel lost in the crowd, and experience culture shock. Some describe their professors as using big words, being inflexible, and being unclear about their expectations. Some feel that they are treated as being inferior, and they describe the college atmosphere as being unsupportive. Some researchers report that students speak more candidly with Mexican-American instructors, and others say that race is not as important as the teacher's attitude in terms of student preference. Their peers are
described as their most important source of information and as the most effective recruiters.

The sources that are reported to influence persistence in college include the students' perceptions of their own social and academic integration on campus, teacher and peer relations, the vision of the long-term benefits of a degree, their parents' education and occupation, parental expectations, and someone to help them form realistic expectations before they attend college. Personal, academic, and financial difficulties are described as the biggest stumbling blocks.

Characteristics of much of the research on Hispanic college students include focusing on deficits they bring to higher education, using forced-choice surveys to learn about them, and focusing on only segments of their college experience. Many researchers have recommended the use of qualitative studies and the interviewing of individuals about their perceptions. This study attempts to do that.

This review of the research literature on campus culture, subcultures, and Hispanic college students is pertinent to the questions being asked in this study. Efforts are made to compare the results of this study to the results of the previous studies to see whether or not similarities exist; however, the main purpose is to develop an in-depth description of this selected subculture.
Chapter 3 addresses the research methods used as well as information about the sample of students who were interviewed concerning their college experience.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study was qualitative, ethnographic research with an emphasis on interviews with students, organizational records, and observations of campus activities. This multi-faceted analysis was intended to collect the data necessary for describing the issues and concerns of Hispanic college students.

The qualitative research method for this study was selected because, as Luthans and Davis (1982) said, "By definition, organizational behavior is not situation-free. Organizational participants do not operate in a highly controlled, standardized environment" (p. 383). This point was illustrated in the campus culture studies described in the previous chapter.

This method is also idiographic, which means that it is individual-centered, with naturalistic environmental contexts and uses qualitative methodologies (Luthans and Davis, 1982). This approach falls within the larger concept of ethnographic research.

Rosen (1991) observed the following:
The ethnographer's method of collecting data is to live among those who are the data. He or she tries to learn
the subject's rules for organizational life, to interact with them for a frequency and duration of time 'sufficient' to understand how and why they construct their social world as it is and to explain it to others. (p. 5)

As a staff member employed by the housing office at this university since August 1984, this researcher qualifies as a nonparticipant observer who has lived among the subjects being studied. The researcher has also been a student, has lived on campus, has taken two courses at the university, has served on various campus committees, and has served as a field instructor for the School of Social Work for two years.

Geertz (1973) proposed that social process and deep meaning are not captured in conventional, quantitative studies. Instead, understanding social process involves getting inside the work of those generating it and constructing an interpretation of "what our informants are up to, or think they are up to, and then systematize those" (p. 15).

Borg and Gall (1983) outlined four elements underlying the value system of ethnographic research. The first element is phenomenology, in which the researcher is trying to understand the perspectives of the group he is studying. The second element is holism, which emphasizes the big
picture or total situation instead of just a segment. Thirdly, the researcher seeks to maintain a nonjudgmental orientation by avoiding coloring the data with preconceptions or hypotheses at the beginning. Fourthly, researchers try to maintain contextualization by viewing the data collected within the context of the environment in which it is collected. In this way, ethnographic research tends to generate hypotheses which can be tested further by other methods of research.

Spradley (1980) describes two types of ethnographic studies; macro-ethnography and micro-ethnography. The first type of research usually takes place over many years, and involves the work of several ethnographers. The second type is usually done in a shorter time period, and focuses on studying a single, isolated social situation. This study would be classified as micro-ethnography.

Spradley (1980) also classifies ethnographic studies in terms of the breadth of the topic studied. The three types of studies that address this aspect are: comprehensive, topic-oriented, and hypothesis-oriented. A comprehensive ethnography seeks to document a total way of life. A topic-oriented ethnography focuses on one or more aspects of community life. A hypothesis-oriented ethnography concentrates on determining how one situation influences another. For illustration, a hypothesis-oriented researcher
might seek to determine how various child rearing practices effect the formation of adult personalities. This study would be classified as topic-oriented, because the focus is on the college experience of Hispanic students.

Collection of Data

Bryman (1989) described four basic methodologies for qualitative organizational research. They include total participant, semi-participant, interview-based, and multi-site methods, each with its own advantages and disadvantages. The method selected for this study was interview-based. Bryman described this method as tending to employ unstructured or semi-structured interviews and documents as sources of data.

To the extent that observation occurs, it is largely non-participant, with the researcher being very much on periphery of interaction, and is undertaken in a somewhat unstrategic manner. Such observation is usually supplementary and something that is carried out in the spaces between interviews. (p. 155)

The Setting

The university, at the time of the study, was comprised of seven colleges including science, nursing, architecture, liberal arts, engineering, business, and social work. It is located in a metropolitan area in a city with a population of approximately 272,000.
The Population

The population included all enrolled Hispanic students, with American citizenship, at an urban state university in the southwest, during the spring semester in 1993. Hispanic students comprised 1,396 of the total enrollment of 22,667 that semester.

Selection of the Sample

The sample was comprised of two groups—one random and one purposely selected. The random sample was drawn with the use of a random numbers table and a comprehensive list of the 1,396 Hispanic students with American citizenship, who were enrolled during the spring semester of 1993. The purposely selected sample was chosen with the help of Richard Massie, Director of Multicultural Services, Casey Gonzales, Affirmative Action Officer, Theresa Maldonado, Professor of engineering, and Naomi Vasquez, a student and president of AMAS. They were asked to provide a list of Hispanic students who were either campus leaders or who came from a variety of different backgrounds. As students were interviewed, they were asked for names of other students they knew who had different perspectives on the interview topics, which is how purposive sampling is done.

Twenty-one students were interviewed between March and May in 1993. Eight (2 males and 6 females) were randomly selected and 13 (9 males and 4 females) were purposely
selected. One student was interviewed as part of a group and then later in a more in-depth personal interview. There was an additional no-show in each group, which was a student who agreed to be interviewed, but did not appear for the scheduled interview. Efforts to re-schedule were not successful.

Efforts were made to include a wide range of students. As a result, 5 lived on campus, 8 lived with parents, and 8 lived in apartments with a spouse, child or roommate. Of these students, 14 have attended at least one other college and 7 have attended only this university. They had a wide range of majors, and were all undergraduates.

Pilot Study

Initially, the study was discussed with Massie, Gonzales, Maldonado, and Vasquez. They were asked to review the research questions, to make recommendations regarding the study, and if they would be willing to assist with the interpretation of the data, once collected. All were willing to assist with the study as needed.

A pilot interview was done with one student in order to receive feedback, check timing, and seek recommendations for additional areas to cover. The student suggested very few changes in the questions or the format, so further pilot interviews were deemed unnecessary. The semi-structured interview process also allows for making changes as one
proceeds with the study, so any other unforeseen problems could be corrected later on.

Preinterview Process

After the sample was selected, potential participants were sent letters requesting their participation in the study (Appendix A). The request letter was sent to communicate the following:

1. To explain the purpose of the study,
2. To explain to potential participants their importance as sources of data for the study,
3. To request their participation in the study,
4. To explain details about the interview process and timeline,
5. To explain the benefits the researcher would accrue,
6. To explain the benefits the participants would accrue,
7. To assure confidentiality for participants and to offer the option of using an alias of their choosing,
8. To explain that the results of the study would be shared with the campus administration, and
9. To request that the potential participant return the enclosed postcard, indicating a telephone number and
times when they could be reached, so they could be contacted by telephone to schedule an interview.

In addition to the request letter, each potential participant was sent a dissertation consent form (Appendix B) and a self-addressed, postage paid, postcard (Appendix C). Letters were mailed in four waves. Twelve letters were sent on February 19, nine letters were sent on March 1, three letters were sent on March 29, and seventeen letters were sent on March 30.

As postcards were returned indicating consent to be interviewed, students were called to arrange a time and a place for the interview. Most of the interviews were arranged to take place in the Center for Multicultural Cooperation (CMC) except for three that took place in the housing office, two in the library, and one group interview in the engineering building. Only two students sent back postcards declining to be interviewed.

Follow up telephone calls were made to students who failed to return postcards. Only two students who scheduled interviews did not appear at the scheduled interview. Efforts were made to reschedule them, but one forgot again, and the other did not want to reschedule because she was too busy. The purposely selected students were sent the letter and then called as time permitted between interviews.
During the interview scheduling telephone conversation, participant's questions about the study were answered. They were also told about the options of having the session tape recorded and of selecting an alias for the purpose of confidentiality. All agreed to be taped and some chose to use an alias.

Interview Process

The researcher brought a list of topics to cover to each interview, but attempted to allow the conversation to flow to let the students determine both the direction and the topics. Each interview began with general questions about how long they had been at the college, if they had gone to college anywhere else, and what their major was. They were asked what they had heard about the college before their arrival and if anything had surprised them after their arrival. They were asked how they spend their time, how their family affects their college attendance, and what has helped or hindered them in college. Many of the questions were open-ended in order to allow the students to include whatever was significant to them. They were asked about problems they had faced and if being Hispanic made their college experience any different from that of students who were not Hispanic. They were asked about their favorite and least favorite class; if there were any faculty or staff that they could go to for help; if they had any
recommendations for the administration; and if there were any additional things that helped to describe what their college experience has been like. A complete list of the actual questions is in Appendix D.

Each interview was audiotaped and lasted between 40 and 100 minutes. The tape recorder was turned on when the student appeared relaxed and had given permission to begin recording. The researcher took notes during the interview as a precaution in case the recorder did not work, which indeed happened twice. The students were also asked if they would like a copy of the results of the findings.

In addition, a reflexive diary was used during the interview period to log impressions and the forming of hypotheses. Some authors call this process memoing.

The researcher also made some informal observations in the CMC; attended a program called the Ballet Folklorico 'Quetzalli' de Veracruz, an Association of Mexican-American Students meeting, a meeting of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers, and a Semana de Cultura fashion show and luncheon. These events were interesting for a number of reasons. They provided experiences of cultural events, an opportunity to identify Hispanic student leaders on campus, and a chance to gain impressions that were not self-reported
by the students. They also provided topics to discuss with students when establishing rapport at the beginning of interviews.

Postinterview Process

Thank you cards were sent to each participant immediately following the interview. Each tape was transcribed using an Olympus microcassette recorder and a Comrex CR-II Comriter. It was a slow process using this equipment and each interview took 7 to 12 hours to transcribe. It was helpful, however, to have done both the interviewing and transcribing because when voices were not clear on the tape, familiarity with the conversation made it easier to decipher.

Ethnographic Analysis

Lincoln and Cuba (1985) described a number of ways in which this type of naturalistic inquiry differs from quantitative studies. First, the study begins with a focus that may change along the way, depending upon the information collected. Theory emerges instead of being given a priori.

The sampling process occurs in much the same way. Instead of selecting random samples, the researcher selects some informants to start with and asks if they know others who might have some important insights or information. Sampling is, therefore, not necessarily representative, but,
rather, it is serial and contingent. For this study, both randomly selected and purposely selected students were included in order to provide both representativeness and unique insights.

The data to be collected also cannot be specified in advance. Open-ended, exploratory questions begin the process. As many researchers of qualitative studies have described, a story or reality begins to unfold and take shape as the researcher collects information. Themes and patterns begin to surface over time. In this study, descriptions of the qualities students prefer in professors and what it is like to be a first-generation college student emerged as new areas.

As a result, for this type of study, it is difficult to predict how long it will take, how much it will cost, and what the results will be. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that "probably all that can be promised in advance is that 'understanding will be increased'" (p. 225).

The constant comparative method was used in this study to process data collected in the interviews. Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe the four stages of this method as: "1. comparing incidents applicable to each category, 2. integrating categories and their properties, 3. delimiting the theory, and 4. writing the theory" (p. 105).
Comparing Incidents

Before incidents can be compared, the transcribed interviews had to be dissected by research question topic and numerically labelled for cross-referencing. The topics used were: college decision, goals change, college reputation, surprises, family influence, contributors to success, contributors to hindrances, campus resource people, problems at college, Hispanic issues, knowledge of Spanish, information for the college administration, college choice, personal schedule, what they would tell their friends, other colleges attended, hometown, favorite class, least favorite class, graduation date, college major, extracurricular activities, reactions to professors, and a miscellaneous category for new information.

Every paragraph of each interview was scanned for information regarding these topics. For each topic reference, a reference number was written in the left hand margin of the interview text and a 3 X 5 notecard was prepared for use in the comparative analysis process. The numbering system is illustrated in Table 1, and a sample notecard is displayed in Figure 1.

After each interview was completed, transcribed, numbered and notecards were completed, the notecards were used for the comparative analysis. As each notecard is
Table 1

Transcript Numbering System for Cross-referencing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.C.: Well, . . . from an athletic aspect, I get a real good education and from there, go on to my profession. I looked into it. I heard from my counselor that it was a good school and they said it would be O.K. to go there, You know? My counselor and I were real close so she said O.K. I heard a lot of good things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Excerpt from J.C.'s interview.

written, it is compared to previous notecards, and the researcher decides whether the item is similar in some way to the previous notecards, or is different from them. If the items are different, a new stack is formed. This process is done intuitively at first; the reasons for categorization may be vague, and the groupings may be changed as new notecards are added. As notecards are added with each interview, themes begin to emerge.

For example, in the early interviews, new perspectives seemed to arise with each new interviewee. The group of engineers talked extensively about grades and prejudice. Money, or the lack thereof, was an important issue to many of the students until those with families with higher
Figure 1

Sample Notecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>J.C.</th>
<th>COLLEGE REPUTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. . . from an athletic aspect, I heard it was a good school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This notecard was filed with the group of notecards related to what the students had heard about the college before arrival.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>J.C.</th>
<th>ATTEND COLLEGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I could get a real good education and from there, go on to my profession. I looked into it. I heard from my counselor it was a good school and they said it would be O.K. to go there.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This notecard was filed with the notecards referring to how the students chose to attend this college.

incomes were interviewed. The first-generation college students were surprised by different aspects of college life than those who had previously attended other colleges or who had other family members who had attended college.
Spradley (1979) offered the following list of types of relationships that can be used to guide the formation of initial categories:

- strict inclusion (X is a kind of Y),
- spatial (X is a place in Y, X is a part of Y),
- cause-effect (X is a result of Y, X is a cause of Y),
- rationale (X is a reason for doing Y),
- function (X is used for Y),
- means-end (X is a way to do Y),
- sequence (X is a step in Y),
- attribution (X is an attribute of Y) (p. 111)

This process does not always flow smoothly, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985). At points where the researcher has difficulty proceeding, they suggest what is called memo writing or peer debriefing. Memo writing involves writing down the rules being used to assign to categories. This is done to solidify cognitive processes and to find catharsis for frustration. A peer debriefer is someone with whom the researcher can talk in order to get a second opinion regarding how the data are being processed. The peer debriefer for this study was another doctoral student.

Integrating Categories and their Properties

Spradley (1979) also described a sequence of steps in what he calls domain analysis, which outlines how to dissect a paragraph from an interview into relationships and patterns. By preparing a domain analysis worksheet (see example in Table 2) with sections for the terms used, the
semantic relationship, cover term, and the structural question, the researcher has a format for analyzing data. The terms or ideas used are contributed by the interviewees in their answers to questions. The cover term is a descriptive term created by the researcher to describe why the list of terms or ideas are grouped together. The structural question is usually stated in terms of asking what are all the items that are a part of the cover term. This question invites searching for more items that belong in this grouping.

Table 2

Domain Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Spatial (X is a part of Y)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structural Question:</td>
<td>What are all the reasons these students have for deciding to go to college?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>better future</td>
<td>is a reason for</td>
<td>deciding to go to college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>always assumed</td>
<td>self-improvement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parent enforced</td>
<td>inspired</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fluke</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Delimiting the Theory

According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), step three of the causal comparative method, called delimiting the theory, occurs at two levels. First, the theory solidifies as additional data ceases to modify the ideas that have formed.
Secondly, the numbers of categories become reduced as the researcher becomes more selective and focused. During this process, the transcripts are read several times to check the context of statements to make sure that groupings accurately reflect not only what was said, but what was meant. This process was further complicated when students had included information that addressed one topic in more than one part of their interview. The levels in a taxonomy of reasons students changed their majors and the relationships among terms in that category are illustrated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*Taxonomy of Reasons Students Changed Majors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>No Change</th>
<th>No students answered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Goals</td>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>Original major was boring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I now major in something I like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I learned what I did not want to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I realized track was not a lifelong career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>External Barriers</td>
<td>Chemistry was too difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I could not get classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 student was not asked this question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Writing the Theory

The fourth stage, called writing the theory, begins with collecting the memoranda and identifying major themes. Spradley (1979) described ethnographic analysis as consisting of "a search for (a) parts of a culture, (b) the relationship among those parts, and (c) the relationship of the parts to the whole" (p. 189).

Ethnography involves discovering the meanings of one culture and describing it to another. The researcher moves from studying everyday activity to describing underlying values and generalities about the culture as a whole, or about a subculture, such as this study focuses. Glaser and Strauss (1967) described how the researcher knows when to commence writing as when convinced that themes form "reasonably accurate statements of the matters studied, and that it is couched in a form that others going into the same field could use--then he can publish his results with confidence" (p. 113).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe this research technique as being an inductive method which brings out underlying uniformities and diversities among subjects. The researcher begins with raw data, uses abstract concepts to account for the differences in the data, and concludes with discissional or propositional theory. This propositional theory can be stated in the form of hypotheses to be tested
by future research. The hypotheses can also be applied to the results of other studies to see where the findings match and where they do not. Chapter 5 will address such comparisons between the results of this study and the results of previous studies.

Triangulation

In a description of current research, Ott (1989) supported the use of triangulation for collecting data on the same phenomenon from different angles. This is done for the purposes of reliability and validity, especially in the case of studies that rely heavily on self-reported information. In this study, the additional sources of information included Census Bureau information, student organization records, university records, observation of student activities and a student organization meeting, as well as an ethnographic paper written by a student for a class.

When doing naturalistic research, the researcher must consider four criteria in order to establish the trustworthiness of the study. These criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), these correspond to internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity in conventional studies.
Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) listed five major techniques to improve credibility. One technique includes activities that make it more likely that credible interpretations will be produced (prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation). The engagement factor in this study is more prolonged than the mailing of questionnaires, but, on the other hand, an interview is not as prolonged as living with the subjects for months, for example. Persistent observation was attempted by attending the students' various activities on campus. Triangulation was covered by obtaining organizational records, interviewing students, attending their events, and reviewing an independent ethnographic study of the CMC.

A second technique for establishing credibility is called negative case analysis, which means that working hypotheses are revised as more information become available. This was also in the plan, since the constant comparative method does just that.

Peer debriefing is a third technique; this was done with a fellow doctoral student. A fourth technique, referential adequacy, involves checking preliminary findings against raw data. Tape recording the interviews allows others to replay the conversation to check accuracy of the transcription and interpretation. Hand-written notes were
taken during each interview in case the recording equipment failed, which it did on two occasions. Finally, the testing of interpretations with interviewees, called member checking, was also included by asking Vasquez, who was an interviewee and who knows many of the other students, to review a draft of the dissertation.

Transferability

Transferability is a complicated issue. Basically, in a study such as this, the best a researcher can offer is that the results are a thick description of reality within the time and context of the study. It's up to the reader to decide, when trying to transfer the results to another time and context, whether enough similarities exist to apply these findings elsewhere. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the onus is on the researcher to provide "the widest possible range of information for inclusion in the thick description" (p. 316).

Dependability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), dependability is best established by an audit. This is similar to a fiscal audit, in which an outsider examines the process and the product of a study to see if the findings and interpretation are supported. This was done by Theresa Maldonado, Engineering Professor, Casey Gonzales, Affirmative Action Director, and Patricia Lazo, Coordinator of the McNair
Program, a program that assists minority students to prepare for graduate school.

Confirmability

Confirmability can be substantiated, not only by an audit, but also by triangulation and the keeping of a reflexive journal. The plan for assuring triangulation has already been described, and the reflexive journal was also used.

Spradley (1979) defined a reflexive journal as follows: Like a diary, this journal will contain a record of experiences, ideas, fears, mistakes, confusions, breakthroughs, and problems that arise during field work. A journal represents the personal side of field work; it includes reactions to informants and the feelings you sense from others. Each journal entry should be dated. (p. 76)

According to Spradley, the journal become an important source of data when the researcher begins writing.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This chapter introduces the students who were interviewed for the study. Details about their backgrounds are provided as well as the findings as they relate to each of the research questions. Information from university records and student organization files and a description of observations by the researcher of student campus activities are also be reported.

In the interest of including a variety of students from different backgrounds, efforts were made to include both random and purposely selected students. First, a description is given of the characteristics of the sample population as a whole; this is followed by descriptions of the interviewees.

Of the 21 students interviewed, 5 lived in residence halls, 8 lived with their parents, and 8 lived in apartments by themselves, with a roommate, or with a spouse and/or children. Fourteen of the students had previously attended at least one other college, and 7 had attended only this university. The students had a variety of majors, and all were undergraduates. Eight had a major in engineering, 3 in communication, 2 in political science, and 1 in each of the
following disciplines: psychology, business, music, pre-dental, Spanish, architecture, interdisciplinary studies, and sports medicine.

Although 13 of these students were reared in Texas, one grew up in Peru, another in Mexico, a third in Europe and one was reared in a military family that moved all over the United States. Four students in the sample were not asked this question.

In order to understand the perspective and values of these students, it is important to know something about their background and frame of reference. Each student was given the opportunity to select an alias for reporting purposes, and all will be referred to by first name only to protect confidentiality. The following section introduces each student.

Student Backgrounds

Oscar is a civil engineering major who works full-time, takes classes at night part-time, and lives with his wife and 16 month-old son in a house. He grew up in El Paso, Texas, and had made a previous attempt at college at the University of Texas at El Paso from 1978 to 1981. He described himself as not being very serious about college at that time and his grades reflected it. As he looks back at that time, he says, "I kind of kick myself in the rear right now. Now it's tough."
After dropping out of college, he started his own construction company. He worked in construction for 4 years until the market died, during which, he says, he learned a lot about engineering, which helps him in his current job and his classes. Oscar returned to college in 1991 as a part-time student with a family. He anticipates graduating in 1996.

Oscar says that his great-grandfather was a doctor in Mexico, but that neither of his parents attended college. He is the oldest of three children and has a sister in college and a brother who works.

Robert is a sophomore architecture major who goes to school full-time and lives in a residence hall. He was born in Laredo, Texas, and grew up in Fort Worth. He attends Tarrant County Junior College in the summers and plans to graduate in 1995. He is 1 of 5 children with a brother in the Navy and three little sisters, ages 14, 10, and 3. His mother graduated from college in Mexico, and his father completed the fourth grade.

Robert supports himself with a combination of financial aid, work at a part-time job off-campus 15 to 18 hours a week, and help from his mother and father. He describes himself as an active member of the Association of Mexican-American Students (AMAS) on campus.
Julie is a junior majoring in speech. She works part-time on campus in the work-study program, takes full-time classes, and lives in an apartment with her 3-year-old son. She grew up in Georgetown, Texas, and attended Tarleton State University for a year as an accounting major before attending this university.

Julie says that neither of her parents went to college, but that both have good jobs. Her older sister just graduated from Texas Tech University with a degree in occupational therapy, and her younger brother is working on a degree in photo journalism at Sam Houston State University. She has three step siblings, none of whom have gone to college.

When describing her upbringing, Julie says, "When I was in Georgetown, we lived in a real, real nice neighborhood, and we have always grown up there. I always grew up with all the little white kids, so I just picked up all their traits." She recently made the honor roll, has become a peer counselor on campus, and plans to graduate in the summer of 1994.

Puff is a computer science engineering major who is a first-generation high school graduate and first-generation college student. He grew up in Dallas, Texas, with his mother and sister. He describes a life of poverty and the difficulty of being reared without a father.
He takes great pride in having played the trumpet in a mariachi band in middle school and travelling around the state to perform. On campus he works part-time in the computer lab in the Center for Multicultural Cooperation (CMC) and is a member of the Texas Association of Mexican-American College Students (TAMACS). Financial aid helps him to finance his education, and he plans to graduate in 1994.

Alicia is 32 years old, is majoring in organizational communication, and lives in an apartment off campus. She grew up in Houston, Texas, and will be the first woman in her family with a college degree. She previously attended Texas Womans' University for one year and Houston Community College on and off for four years. Between attempts at college, she worked in a bank and as a partner in a landscape company. She has aspirations to earn a master's degree in social work and go into private practice.

Alicia's father is a doctor, and her mother became a nurse by receiving on-the-job training at a teaching hospital. Alicia has an older brother who graduated from college and two younger sisters who attended college but did not graduate. Her parents and the bank helped to pay for college in her previous attempts, but now she has a workstudy job on campus and a part-time job off campus to support herself.
Alicia is involved in several organizations on campus, including Encore, an organization for nontraditional students; the President's Student Advisory Council; the Campus Logo Planning Committee; and the Social Work Association. She is a McNair Fellow, which is a program that assists minority students in preparing for graduate school. Alicia plans to graduate in 1994.

Anthony, who is majoring in music and plays the trumpet, enjoys both teaching and performing. In addition to full-time classes and working in a music store part-time, he plays tejano music in a band on weekends. He grew up in Haltom City, Texas, and currently lives with his parents. His family helps him to pay for books and tuition.

Prior to attending this university, he attended to the University of Texas at San Antonio for three years as a radio and television major and then spent one year at Tarrant County Junior College in order to help out at home. Both of his parents went to college but quit 30 hours short of graduation. He says that his parents are particularly supportive of his finishing his degree because they believe that their future would have been better had they finished. He says that his parents were pressured to quit school to work to support their family, so they are careful not to do the same to him.
Anthony has a brother who is a freshman at the University of Houston majoring in hotel and restaurant management. Anthony anticipates graduating in the fall of 1994 or the spring of 1995.

Elizabeth, a political science major, previously attended the University of California and the University of Missouri on the G.I. bill. She was reared in Victoria, Texas, and currently lives in an apartment with her 21-year-old son, who also attends this university. She was the first person in her family to go to college.

Elizabeth plans to go to graduate school in political science and eventually would like to have a job in which she travels to high schools to encourage minority students to stay in school and go to college. She has a work study job on campus and is a McNair Fellow.

Sop is a pre-electrical engineering major who earned his associates' degree in electronics at Eastfield Junior College before coming to this university. He grew up in Dallas, Texas, and now lives in a residence hall. Neither his parents nor his sister went to college, and his brother took only a couple of classes. In fact, out of 50 cousins and over a dozen aunts and uncles in his family, only he and one other cousin have any kind of college degree.

Sop is a full-time student, an officer for AMAS, and a member of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers.
(SHPE). He does not work during the school year because his parents pay his expenses. He says he has not applied for financial aid because that would be like begging or taking someone else’s money. He would rather get a job in the near future to ease the financial strain rather than applying for financial aid.

Sop has a concern for the Mexican-American students at this university, which has to do with all the efforts extended toward recruiting these students and the lack of efforts to help retain them through graduation. He calls it the leaky bucket theory. It concerns him that AMAS focuses on social activities and recruitment when it should be emphasizing academics in order to help more students graduate.

Suzanne is 22-years-old and an electrical engineering major with a presidential leadership scholarship. She lives at home with her parents, who also help her with college expenses. Her mother finished the sixth grade and then went to accounting school in Mexico, and her stepfather is a high school graduate.

In engineering classes, Suzanne says she is one of two women or the only woman in most of her classes. She feels pressure in some of these classes because she thinks she is graded harder than her male classmates by some professors because she is female.
Luis is a pre-dental major who grew up in Dallas, Texas, and now lives in a residence hall. He would like to be a dentist because he admired his orthodontist's way of working with children and because he would like to have his own business. He has attended only this university and plans to transfer to Texas A&M. His parents pay for his schooling, and he plans to graduate in 1995 or 1996.

His mother graduated from high school in Mexico and then attended cosmetology school. His father was raised in the area near Brownsville, Texas, and is a certified public accountant with a masters' degree from the University of North Texas.

Luis has been a member of the Student Activities Board and AMAS on campus. He is the chairman of the AMAS sports program.

Belinda is a psychology senior planning to graduate in a month. She lives with her husband, 4-year-old daughter, 6-month-old daughter, and parents-in-law in the parents' house. Her husband also attends this university, and his parents take care of the children while he and Belinda are at school.

She grew up in Corpus Christi, Texas, and previously attended Texas A&M for four years, beginning as a freshman in pre-med. She described feeling very excluded at Texas A&M.
Belinda's goals changed during college when she married and had her first child. She and her husband moved from College Station to Irving, Texas, to go where the jobs were, which is how she came to live near this university. She hopes to attend graduate school some day.

Baka San is a 22-year-old computer science engineer with two previous associates degrees. One degree is in robotics, and the other is in computer-aided drafting. He previously attended Texas Wesleyan College and Tarrant County Junior College.

He lives at home with his parents, serves as an officer in SHPE, and plans to graduate in 1995. His father has a masters' degree in law enforcement, and his mother has a degree in nursing. Baka San says he sometimes has the best of both worlds because, in person, he does not look Hispanic, but on paper his surname helps him to qualify for minority scholarships.

Red is 25-years-old and an engineering major with plans to attend graduate school. He also attended Tarrant County Junior College and plans to graduate in 1993. He is a member of SHPE and a brother to Baka San.

Soledad is a Spanish major who would like to teach in an elementary school after graduation. She was raised in Liberty, Texas, and previously attended Lee Junior College and the University of Houston. She chose this university
because she has relatives nearby. Currently, she lives in a residence hall and plans to graduate in 1994.

She describes herself as a first-generation college student who finds that distinction to be lonely at times. She has one sister who graduated from high school and one who is still in high school. She has a brother who is attending a junior college.

Maria is a political science senior who grew up in Peru. At age 21 she moved to the United States and started college in Colorado two years later. She spent three years in the Community College of Denver and two years at the University of Colorado. During that time she married an American and obtained American citizenship. She said that going to college in Peru is highly competitive and that there can be 8,000 students competing for only 200 spaces.

She lives with her husband and baby and is expecting her second child. She attends school part-time and does not presently work; she spends her time studying and taking care of her home and her child. She plans to graduate at the end of the summer session in 1993.

Maria's father went to college and became a dentist but is now deceased. Her mother did not attend college. Maria says that most students from Latin America who come here are from wealthy and/or well-educated families because it is expensive to go to college out of the country. Maria
describes Texas as a conservative state and says it can be very lonely for a Latin student because the people here appear not to trust those with a different accent.

Kirstin is a sports medicine major who grew up in an air force family that travelled all over the world. She says that she grew up in Europe and has spent a total of 11 years in the United States. Currently she lives in an apartment with a roommate.

She attended four junior colleges before attending this university. They included San Antonio College for a year, St. Phillips for one semester, Santa Barbara College for a semester, and Oxnard for a year and a half. Her mother has a General Education Diploma, and her father is a college graduate and works as a field engineer.

Kirstin works 20 to 25 hours a week as a medic and is in the army reserves. She is in the process of being hired by the police department. She has a wide range of interests and has previously majored in general studies and x-ray technology. She plans to graduate in 1995.

Naomi is a business major with plans to attend to pharmacy school, eventually manage a pharmacy, and become involved in local politics. She also grew up in a military family and spent some years in Ohio, Texas, and California. She lives at home with her parents and is very active on campus in student organizations. She has been president of
AMAS, a campus tour guide, a member of a student budgeting committee, a charter member and organizer of a Hispanic sorority, Kappa Delta Chi, and has helped plan Homecoming and Semana de Cultura weeks.

Her father has the distinction, of which she is very proud, of having worked as a migrant worker and having earned a masters' degree. Her mother did not attend college and neither did her brother, but she has a sister with a bachelors' degree. Her parents help her pay for school; she plans to graduate with her first degree in 1994.

Jesus is a mechanical engineering major and a member of a wheelchair basketball team that has won three national championships in three consecutive years. He began life in Mexico and lived there until age 6 when his family moved to California. He attended Glendale College for one year before coming to this university to play on the basketball team. He lives on campus in an apartment and has been a member of TAMACS.

Jesus has two sisters, both of whom have college degrees in teaching and one brother, who is going to school in a police academy. Jesus plans to graduate in 1994.

Carolina is an interdisciplinary studies senior with plans to graduate soon. She grew up in Grand Prairie, Texas, and lives at home with her family. She describes herself as being very politically active and very interested
in learning about her Mexican-American history. In addition to politics, she enjoys folklorica dancing and working with groups such as Youth Opportunities Unlimited, Upward Bound, gangs, and drug users.

She has three brothers, the oldest of whom dropped out of school in junior high school and now works with gangs. Her middle brother attends this university, and her youngest brother is in high school in the honors program.

Bob, age 22, is an aerospace engineering major attending college with a track scholarship. He lives in an apartment close to campus and says his parents help him pay for school. He is not sure which year he will graduate. His mother has a college degree in allied health; he did not say what his father's educational background is.

J.C. is a freshman in communication who grew up in El Paso, Texas. He lives in a residence hall and has been active on campus in track and hall government. He says, "I have found a home at Pachl Hall." Being involved on campus he says, makes life fun. He has attended only this university.

Both of his parents attended the University of Texas at El Paso, and his older brother goes there as well, off and on. He has a little sister in the eighth grade.

The following section includes the information gathered for each of the research questions. Rather than reporting
percentages and means, direct quotes are listed for each question in order to communicate the nuances and meanings of the students' perceptions on various issues in their college experience. The student's responses are quoted verbatim, without correction of grammar, in order to avoid loss of meaning. Conclusions and recommendations based on these findings are discussed in chapter 5.

Interviews

College decision

Research Question 1: How did the student decide to go to college? Although stated in different ways, 6 themes emerged in the answers to this question. The themes are named better future, fluke, always assumed, parent enforced, self-improvement, and inspired. Some students answered with combinations of these themes. Examples are given for each of these themes.

Soledad indicated a desire for a better future when she said,

I think I just wanted something better, really. Because I know that getting an education is supposed to be a good thing for being able to provide for yourself and your family. You've got a better future, as far as you'll have a job, I think--especially in the education field. I'll never have to worry about being laid off or anything like that.
Anthony says, "When I started, I really didn't know aside from it was just the only way I knew would make things better in the long run."

Puff describes a painful event in kindergarten when he was ridiculed by other children for not having nice clothes. Back then I didn't know, but now I know. As I grew older, I knew that she [his mother who reared him as a single parent] wasn't able to buy me what I needed. I guess about the ninth or eighth grade--ever since that day that I figured out what was hurting her so much--you know, I guess I made a promise to myself never for me to feel that type of pain or for her to feel that type of pain again. You know, they say that education and knowledge is power and all this other stuff.

With her response, Elizabeth coined the name of this theme as fluke.

Well, really and truly it started out as a fluke. I was ex-military and I was working at a hospital after my military stint and these young people were there. They said, how come you don't go to college? With your G.I. bill you could get more than you are getting here. And I go, I could? I was working really hard. I couldn't believe I could go to school and make more. So I went to the University of Missouri.
Sop had a similar circumstance. He says,
I don't know, it just happened. I honestly wasn't
thinking too much about it, and I think it was the last
SATs that could be sent out to the schools before you
could get accepted. My cousin convinced me to take it;
then, in the morning, because she didn't have a car—to
sign up myself—so why not?
Thus, Sop was talked into taking entrance examinations
because he gave his cousin a ride to the test.

Although there is no direct quotation from Carolina
because the tape recorder malfunctioned during her
interview, her response to this question was memorable. She
says she remembers thinking that she might not be alive
after high school because she just saw a big void. She was
not suicidal; she just could not see any future after high
school until the Upward Bound program opened the possibility
of college for her.

Several students replied that it was just always assumed
in their family that they would go to college. Jesus
reports, "Well, I had a good GPA in high school, and I
didn't even try that hard. I always liked school. I always
thought about going to college in the future, so that's what
got it started." Alicia says, "It was just always assumed I
would go to college. All of my siblings have all gone to
college; not all of them have graduated." Julie says, "It
was always just kind of understood." Anthony replies, "I always felt that I was gonna go to college. There was no doubt about it; I was just gonna go."

Some students report that their parents exerted varying levels of influence in their decision to go to college. Naomi says, "It wasn't an option like some kids. I didn't know it was a choice!" Oscar reports, "I was fresh out of high school. My Dad was the one who said, 'You gotta go to school'." Robert says, "Really, since I was a little kid, my parents kept telling me I was gonna go." These three students talk about their parents' influence in a positive way that indicates that they were willing partners in the decision. However, Belinda indicates she was not so willing:

Basically I was booted out of my house by my Dad. It was just always a thing that I would go. When I graduated high school, I wasn't anywhere ready to go. I didn't know what I wanted to do. I just kinda went because I was supposed to but I would have just as soon stayed home because I really had no direction.

Maria gave self-improvement as her reason for going to college. She put it this way: "I wanted to improve myself, and I wanted to learn better English. I thought the place to do that would be school. I want to get a better job. I didn't like my husband knowing more than I do."
The last theme describes those students who were inspired by others to go to college. Kirstin reminisces,
As I was growing up, I never really knew I wanted to go to school. A lot of it is my Dad. He is a field engineer. So that's one of the biggest reasons. He was a good role model. I think that an education--it sets you apart--even if you don't use your education.

Luis remembers:
It was my decision because it is something I wanted to do. I wanted to become a dentist because it is something I've wanted ever since I've been to the orthodontist. That's what I want to be is an orthodontist. Just the way he handled his practice with all the kids. He joked around with them. He was in charge of his own business.

The students who are not quoted in this section did not reply to this question. In this type of conversational interview, there should be topics to cover but not a structured list of questions. Not all respondents directly answer the research questions, and some discuss topics that are relevant to them about their college experience. This is supposed to be an important feature of ethnographic interviews. It allows the interviewees to bring in information that they perceive to be important to the topic under study that the researcher may not have anticipated.
As illustrated by the variety of student perspectives, there is no single reason for their decisions to go to college. This lack of uniformity illustrates the diversity among Hispanics.

**Career Goals**

**Research Question 2:** Have the students' career goals changed since they came to college? Some of the students attended college after completing high school. They either dropped out because they did not apply themselves, or they left for other reasons and returned, sometimes, years later. These students were asked if their major changed at any point in their college career, not just during their most recent effort. The themes that appear in their answers include: no change, self-awareness, and external barriers.

The largest group in this sample stated that their goals or majors have not changed since they started college. The 10 students responding in this manner were Luis, Sop, Soledad, Maria, Jesus, Robert, Suzanne, Baka San, Red, and Bob. These students said that they came to college knowing what they wanted to do and that, even after taking classes in their major, they still feel that way.

The next largest group said that they are now majoring in something they really enjoy. This group includes Julie, Kirstin, Naomi, Anthony, Elizabeth, and Oscar. The following describes their process of arriving at a major.
Julie started out as an accounting major at Tarleton State University; she says that after two semesters in accounting, "I kinda realized the money wasn't all that worth it. So when I came here, I was undeclared, and my first semester here I took a speech class and really enjoyed it. So I decided to be a speech major."

Kirstin started out as an x-ray technician major at St. Phillips College because a friend encouraged her to try that major. About x-rays she says, "I actually got to work at College Hospital in Santa Barbara, and it became kind of boring and routine. You get stuck in a room doing chest x-rays all day long." Kirstin explains her switching to sports medicine:

My biggest decision in that is that I want to do something that I am good at, that I can have fun with. Well, I like medicine, so that's good. But, being a medic, I've gotten a lot of background training--like I suture, I deliver babies--stuff like that. For me, [I chose] sports medicine because I admire athletes like Martina and other athletes.

Naomi tells the following story about her major change: I was a pharmacy major, planning on being here 2 years for pre-pharmacy, transferring to a pharmacy school for 3 years, and then being out and graduated by then. But that disappeared pretty quick. I couldn't get the
courses that I wanted, so I had to compensate because I was only getting 3 to 6 or 4 to 8 hours. So I started taking business courses to balance it out. After a while, I wasn't cutting it in chemistry either, so I decided to go full business this year. And a lot was also because of my activities. Obviously, something has got to [be] sacrifice[d], and it usually was my grades. And then, all the stuff that I've done in activities--its changed what I want to do. I see a lot more of the politics at the university level and beyond, of course, so my interest has really been piqued. I can see myself running for political office, you know, small, city-wide--that kind of thing--because of my involvement here. My ultimate goal is to be a pharmacist. I want to go back and pick that up. So, as management I'd like to do something with pharmaceutical, with a minor in marketing, and either go drug rep or managing a pharmacy.

Anthony has had a few majors, with his first major being radio and television communications. He explains the changes:

From RTV communications to undecided, actually, that was before RTV, and then I went into a science major, mathematics, and then after that I realized that wasn't
really what I wanted. I had always wanted to pursue music, and I decided to go ahead and pursue that.

When asked what interests him in music, Anthony says, "Performance and teaching. Nothing beats performing."

Elizabeth started out in nursing and switched to political science. She says,

I was on my third year in nursing, and I had to leave the area, so I just—everybody was really helpful, and they pulled it all together for me to get an associates' degree in liberal arts. So, in fact, that has helped me to get into almost any college. I have a lot of science, and I don't have a lot of other stuff, but yet, I like political science.

Oscar went to college right after high school at the urging of his father. He started out in pre-med and admits that he did not take school very seriously, so he dropped out and started his own construction company. Oscar explains:

My last semester at UTEP is when I started working for a small landscape architect firm. I really liked the design part of the industry. I have been in the other side; now I want the other side—you know, the design part, and the decision-making part of it. And that is where I kind of decided, you know, maybe being an
engineer is a little better for me. So, that's where I decided to do that.

Some students have a number of reasons for changing majors, as can be seen from some of the names that re-appear in the following paragraphs. For example, both Puff and Kirstin say that they changed majors because the initial one was boring. Kirstin's account concerning x-ray technology was reported earlier. Puff says this:

Engineering, as I began to look into it--engineering is a good field. I had a strong science and math background. So I said, all right, fine, I'll go into that. I went electrical and, like I said, when I went to my first courses and they were like really boring--I didn't really like it, so I went to computer science.

Two students reported that the difficulty of chemistry caused them to select another field. Naomi's account has been given; Alicia states the following: "Well, just one word about nursing--chemistry! I have an allergy to chemistry. It's funny; they wouldn't let me be a nurse without taking chemistry."

Alicia dropped out of college and worked for awhile. She explains what she did when she came back to school. I just started taking courses and realized. . .[I] had done some research before I had gone back, trying to find out job projections, what was job growth, what was
projected as a growing field—that sort of stuff. And the thing that I had pretty well settled on was something along the lines of human resource management, social work, or communications. So, here in communications, they have what is called an organization communications degree. I had a double major because I always wanted to be a psychologist. I always wanted to do that, so I decided, I'll have a double major in psychology and organizational communications for a while. And then I realized how much longer it was going to take me to get out of school. I thought very seriously about going into social work, because with a master's degree, I could go into private practice with social work. So I decided: I will stick with organizational communications in my undergrad, and I'll get my master's degree in social work. I can go into private practice, and, if in five years into private practice, I wake up one morning and realize this is not what I want to be when I grew up, I would still have a diversified enough undergrad degree that I could go into the business world doing employee assistance, training and development, and that type of stuff.
Julie and Belinda both say that they changed majors when they learned about what they did not want to do. Julie's account has been described; Belinda shares hers:

I didn't know what I wanted to do. I kinda knew that I wanted to be a doctor. I wanted to make all this money. I wanted to have all this prestige. I go to A&M and it's very hard and I made C's and it was like--I don't know if I want to be pre-med. I had gone to some summer programs at UTLB for allied health, and so I decided I wanted to be a physical therapist. I was pre-physical therapy and I went in there and something happened . . . where I didn't get a class approved or something that I had registered for. And this man sat me down and yelled at me and said that the only things I had going for me was the fact that I was Mexican and I was a woman and that he would be glad to get me out of his department because I really--that was so devastating! And so that was when I went to psychology. It was kinda like I was a little scared kid running away to be where they accepted me, and that was kind of like where I stuck. So then after that was when I changed to psychology.

Belinda reflects on her early attempt to go to college and how it contrasts with her approach now:
I didn't have any type of life plan or plans. Yeah, they have changed a lot! Everybody says, if I knew then what I know now, it would have been so different! I'm a lot more serious now. I still don't know what I want to be, but I can definitely say that I don't want to work with numbers. There's definite preferences that I have now, but, back then, I would have been like, oh, I don't know. Now it's like I don't want to do any type of business. I want to work with people. I want to do this and this and this. My goals or likes and dislikes are a lot more clarified. I'm a lot more serious about my studies. I've got to do my best. I've got to make the grade. Back then, I was like, oh I guess I will study tonight.

J.C. changed his goals because he realized that being a track athlete could not be a lifelong career. He explains: I just kind of started realizing that an old saying, like, for basketball players--what happens when the basketball gets flat? I realized that track is not going to always be there. I can't always be strong forever. So I'm trying real hard to do my school now.

Carolina's response is not included; the notes from her interview indicate no information about this question. They do say that she plans to teach, but not whether she changed her major at any time.
The three themes that emerge in the reasons given for changing goals or majors include (a) no change, (b) change based on increased self-awareness, and (c) response to external barriers. The change based on increased self-awareness includes (a) the major was boring; (b) the major is now something the student really enjoys; (c) students learned about what they did not want to do; and (d) students realized the career would not be lifelong. The students who responded to external barriers were those who could not get the classes they needed, those who could not pass chemistry, and the one who examined the job market to find a growing field.

**Information About College**

**Research Question 3:** What do students hear about college before they arrive on campus? The two questions that primarily elicited answers to this question were: What did you hear about this university before you got here, and why did you choose this university? The following themes emerged: (a) I heard nothing; (b) I knew about the academic reputation; (c) I had heard about the athletic teams; (d) it is close to home; and (e) I knew someone who attended school here.

The most common response was that these students had heard very little, if anything, about this university before arriving on campus. Nine students said they heard nothing
or nothing much. Naomi, who attended high school in the city where the university is located said, "All the years that I went to high school . . . I had never been to the campus. I never heard anything about it and never got any information. . . it's pathetic when you don't know a major university is in your own town!"

Some students mentioned the academic reputations of four schools in the university as information they had heard. Five said that the engineering department had a good reputation; architecture, business, and music were mentioned by one student each. One student said he came here to be on the track team and another to be on the wheelchair basketball team. Two students with an opposite view said they had heard that the university did not have a good reputation.

Describing the university as a whole, two students had heard that it was a big campus, and two had also heard that the classes were difficult. The following were contributed by one person each: heard this university was a commuter school (Julie); has no school spirit (Bob); has lousy instructors (Baka San); does not have a football team (Bob); is inexpensive and offers a lot of night classes (Elizabeth); the professors do not speak English and it graduates only the best students (Red).
As to why they chose this university to attend, 9 students said they did so because it was close to their home or to a relative's home. The nine were Baka San, Elizabeth, Oscar, Belinda, Alicia, Maria, Kirstin, Naomi and Soledad.

Five students selected the university for a certain department or feature. J.C. came for the communications department, Red for engineering, Anthony for music, Robert for architecture, and Jesus for the wheelchair basketball team.

Julie, Naomi, and Luis selected this university because a family member or boyfriend went here. Bob and Suzanne came because they had the incentive of a scholarship. Red selected it because it was cheap.

Puff and Sop had both considered going away to school but they did not want to leave their families. Puff explains as follows:

I was planning to go to A&M or UT Austin. Well, my mother had asthma, and she had a real bad asthma attack after my graduation ceremony. Two days later, she had a bad asthma attack, and, if I was not there to go across the street to the neighbors to borrow their car to take her to the hospital, I think she would have died, and that's one of the reasons that prompted me to come here.
Sop said, "I was going to go to UTSA but I couldn't leave my family. I had to stay within driving distance." When Sop says he had to stay, that decision was self-imposed, not parent-imposed.

Interviews with the students revealed that the appeal of staying near home often resulted from financial restriction combined with feelings of closeness to family and a preference for staying nearby. Relationships in general, whether they were with families, girlfriends or boyfriends, played an important role in the students' choice of the university. Many had heard nothing about the school before arriving, but most who had heard anything, had heard about good academic programs or athletic teams.

**Surprises in College**

**Research Question 4:** What surprises do the students experience in college? Sometimes the answers to this question seem contradictory until the student frame of reference is considered. Often, if they had attended another university or junior college, what surprised them appeared to pertain to the contrast to their other college experiences. Fourteen of the 21 students have attended at least one other college. The students who have not attended another college are Bob, Suzanne, J.C., Naomi, Carolina, Puff, and Luis. In asking about surprises, one can learn about expectations, frames of reference, and preferences.
The answers to this question appear to cluster into nine themes: (a) feeling like a minority, (b) feeling lost in the crowd, (c) feeling disappointment in faculty, (d) fighting bureaucracy, (e) finding that people are friendly, (f) discovering a diverse campus, (g) sensing a conservative atmosphere, (h) having no surprises, and (i) experiencing difficult classes.

The five students who said or implied that they felt like a minority were not all referring to their ethnicity. Suzanne, for example, was surprised to find herself being the only one—or one of two women—in some of her engineering classes. When asked what surprised her, Alicia said, "How young the teachers were! Everyone was younger than I was!" Oscar said, "I thought I would be the old man at school at night." He was glad to see that there were many older students taking night classes. Bob and Puff both talked of about being among the few Hispanics on campus.

Nine students addressed the size of the campus or their classes concerning feeling lost in the crowd. Only Belinda described being surprised that classes and classrooms were smaller than she expected and that the campus seemed more personalized. What completes this picture is keeping in mind that she compared this campus to Texas A&M, which enrolls almost twice as many students.
Anthony's response was moderate; he said, "It was a little bigger than I expected." Jesus' reply was more typical of this group: "When I came here, I was lost. I thought it was a big campus. So that was the first thing. I could not find my way back to my apartment." Julie echoed his impression: "It was just big! It was just huge! I remember I knew where my apartment was at. I knew where the university was at, the hospital, and the mall--that was it."

Alicia described the contrast with her past experience, saying, "It was really big and spread out. I wasn't used to that because TWU is all right there." Naomi considered both campus and class size:

And then the buildings, so many of them. I thought I would never find my way around... the size of the classes, because one of my first classes--well, I had Saxe [a professor's name] in a class of 500. That was scary! I sat in the back and couldn't even see him!

Soledad described the campus as being larger than Lee College, and Sop, who was used to Eastfield Junior College, noted that, when arriving here, he found parking to be too far away. Suzanne described the advising system as having so many students waiting for assistance that she had to take a number then did not get through the line before she had to leave. She was also surprised to see 100 students in a history class.
Six students described their professors as both surprising and disappointing them. Bob said, "They give you tests that you can't possibly pass." Kirstin remarked, "My teachers, some of my physics teachers, my math teachers—they're international and a lot of them can't speak English." Puff expected professors to be more like friends, as were high school teachers. Maria noted that her teachers in Peru and Colorado looked very sophisticated and spoke English or Spanish perfectly. Here, she said, her "first teacher looked like a cowboy!" Baka San observed, "Well, the first thing that surprised me was that most all of the rumors were true. Bad instructors. Basically, all the negative rumors were true."

Addressing the topic of bureaucracy, Red said, "The bureaucracy is so huge, you have to run around to a bunch of offices . . . to find some . . . piece of information that they assumed . . . you knew ahead of time. And it is strange; the bureaucracy fights you left and right." Red had earlier attended a junior college; about that he says, "Well, the first college I went to was TCJC. That is where I got my first degree from. There everything was handled very easily." Baka San agreed, saying, "The bureaucracy surprised me."

Regarding the theme people are friendly, four students in this sample agreed with that statement, and three
disagreed. Anthony recalled thinking that people are
generally friendly on this campus. He said, "In the band
program, I noticed there weren't cliques of Hispanics and
Anglos. It was just a big group." J.C.'s first impression
was this: "I was expecting to stick to myself and not
really be able to talk to a lot of people but that's not
true here. It's friendly here." Belinda said she felt more
welcomed here than at A&M, where she felt excluded, and that
she interacts more with her professors here. She said it is
hard to know whether to attribute the difference to the two
campuses or to her own maturity. She had a theory about
this:

I think that I feel more welcome here because I have
made myself or I perceive myself like that. You know?
It's like it used to be, if I needed help or wanted
help, I wouldn't look for it, I would just kind of
like...too bad, and I wouldn't [do anything about it].
Now, if I need something, I will go out there and find
it.

She seemed to be saying that, just because others do not
take care of you, that does not mean you are not welcome and
that it takes maturity to figure that out.

On the other hand, Robert observed the following:
When I first moved in here, I was in the dorms in Pachl
Hall, and coming out of that, I was expecting a little
more "friendliness" or something. Then, after a while that I was here, I started getting a little more interactive with people because I joined an organization in the middle of my first semester here [AMAS].

Sop spoke about friendliness:

Yeah, there is one thing that always surprised me. At Eastfield, when I was walking around, no matter who it was, I may not have known them or anything, I could say hi and they would say hi back. Here, no way.

Julie described coming to this campus after growing up in a small town and attending a small college:

When I came here, I was really kind of sad because I've always been really outgoing, and when I came here, I didn't have any friends at all. It was hard for me to start out again. Nobody was really that friendly. You sit down in your class and you are just there to study and you . . . leave.

The sixth theme that emerged among the answers was the impression of this being a diverse campus. Belinda said that she was surprised at all the ethnic diversity, and Oscar also said, "This is pretty much like UTEP except there is just a little more diversity." Julie shared her impressions:
I think the biggest shock was just seeing so many people and so many different ethnic ... In Tarleton, you were either Hispanic, black, or white. I had never seen so many different, you know, Oriental people or Asian people. You never see any of those, even in my hometown. So it was really diverse!

Three students contributed thoughts to the seventh theme, conservative atmosphere. Elizabeth had a lot to say on this topic. In fact, this was her main focus of our conversation.

As far as classes, what is different is that--I guess it must be the Texas attitude or culture. Because, sometimes, being in political science, we'll argue some subjects, and usually the subjects--whatever they might be--half the class would be for or against in California. Here, it seems like everybody is against social programs or poor people--period! I was really sort of startled. These people were so young, and I thought that they would be more of what we would think as liberal, but they are soooo conservative! To me they borderline on racism because they are so extreme. I just couldn't believe it! That has been a shock!

Maria had a different perspective: "Teachers, they were very conservative. I came from Colorado, and I had these very liberal teachers, so here was kind of--it was
different." Kirstin talked about Texas' being behind Europe and California in technology and clothing. She said this about clothes:

They are not into fashion. They are more into this country living--a lot think women should wear dresses--type of thing. Men should be in ties, whereas other states are a little bit more radical. Like, I don't think they expect women to have punkish-looking hairdos. They don't expect for the males to have long hair. They kind of stereotype people. I'm not sure, that's my opinion.

Puff is the only student who mentioned that he was disappointed with other Hispanics on campus, so his point was not considered a theme in the answer to this question. Here was his perspective:

All right--my kind of Hispanic, Mexican-American--passing you on the street...if you are Hispanic, I say, "What's up?" You would say, "Hey, what's up?" You would not question do I know you? All you know, if you are another Hispanic and because I said hi, you should return the hi back. Another thing is, because we didn't have much in my neighborhood, we always stood up for each other, you know? Man, I need a dollar. I got one, here you go. We never said, "When you gonna pay me back?"
Puff did not think many of his type of Hispanics attend this university.

Three students said that nothing surprised them when they first arrived at the university. Carolina's reason was that she had been in the Upward Bound program in high school, in which the student stays on campus and takes classes in order to better prepare for college; therefore, campus life was already familiar to her. Luis said that nothing really surprised him, but, he did not elaborate on his answer. His sister was already in attendance at this university before he arrived, so he may have received some information from her. Soledad said that nothing surprised her because, as a first-generation college student, she had no expectations. Also, she had attended two colleges before she came here.

The last theme relating to surprises is called difficult classes. Sop said, "The classes were a lot harder than high school, that's for sure!" Kirstin said this about a history course:

I mean, it's a challenge and kinda neat. I like challenges, but sometimes you are, like, too fast! It's kind a like you have a beginner basketball player [who] maybe doesn't even know how to throw the basket, and you are competing against Magic Johnson. That's
how you feel. A lot of times I think a lot of other students feel the same way.

Robert had the opposite experience. He said, "As a matter of fact, a lot of people told me it [college] was going to be hard, but my first year here--it wasn't very hard. The first semester was the best semester I've had."

The nine themes relating to the surprises experienced by these students on their arrival at the university give the general impression that, to a new student, the university can seem a large, confusing place. However, some of the students appreciate the diverse student body, and others have found friendships.

Family Impact

Research Question 5: How do the students' families affect their success in college? The following are the three questions that elicited the most information about family were: How does your family affect your college attendance? Did you grow up speaking Spanish? Did your parents or any other family members go to college?

Belinda aptly provided a good introduction to this section:

I think family is a big part of Mexican-American students--and how your family is reacting to you, how they are reacting to college, or how they are treating you. I think family is a really big deal to a lot of
Hispanic students and what they [their families] think—-I think a lot of that shapes how they [the student] experience school.

Out of the sample group, eight students are first-generation college students (Sop, Soledad, Puff, Julie, Elizabeth, Suzanne, Oscar, and Carolina); five have parents who both went to college (J.C., Anthony, Baka San, Red and Belinda); five have fathers who went to college, but mothers who did not (Luis, Alicia, Naomi, Kirstin, and Maria); and two have mothers who went to college, but fathers who did not (Robert and Bob). Jesus did not indicate whether either of his parents went to college. A total of 13 students reported that at least one sibling has attended college (Baka San, Red, Sop, Soledad, J.C., Carolina, Alicia, Oscar, Anthony, Julie, Luis, Naomi, and Jesus); 3 reported no siblings who have been to college (Robert, Elizabeth and Puff); and the remaining 5 did not mention it at all (Kirstin, Maria, Belinda, Bob, and Suzanne).

Speaking Spanish is an important part of many Hispanic households. Of the interviewees, 14 grew up speaking Spanish, and 10 of them refer to it as their first language. The 10 students are Carolina, Puff, Luis, Robert, Soledad, Kirstin, Maria, Alicia, Jesus, and Naomi. The 4 who learned English first are Belinda, Oscar, Anthony, and Suzanne.
Seven reported that they did not learn Spanish. They include Sop, J.C., Julie, Elizabeth, Baka San, Red, and Bob. However, Sop, J.C., Julie, and Elizabeth are taking Spanish classes. Some students speak other languages: Kirstin, who learned Italian living overseas; Maria, who speaks Portuguese growing up in Peru; J.C., who learned Greek visiting relatives in Greece; and Suzanne, who learned German.

There appear to be 5 themes in the students' answers relating to the speaking of Spanish. They have been named lost fluency, protected generation, ethnic pride, mixed languages and older generation.

Four students mentioned that they are losing fluency in the language they do not use regularly. For example, Naomi said,

My first years, I was raised by my grandmother. She is from Mexico, so she only spoke Spanish. My first language is Spanish, and all I spoke was Spanish. I moved to Ohio, and I forgot my Spanish because, obviously, there are no Mexicans there . . . . I would come in the summers back to my grandmother's and learn Spanish, go back and forget it. So, it has kind of been on and off. I can speak Spanish now; it's not fluent, but I can understand it really well, and I can speak it enough to get by.
Anthony and Alicia described the same kind of off-and-on use; so they do not feel very fluent in Spanish. J.C. said that he has forgotten most of the Greek he learned because he only used it one summer.

Julie, Elizabeth, and Anthony described their parents as speaking Spanish to each other, but not encouraging the children to learn it. They gave several reasons why. Julie explained as follows:

When my parents grew up, their language that they spoke was Spanish. My father is Spanish; his family comes from Spain, and my mother is Mexican. They speak Spanish to each other, but we are like Tex-Mex, I guess you could say. The reason they said that they never taught us Spanish was because, when they were going to school, they would get in trouble for speaking Spanish and they didn't want the same thing to happen to us. But, if they knew times were changing, they would have taught us.

Elizabeth explained it this way:
Well, I am not bilingual, and I grew up in a Spanish household, speaking Spanish. But, during the time I was going to high school in the late 60s--during that time, we were not allowed to speak Spanish. We would get in trouble. Even like now, they have got English as a second language because they were trying to
assimilate us into the Caucasian culture and that was to lose our language, our identity, and our customs. . . So our parents spoke Spanish to each other, but they didn't let us speak Spanish to them or to ourselves because they were trying to do what is best for us.

Anthony learned Spanish from being around his grandparents until he started school.

And then when I started public school, it was a predominantly Anglo school. Nobody spoke it, and anytime I spoke it, they looked at me like, huh? . . . I was never punished; it was peers that were like "What is that? You're weird." You know, that kind of thing. I wouldn't say punishment; it just felt uncomfortable.

The theme ethnic pride represents the students who did not learn Spanish growing up, who are now struggling to learn it in college classes, and who are feeling embarrassed when they do not do as well as they think they should because it is a part of their heritage. Julie said, "Even though I'm Spanish, I don't know it, and it's very difficult for me and I get really stressed out." Sop described his embarrassment this way:

I didn't do very good on the midterm; actually I did real bad on the midterm, and I felt bad. I thought, golly, I'm going to get a bad grade in this class.
It's going to look bad. They are going to say, Sop [his surname], a C in Spanish, I don't know about that. He said he felt better when a university staff member told him, "I guarantee you got people here who speak English all their lives and they are not getting A's in English."

J.C. said, "It was actually weird, because a lot of my friends thought I was a pure Spanish person, and I knew the language great and it really wasn't me." Elizabeth spoke about her classmates in Spanish:

Everybody expects me to know it in class because of my age and then, on the other hand, they find out that I don't know it so they are sympathetic to that. But, when I do know something in class, it's like, "it's just because she is Spanish."

The mixed languages theme refers to those who described various ways languages were combined in their homes. Naomi said, "My parents would speak Spanish, but they speak Spanglish and every other word is alternating, so I can understand it." Julie used the phrase Tex-Mex and Puff called the mixture "speaking Spanish like a tourist".

Alicia explained her family's mixed-language situation: My mother is American, and my father is Spanish. We would speak Spanish to my father and speak English to my mother. My father would not acknowledge us if we didn't speak Spanish because he wanted us to be
bilingual. We used to have some pretty funny family
discussions because my mother didn't understand
Spanish. She understood the dirty words we found out
real quick, and she understood a lot more than she
could speak. But, for us to just carry on a regular
conversation with her—we couldn't do that. And we
would get in these family arguments and these really
heated discussions or arguments, and the next minute,
our parents are standing there laughing because we are
speaking Spanish to our mother and English to our
father and they are just laughing at us because we are
all confused.

The older-generation theme concerns what older people
who value the ability to speak Spanish have said to the
students. Sop reported family conversations:

When someone would come over—like my uncles who always
speak Spanish all the time—and they would hear me
speak English a lot, they are like, "How come you don't
speak Spanish?" [Then] "Oh, he never picked it up; he
never cares." My dad would say that. I say, "What!
You never speak it around the house, so how am I
supposed to speak it all the time?" He just blows me
off when I say that . . . My cousins are all the same
way as me, so I don't feel so bad. A lot of my
cousins, that is, not all of them.
Anthony told this story:
One time, we were sitting there having breakfast, and an older lady—she was an older student; she was probably in her sixties—turned around and said, "Where did you all learn to speak Spanish? You speak it so beautifully, I wish more kids did."

Julie related a similar story:
The older generations in our family—it's kinda like a disgrace to them that we don't know Spanish. It doesn't really bother me and my brother and my sister. It's not like a big thing that we get upset about.

The following section focuses on how Hispanic families help to support the students' college attendance and how families can hinder the progress of the students. An overwhelming majority of the students (16) described their families or a family member as being supportive of their attending college. Five students, including 3 who had also described supportive family members, said that their families did and said things that hindered their momentum. J.C. and Red were not asked this specific question, and Alicia did not mention any support from her family other than financially which will be discussed later.

The 16 students who were supported emotionally by their families were Carolina, Jesus, Bob, Belinda, Anthony, Julie, Kirstin, Luis, Sop, Maria, Naomi, Puff, Baka San, Robert,
Elizabeth, and Soledad. Julie described her family's support this way: "They are like supportive, like 100%. I mean, they would do anything for us to go to school. They think it's a wonderful opportunity." Kirstin said of her family: They support me tremendously. In fact, I've gotten to the point where I say I can't afford to go to school, I . . . need time out . . . they say, "Well, we'll help you", and they help me out a lot, monetary-wise. Sop spoke of his father's role:

My Dad, if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have done anything, to be honest. Nothing. I wouldn't have bothered. He wanted me to do it and I'll do it for him if I can. I hope so, we'll see.

The rest of the group echoed sentiments such as the above. They all seem to have close family relationships and a strong commitment to higher education.

The five students who described how family members can hinder their college attendance were Suzanne, Elizabeth, Oscar, Puff, and Belinda. Suzanne gave an example:

Well, with my family, my Mom is real protective of me going to sleep. There have been times when as a college student I need to stay up to do homework, or I need to stay up to study for a test, and she says, "It's 11 o'clock, you have to start going to sleep." I say, "No, I have to stay awake!" Then later, I stay
awake anyway til 2 o'clock, and my Mom would get up and say, "Go to sleep." She would come over and make me, you know, stop my work.

Elizabeth said about her family, "Even though they are really happy [for me to be going to college], or whatever the word might be, but, on the other hand, it's like [they say], "Gosh, you have been in college forever, when are you going to get out?".

Oscar described this scenario:

Well, when I first started back in '91, my wife was very helpful. I have friends who have also gone back to school and finished later, and they told me, they said, "How has she done? How has she done?" I said, "She has done really well. She's helping me out. She's pushing me to study." [They said,] "She is going to get tired of that." And, in fact, that has happened! She has gotten tired. She says, "You've gotta do this, you've gotta do that," so I have to cram my studying into whenever I can. And the little one—I kinda like to spend time with him anyway.

Puff said that his sister is supportive of his attending college, but that his mother says, "When are you gonna get out of school because we are pressed for money now. I mean we only get . . . or your rent is due now." He continued:
To this day, I work when I can, but there is this balance between work . . . time is limited, right? How you budget time . . . Well, am I gonna sacrifice my grade by taking away study time by working? You know, like have a high income? It's almost like a seesaw. Do I have no income and suffer in the household and excel over here academically?

Belinda described her parents as being supportive and her inlaws as helping to take care of her children so that she can graduate at the end of the semester. However, she gave an example of how family hinders her progress:

I have been thinking about going on ahead and going to graduate school, and even been thinking about applying for medical school to be a psychiatrist. Last week, I just made this decision. I'm not going! I just don't have the support. It's simple as that, and no matter how much I really want it. . . . Last weekend, okay, I had two tests Tuesday, and last weekend there was nobody at home, not my husband, not my inlaws, nobody but me and my girls. So I got no studying done. None! And I needed to!

Other than emotional support, there are four other ways in which families help these students succeed in college, including (a) help with children, (b) financial assistance,
(c) help with homework, and (d) advice for preparing for classes.

Maria, Julie, and Belinda all said that their families help take care of their children so that they can study. Maria's mother, for example, is planning to come to Texas this summer from Peru in order to help while Maria finishes classes. Julie explained:

It's just me by myself, and during . . . finals and when I have a lot of projects due, my parents will, like, watch him [her son Colby] for a week. At first, it was really hard to let him go, but now it's like--okay, take him, take him. I know he's in good hands.

Belinda's inlaws help by providing room for her whole family in their house to relieve her of having the pressure to having to work. They also help by watching her children so she can go to class and study.

Ten students reported that their families assist them financially, and since this question was not asked directly, there may have been more. The 10 included Luis, Robert, Kirstin, Sop, Julie, Alicia, Anthony, Naomi, Bob, and Suzanne. Robert said that, when he lost his financial aid eligibility, his parents began paying for his schooling. He felt this way about their assistance:
It's really sort of a give and take with my parents. My income tax—I just got it yesterday. I never expected it to be solely for me. They [his parents] have always been giving to me. The check that I got in the mail from IRS isn't mine; it's theirs. That's really like a payback for all that they have done. They have helped me a lot through this college.

When Sop was asked about financial aid, he said, "I never applied. Everyone tells me I'm stupid for not even applying. I never applied." When asked how he was paying for school, he answered, "My parents." He views financial aid as using other people's money, and he would rather work than apply for that.

The results indicate some of the falsehood concerning the myth that all Hispanic college students attend college on financial aid. Ten of these students receive help from their families; Oscar works full-time; 3 students are on athletic or leadership scholarships (J.C., Bob, and Suzanne); and many have part-time jobs.

Maria said that her husband sometimes helps her with her homework. Luis said his dad encourages him to study, and Naomi reported that her dad encouraged her to take college preparation classes in high school. All three view these efforts as helping them to succeed in college.
The final section of this discussion relating to families is devoted to various messages students told about having received from their parents on a variety of topics. Some relate to lifestyle issues, and some relate to the value their parents place on a college degree.

Luis said the following concerning lifestyle:

She [his mother] doesn't like the fact that I leave [for college], but she's happy that I am going, that I go do something rather than just sit around. 'Course, they [his parents] hate when I wear my hat backwards or sideways, because they say it's gang related.

Puff quotes his mother:

Look, you can start going out, but there are two things you don't do. First off, you don't come home with a girl . . . telling me she is pregnant, and the other thing is you don't call me from jail or come home with the cops. Other than that, you can do anything you want to do.

On the value of a college degree, Baka San said, "My parents say, 'Get your degree. Do whatever it takes.'"

Kirstin said about her parents, "Basically, they don't pressure me to do anything I don't want to do. They want me to be happy in whatever area . . . I choose. However, they . . . strongly suggest that college is important because that is the way the future is going." Carolina said that
her parents are concerned about her involvement in community service because they are afraid that it will interfere with her success in college.

All in all, these students appear to have supportive families who value their pursuit of a college degree. They help them in several ways including financial and emotional support, childcare, and assistance with homework. The students described close family relationships and an appreciation for the support they receive. Some students, however, feel pressured by family to contribute money to the household, do chores, take care of children, or stop studying in order to sleep.

**College Success**

**Research Question 6:** What has helped the students succeed in college? The interview questions that helped to shed light on this question include the following: What has been your favorite class at this university? What has helped you to be successful at this university? Could you describe to me how you spend your time in an average week?

Of the 17 students who were asked what their favorite class was, 9 responded that a class in their major field of study was their favorite. For example, Robert picked architecture; Baka San, computer organization; J.C. and Alicia, communication; Julie, speech; Belinda, experimental
psychology; Oscar, survey class; Anthony, music theory; and Jesus, statics.

When giving reasons why they selected certain classes as their favorites, the students often described one or a combination of 3 elements, which included liking something about the professor or how he or she teaches; finding the subject to be interesting or enjoying the interaction with other students in class projects. They referred either to singular elements or to the following combinations: subject and professor; subject and other students; professor and other students.

Two students mentioned only characteristics of their professor as their reasons for choosing a certain class as their favorite. Maria selected English literature, saying this about her professor: She knows what she is teaching. She is a good teacher. She is sophisticated and she is what you expect of a teacher. She is open-minded. She was very supportive. Baka San observed that his professor for computer organization was neat and flexible.

Belinda and Sop both said they chose their favorite class because of the subject and the other students. Belinda explained why she chose experimental psychology:

Because it was hard, but it was challenging, and the thing that I like most about it was that I met some real good friends in it. Because we were required to
have partners, and, in one, we did a group experiment out in the field where we went as a group of four. So I became real close to these guys. Actually, the whole class was real close. I guess that's my whole big hang-up. I don't like the anonymity. You could go through your whole college career and go to classes and go home and never meet a soul.

Sop chose two classes as his favorites--racquetball and physics lab. About racquetball, he said, "I've had the most fun in racquetball. This is the second semester in a row I've taken it. I've taken it with a friend always." He goes on to describe the enjoyment of the competition of trying to beat his friend. He related the following about physics lab:

Oh, there was one in particular where they would give you a little ball and this little shooter, and you would measure how much force it would throw it out at, that particular little ball. It would set up on a stand at a certain angle, and you had to calculate where it would land on the floor. You had test tries on the flat, and we got to measure those out, but then it came down to--our whole grade rested on where it landed with a little target . . . We got a 100, so I was awfully happy that day.
Alicia is the only student who described liking both the professor and the other students. She chose communications classes: "A lot of communications courses require group projects. To me that's fun! It's not work. That's not class work, it's enjoyable. I like getting together." About the professor, she said, "She motivates me to do more. . . . For me, she is a role model. She is one of the few women with a Ph.D. in communication . . . She always makes me think."

Five students chose classes based on the combination of a good professor and an enjoyable subject. They were Robert, Naomi, Carolina, Elizabeth, and Kirstin. Robert said that he likes architecture studios because they are small, casual classes and because, sometimes, the professors are more likely to tell jokes. Naomi liked English literature because she loves writing, the professor did not lecture all the time, he was flexible, and he sometimes assigned group projects, which she enjoys doing.

Carolina chose minority politics because the professor was involved in local and state politics and she felt that she learned about her history from "the horse's mouth." Elizabeth selected this same course, taught by the same professor, because she learned a lot from him. She also selected research methods because she felt close to her professor and he was very helpful.
She said that the methods information had been helpful for other classes as well. Kirstin selected health class because she liked the professor and kinesiology because it was challenging and scientific. She said this about her health professor:

She is more down to the lower level. I mean, she actually talks to people direct. She knows your name. She knows everybody's name. She deals with your problems too. . . . She is really flexible, and she is really easy going . . . I want to please her, or something, just because she expects that of you.

Seven students chose classes because there was something about the subject that appealed to them. None said they liked a class just because it was easy or because they got a good grade.

Jesus chose engineering statics because it is tough and he deals with mechanical problems that are a challenge to figure out. Anthony selected music theory because it is fun to learn to analyze music in order to understand why it sounds the way it does. J.C. picked communication because he has a creative mind like his dad and he likes using it. Julie chose speech because she can express herself, do what she is interested in, and does not have to listen to lectures. Oscar said that his engineering survey class was fun and that he learned how much he already knew from
working in construction. Luis liked history because he likes westerns, cowboys, and post Civil War history. Soledad chose sociology because:

It is stuff that you can relate to. I mean it's just about people--you know, how they act. Not like one of those courses where I wonder why in the world--am I ever going to have to know this when I get out there?

Information about favorite classes was included in this section on contributors to success because, if students are enjoying classes, they are probably more likely to study for them and be more involved in class. They appear to like the classes because of the enjoyment of relationships with professors, the challenge, working with groups, making friends in class, using their creativity, and learning new things. They do not seem to be just looking for the easy classes and instructors.

As for what the students identify as contributors to their success in college, their answers clustered into 4 themes and an additional list of reasons that are specific to individuals. The four themes have been named: getting help, self-discipline, determination, and enjoyment of learning.

Eight students mentioned that getting help from various sources has helped them along the way. Jesus said that the campus tutoring office helped him and his fellow basketball
teammates keep up when they missed classes because of travelling to games. Elizabeth said that the McNair office helps her with access to computers, conferences, resolving problems, and preparing to take the Graduate Record Examination. Robert, Sop, and Luis observed that it helps to have a girlfriend or friends to study with. Baka San said that it helps to know people who have had a class to get copies of tests and homework.

Julie answered, "I was just thinking if I never had a job on campus and I didn't know Frank, Howard, and Louann, I don't think I would be as successful in school or happy with myself." Belinda remarked, "If you can't do it alone, then you go out there and find someone that will help you get the information you need. I mean, that's just the key to it all! Going out there and getting it done."

Five students said that self-discipline is an important key to being successful in college. J.C. said that he studies twice as much now, goes to bed earlier, and wakes up earlier and that this discipline has helped him academically. Belinda said that what works for her is time management--making lists, planning ahead, and keeping up with class assignments. Similarly, Jesus said that he manages his time, does not cram, and makes time to study every day.
A professor told Anthony that discipline was the secret to being successful in music. Anthony agreed:

Especially when I practice 4 or 5 hours a day, after about a week or two of practicing that many hours a day, I just pick up my instrument, and I'm just all over it—full range—total vocabulary of articulation without hesitation. If I just take a couple of days off... not stick to it, then it's really detrimental to my playing.

Alicia observed this about self-discipline:

Because of my maturity, I realize that I may not want to do something I may not like. I may not want to tell my friends, no, I cannot go out with you Saturday night, I have a paper due Monday, but I do it. I may not want to study some God-awful biology or calculus, but I do it, and, I do it well enough to get a good grade. For me now, it's more intrinsic; it's for me.

Oscar is 1 of 5 students who said that the determination to succeed is crucial. Belinda said about determination, "Everybody is not going to come and help you. Life is not going to come to you; you have to decide what you want and go out—you know?" Anthony said simply, "If you apply yourself, you can achieve the goals that you want."
Elizabeth has a more global view of why she has to be determined in order to be successful.

The atmosphere in college has changed [since she first went to school years ago]. Now it's like—you do it yourself; no one is really there to help you, and I think that really has to do with the [national] deficit. That has cut down so many things. They just can't—they are just working with skeleton crews. They can't do what they used to do, but I don't think that the colleges don't want to help; they just don't have the personnel.

As a first-generation college student, Soledad had the following view of determination:

You have to want to do it for yourself because, a lot of times, you don't have a lot of support—like from your family members. I mean—not that they are against you, because they are definitely not against you—but they are not pushing. I mean, they don't really encourage you a whole lot. They are just like—neutral. So I think you really have to want to do it.

Three students said that the enjoyment of learning something new helps them to succeed. Carolina said that taking classes seriously and learning about the history of Mexican-Americans in class has helped to give her an added
sense of purpose. Oscar gave credit to interest in engineering for helping him to do well in classes. Belinda noted with enthusiasm, "I enjoy learning. I enjoy it, and I enjoy doing research, listening to lectures, and learning how the body works. . . . I don't ever want to stop learning. I just want to take in as much as I can."

Two students said that each of the following items helped to contribute to their success: getting financial aid (Julie and Robert); having friends at school (Luis and Sop); encouragement from others (Anthony and Sop); wanting to achieve for someone else (Julie and Sop); and wanting to achieve for myself (Alicia and Naomi).

One student each said that the following helped: living on campus (Soledad); paying for school herself (Alicia); fear of failing (Kirstin); lack of distraction from a social life (Robert); joining study groups (Alicia); and having opportunities to perform (Anthony). Carolina said that, if she had it to do all over again, she would have gone to a junior college before attending the university, in order to strengthen her basic skills.

For the most part, this group of students seems self-reliant and motivated to succeed in college. They see the importance of seeking assistance when they need it, and they appear willing to give the time needed to make school a priority in order to reach their goals.
The time students have to devote to coursework also can contribute to their success in college. Except for those in the group interview (Bob, Red, and Suzanne) and Carolina, the students were asked how they spend their time during the semester. A discussion of this follows.

Eight students work part-time (Puff, Robert, Soledad, Julie, Kirstin, J.C., Alicia, and Elizabeth); 2 work full-time, or at least 40 hours a week (Oscar and Anthony); and 6 do not currently work (Sop, Maria, Naomi, Luis, Belinda, and Jesus). J.C., Bob, and Jesus are athletes who compete in intercollegiate sports. Julie, Belinda, Oscar, Maria, and Elizabeth are raising children.

It is difficult to summarize the weekly schedule information that the students shared. In order to simplify this section, the students were divided into categories: highly academic, highly non-academic, and balanced. The highly academic students stressed how much they made a point to study and arrange their other activities around coursework. The non-academic group stressed all of their non-academic commitments and activities and described doing minimal coursework. The group called balanced described their week as including a number of elements, with no overload in any one area.

In the academic group, Robert described his time as being divided between coursework, his girlfriend, and his
part-time job—probably in that order, with the first taking the most time out of his week and the last taking about 15 to 18 hours per week. It sounds as though he spends a great deal of time in the architecture building late at night.

J.C.'s week includes classes, track, work, and studying. He is also active in hall council. Anthony spends 40 to 50 hours per week working in a music store, practicing for his band, and performing on weekends. Because he is a music major, much of his time is devoted to his field of study. Luis' time is spent studying, attending AMAS activities, and going to classes.

There appear to be two groups in the non-academic category. One group spends much of their time with family obligations and the other is active in campus activities. For example, Oscar works full-time and is taking one night class. He studies on the weekends and takes care of family responsibilities on weeknights. Belinda is on campus during the day and studies after 10 p.m. on weeknights. She said that she spends the rest of her time with her two daughters and doing housework. Julie takes classes during the day, takes care of her son in the evenings, and visits her parents or does housework on weekends. Maria is taking six hours and studies at night after her child goes to bed. On weekends, she cleans and cooks.
On the social side, Naomi outlined her week as consisting of preparing for AMAS meetings, meeting with her sorority, giving campus tours, recruiting high school students, doing AMAS service projects or activities, studying, and attending classes. On weekends, when she can, she likes to go to family barbecues. Sop has classes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and in between those times, it sounds as though he is going to lunch with friends, studying, getting ready for an AMAS meeting, and "hanging out" in the CMC. About the CMC, Sop said, "There is always something interesting going on in there." On the weekends, he goes home to see his family.

The students in the balanced category appear to spend at least as much time on coursework as they do on other activities. For example, Jesus plans 4 hours of studying every day, works out in the gym one and a half hours, takes 12 credit hours, and has 2 hours of basketball practice daily from September to March. Puff said that every day is different for him, but that basically, he goes to classes, studies, "hangs out" in the CMC, talks to friends, and returns home.

Elizabeth takes classes during the day, attends tutoring sessions, works 5 or 6 hours at the campus library, and spends her weekends in McNair lectures, as well as doing homework and housework. Alicia takes classes, meets with
her calculus group, works on campus, works at another job off campus, and studies. Soledad takes full-time classes, works on campus part-time, studies, and spends her weekends with relatives. Kirstin takes classes, studies with friends, watches television with her roommate, studies on her own, runs regularly, and works on the weekends as a medic and in the army reserves.

The other students, not listed in this section, did not address the topic of schedules. The group interview focused in-depth on a few topics, but the students had to leave for classes before all the areas could be covered.

The three questions that were asked regarding the topic of contributors to success in college elicited information about why the students like certain classes, what helps them do well, and how they spend their time. They appear to like classes for a combination of reasons related to professors' characteristics, friends in classes, and the appeal of the subject itself.

The characteristics of popular professors were that they know student names; talk to students on their level; are flexible, helpful, easy going, open-minded, or supportive; tell jokes; do not lecture all the time; and, motivate students. The students like the classes that challenge them; allow competition; foster creativity and
self-expression; apply to their future goals; and consist of more than lectures.

The students say that getting help when they need it, having self-discipline, being determined, and enjoying learning all contribute to their success. Some said living on campus, paying for school themselves, having a fear of failure, not being distracted with a social life, joining study groups, and getting to perform with their musical instruments also helps some students. One said that attending junior college beforehand to improve basic skills would have helped her.

In terms of how they spend their time, some students make school a priority, whereas others spend more time on family obligations or campus activities. A third group appears to have found some balance between school and the rest of their activities. All in all, the students are busy, and do not appear to have a lot of free, unstructured time in their lives.

**Hindrances to Success in College**

**Research Question 7:** What has impeded the students' success in college? The questions that were asked on this topic included the following: What has hindered your success at this university? What has been your least favorite class at this university? What problems have you faced at this university and how did you solve them?
In regard to hindrances, at least 3 students mentioned 5 themes. These themes include: (a) financial problems, (b) family obligations, (c) social life, (d) study friends, and (e) underpreparedness.

Four students said that financial problems hinder them. Alicia described the problem like this, "It's hard to sit . . . and study when I'm wondering if I am going to have lights to study by . . . I think the financial strain is the hardest thing for me. That's the thing that causes me the most stress." When Anthony was asked what hinders him, he replied, "Having to work, because that takes away from things that I need to do."

Belinda answered this way:
Well, one of the things that I do know is, when I started as a freshman and my dad was paying for everything, boy, I sure should have taken advantage of it. Because, when I started having to work and pay bills and study, I think that puts a big wedge. I think that kinda hinders.

Elizabeth described her situation: "My status monetarily in the last three years is like zero . . . I have gone to financial aid. It took me eight months to get what I really wanted."

Four students also mentioned that family obligations hindered their college work. Julie said, "It was kind of
hard trying to be a mom and going to school and it was my first time to experience that." Alicia was in a relationship with a man who wanted her to cook meals and spend more time with him than she could afford, because of school. Oscar's lack of study time with a full-time job and a family is a big hindrance for him. Belinda needs more help taking care of her daughters so that she can have more time for school.

Robert, Jesus, and Sop have a hard time finding enough time for schoolwork because of their active social life. Robert admitted, "When I started getting into AMAS and they had a lot of things to do, I really got into it, and I guess that's what made my grades suffer." Jesus confessed, "I got to stop going out. If there is anything that will stop me, it's girls and going out."

Sop is concerned that AMAS is focusing more on social activities and recruiting high school students than on making academics a priority. He has a "leaky bucket theory" that AMAS students are spending a lot of time recruiting and not taking care of their own academics so that they drop out. He said, "Sometimes, you have to look for yourself first, and right now, I gotta look for myself a lot! I won't say first. I have to look for myself at this very moment." Sop is in favor of having AMAS focus on retention
as well as on recruitment and reviving the scholarship committee that sets up study groups.

Elizabeth, Oscar, Alicia, and Puff mentioned that being underprepared academically in public schools has hindered their college performance. Elizabeth described her high school education as very lacking and said that, when she started school at the University of Missouri, "a lot of my classes were remedial even though they were college-level remedial English, remedial reading, remedial everything!"

According to Oscar, his main problem in college was his lack of preparation in the lower levels. He said this about his school:

Algebra wasn't thorough enough. I took algebra and trig, and that was about it. I didn't take cal because they had one cal class, but only 30 people could get in it, and that was it. I didn't even bother to take physics because, if I couldn't take cal, there was no need to take physics.

Puff said that he too is very upset with his high school because it did not prepare him for college.

Alicia admitted that her academic underpreparedness is due to her own actions more than to the public school's.

I feel like there's so many things that these kids know that they learned in high school. I mean, I barely got out of high school. I got out of high school, I mean,
by the skin of my teeth. I hated school! I just hated it with a passion!

Soledad, Baka San, and Sop all said that not having friends to study with is a hindrance for them. Soledad said, "I think that, maybe, if I had like a real close friend or a cousin that was going to college, that maybe we could help each other and everything. Like this, I am just doing it on my own." Baka San lamented that he does not know anybody on campus from whom to get homework. Sop says he did well academically at Eastfield because of competition: "I had a group of friends there; they were all Mexican too, and back there we were competing against each other. We would always sign up for the same classes every semester and do all our stuff together."

Two students each mentioned the following hindrances: procrastinating (Luis and Robert); not living on campus (Anthony and Baka San); and being too outspoken and, thus, being labelled as a radical (Naomi and Carolina). One student each included the following: lack of tutoring (Robert); lack of professors willing to help (Oscar); bureaucracy on campus (Carolina); and being a first-generation college student so that family does not understand your experiences (Soledad).

The next section focuses on the students' descriptions of their least favorite classes. The reasons given in these
answers differed from those concerning their favorite classes. About favorite classes, the students gave reasons ranging from various combinations of professor characteristics, getting to know other students, and the appeal of the subject itself. In regard to least favorite classes, the answers all referred to something negative about the subject itself, with only one exception; and, also the students occasionally mentioned something negative about the professor. In most cases, the difficulty of the class caused them not to like it.

Mathematics and science classes were mentioned as their least favorite by most students. Luis, Naomi, and Belinda named chemistry; Alicia and Soledad, biology; Luis, Robert, Kirstin, Alicia, Oscar, and Baka San, mathematics; J.C., Alicia, Jesus, and Maria, various history courses; Kirstin and Julie, English; Sop, Spanish; Elizabeth, political science; and Anthony, literature. Carolina is the only student who said she did not have a class she did not like. The students not addressing this question were Red, Puff, Suzanne, and Bob.

In regard to the difficulty of classes, Julie said about English, "I think I'm just really bad at it." Kirstin revealed that, "It's just the fear of math--that I won't understand." Soledad said, "Biology--gradewise, I am not good in it. I am just not a science person. If I don't
like it, I don't study much for it." Sop said that Spanish class made him feel stupid and that he felt he should have known more than he did. Robert admitted that mathematics is hard for him and Luis described chemistry as confusing. Baka San thought differential equations were "used to weed people out".

Belinda said that chemistry is hard for her and that she hates the material. Alicia noted that, in biology, there was no correlation between the amount of time she studied and the grade she got. To Naomi, chemistry is hard because you have to understand it; you cannot just memorize it. About mathematics, Oscar said, "Some of the things I just don't comprehend. They sit there and tell you, and I--you, fly through the material. I mean, it's a chapter a day--it's just too fast!" Anthony saw literature as hard for him because of the time needed to do all the reading, and since he is not a fast reader, it was hard for him to keep up with the class.

According to J.C., history is boring because of all the memorizing of dates. Jesus said of history, "I don't really care who killed who. What good is that gonna do in my future?"

Elizabeth is the only student who said that it was the other students in the class who caused her not to like
bureaucracy, a political science course. The narrow-minded views of her classmates were upsetting to her.

In other parts of the interviews, several of the students mentioned that they liked some classes because they were challenging. It appears that the classes they liked the least have exceeded the challenging threshold; they were too difficult. An interesting question to explore would be whether the difficulty comes from the lack of academic preparation or the lack of aptitude in that area.

The next section focuses on what problems these students have experienced on campus and how they have solved them. Four students reported that they really did not have any problems. They were Kirstin, Soledad, Luis, and Julie. Five themes emerged in the students' answers to this question, including bureaucracy, wrong information, discriminatory practices, academic difficulties, and financial concerns.

On the topic of bureaucracy, Bob said, "I feel like I'm always fighting in college for what I get." Elizabeth echoed, "When you have a problem, it doesn't get solved nice and normal." She had a long delay in getting financial aid due to miscommunication problems. Maria described a long and involved problem with an error on her academic record. Baka San said that transferring credits from TCJC was complicated and that campus office workers kept sending him
to the wrong places to get it resolved. Red agreed that bureaucracy is a problem, but did not give his own example. Baka San also observed that even trying to sponsor a program on campus was complicated.

Several students complained that they were given wrong information in offices that should know the right way to do things. Bob related a story about a professor who told him he could not take calculus on another campus and transfer the credit to this university. As a result, he rented an apartment for a summer in order to take it here, and later found out that he could have saved the money, lived at home, and taken the class in his hometown. About that situation he said, "You can't touch the teachers here. They can basically lie to you about transferring credit."

Baka San and Suzanne both revealed that they were misled about scholarship information. Baka San said that the registrar's office told him there were no scholarships; Suzanne felt that a scholarship brochure was misleading.

Naomi and Alicia were given wrong information about which classes to take by their advisor. Naomi had this to say about advising:

There is no one who tells them [students] anything. The advisors here aren't worth anything--the ones that I have dealt with in my 4 years. I've had freshmen that are in here [the CMC] who will show me their
registration. They will have junior level engineering courses in their first semester . . . "That is what my advisor gave me," [they tell me]. This is the kind of stuff that is going through, and they [the freshmen] don't know any better. Unless they have somebody that is watching out for them, you know, it's going to mess them up. He [a freshman] ended up dropping out because he failed his whole freshman year. He couldn't cut it anymore. He's out. I don't want to get messed around, and I want to help keep it from happening to my friends.

Alicia relates a story about her advisor telling her to take a class and then later asking why she took that class.

About discriminatory practices on campus, Suzanne, Bob, Baka San, and Elizabeth all have stories. In fact, this issue was a big focus in the interview with the group of engineering students. Suzanne revealed that an Indian graduate teaching assistant was known to give his friends copies of tests in advance. Bob said that Chinese instructors in his department grade in a way to ensure that the Chinese students do well. Baka San felt that foreign instructors grade against students with American names. And Elizabeth felt discriminated against when trying to get a workstudy job on campus. She is convinced that, because she lost her birth certificate and was Mexican, the personnel
office was overly strict about hiring practices; and they suspected her of being an illegal alien trying to get around the system. Eventually, the problem was resolved and she was hired.

Five students mentioned they had had academic difficulties. Robert shared his experience:

There is one professor that's there, and he teaches a combination class of algebra and trigonometry. I guess he is trying to get through the syllabus. He moves pretty fast, and I can't understand. Also he is Indian or something, and some of the words that he says, I can't understand. It's his accent.

For Maria, the class in United States history was just too hard. Naomi had a problem with full classes in her major so that she either had to go part-time or change her major. According to Baka San, the attitude in his department is very cutthroat, which causes problems for him. Puff did not know that he could drop classes to avoid getting bad grades.

The last theme regarding problems has to do with finances. Oscar was concerned about the prices of books, and Robert felt that architecture supplies are too expensive. For one class, Robert will spend $30 apiece on 5 models in a semester. Alicia was concerned that the limit on how much money a student is allowed to earn while on financial aid is too low. Puff, a senior in computer
science, does not own a computer, which he said is a result of not having enough money.

Baka San mentioned three additional problems that do not appear to fit into any of the themes mentioned above. He said he feels that he is just a number on campus, that advisors do not believe what students tell them, and that some of the professors he has had fail to keep office hours or answer their phone when he needs help or information.

Many of these problems appear to be typical problems that college students experience. Problems with bureaucracy, not having enough money, getting wrong information, and academic difficulties exist among students on many large campuses; however, reports of discriminatory practices such as preferential grading and giving tests to friends are areas for considerable concern.

The answer to this question about hindrances appears to be multifaceted. Out of the three questions asked in this section, financial concerns were a major theme in two of them. Being academically underprepared or having difficulty in classes were mentioned in all three. Bureaucracy was a theme in campus problems and was mentioned by one student when asked about hindrances. The other themes, such as family obligations, too much social life, wanting friends to study with, discriminatory practices, and wrong information were mentioned in response to one of the questions. Other
problems mentioned by individual students include procrastination, living off campus, being too outspoken, being a first-generation college student, having unhelpful professors, having boring classes, having classes not related to my future needs, and dealing with narrow-minded fellow students. This list illustrates how qualitative studies can provide a depth of understanding of students' experiences and perceptions.

What The Students Would Tell Friends

Research Question 8: How would these students describe this university to their friends? They were asked: How would you describe this university to your friends? There are five themes in the students' responses to this question in which at least 3 students gave the same response. These themes are named: getting involved, good school, school size, non-traditional college and no football.

Five students talked about becoming involved in activities on campus. Julie said, "You have to make an effort to get involved before you are gonna like it. Make it to where it can make you happy." Anthony sees the campus as large and offering many opportunities. He noted, "Even though it is a commuter school, you get out of it what you put into it." Robert said that his advice to his cousin who is planning to come to school here is to join the AMAS, but to keep a balance between social life and academics.
Alicia would advise students to "be involved in a lot of different committees" on campus. She suggested that traditional students should join a fraternity or sorority for the camaraderie that they offer. Belinda said that when she is on campus, she can always find something to do.

Four students said that they would tell their friends that it is a good school; the 4 are Jesus, Puff, Robert, and Belinda. Four students also addressed the size of the campus, but their perceptions varied. For example, Soledad observed that, for a four-year university, it is not that large. In Belinda's words, "It's not too big." On the other hand, Julie described it as a "really big university" and Anthony said, "It's a large campus." Students view the size of the campus in comparison to where they attended school before.

Puff, Jesus, and Alicia would tell their friends that this is not the place to go if one is looking for the traditional college experience. All three mention a lack of school spirit, and Puff noted the lack of established campus traditions. Alicia and Jesus noted that not many students live on campus; many commute.

Relative to the nontraditional campus theme, 3 students, Oscar, Puff and Anthony, noted the lack of a football team. They were Oscar, Puff and Anthony.
Two students each contributed the following items:
Anthony and Maria would give their friends details about the size of the classes, and Jesus and Soledad would tell that they have had a good experience overall at the school. Naomi and Elizabeth would ask their friends what they plan to major in before they make a recommendation. They would recommend the school only to those who plan to major in one of the school's strong programs.

The following comments were each made by one student. Belinda said that she has had good professors and that people will help you. Maria would advise friends to ask other students about professors before signing up for classes; she would also reveal that the people on campus are conservative. Alicia commented that there is a lot of concrete on campus. Robert has noticed many Chinese and Vietnamese students on campus and Elizabeth feels it is not a good school. These views reveal a wide range of attitudes and areas of controversy.

Overall, these students would give their friends positive comments about the academics of the university, but they would also urge prospective students to make efforts to get involved in campus life, because, basically, this is a commuter school. There is no real consensus among the students as to whether the campus is large or not.
Problems in College

Research Question 9: What problems have the students faced in college and how have they solved them? The information gathered from this question was included in the answers to Research Question 7 because those answers often indicated that the problems were not necessarily solved and that they hinder the students' success.

Research Question 10: What areas do the students continue to have questions about concerning succeeding to graduation? The students were asked: When do you plan to graduate? In several cases, their concerns were voiced either at that point or later during the conversation.

Carolina and Belinda were planning to graduate during the month after our conversation, and Red had plans to graduate in the summer. Jesus, Naomi, and Julie were planning to graduate in a year, and Robert planned to do so in 2 years. J.C. was just finishing his freshman year, so graduation is in the distant future for him. Luis plans to transfer to Texas A&M in the fall, but does not see anything delaying his graduation in 2 or 3 years because his grades keep improving. Suzanne and Bob did not answer this question.

The other 10 students all had some variable that might effect their graduation date. Maria was concerned about passing a course in the history of the United States after
attempting it twice previously, and she was also having a problem with removing an F from her transcript that was mistakenly recorded for a class she dropped. Oscar was concerned that taking just a few credits each semester will take a long time. Kirstin wondered if working for the police department will delay her graduation. Sop needs to make his grades a priority in order to get into the engineering school, and he admitted that he needs to spend less time in the CMC and more time studying.

Because school comes second to family for Puff, family obligations could interrupt his plans to graduate in a year. Soledad would like to graduate in a year but said, "I don't know. Things don't always go as planned." Anthony is working on a double major in music education and jazz studies, which that will take another semester or two. Alicia plans to graduate in a year, but struggles with money could alter that. Elizabeth has recently changed her plans to graduate in a year instead of a semester so that she can bring up her grade-point average and do some research in the McNair program in order to get into graduate school. Baka San plans to graduate in 2 years if he can take courses on schedule.

In summary, not all of these students have concerns about whether they will graduate. In fact, most sound as though they feel confident that they will graduate, but that
various situations might delay them. Three students were
definitely planning to graduate within the next 3 months and
6 others felt confident that it was just a matter of time
before they would graduate. The reasons the students gave
that might delay graduation were as follows: not passing a
class, not clearing up a transcript problem, taking too few
classes at a time, working long hours, socializing in the
CMC too much, dealing with family obligations, dealing with
changes in plans, taking a double major, having financial
problems, taking extra classes to improve one's grade-point
average, doing research to prepare for graduate school, and
not being able to take courses on schedule.

Impact of Being Hispanic

Research Question 11: How does being Hispanic make
their college experience different from other nationalities?
The students were asked: Do you think that being Hispanic
makes your college experience different from students who
are not Hispanic and, if so, how? They were also asked how
eye refer to their heritage so the researcher could use
their preferred term. The three topics to be discussed in
this section are heritage terms, Hispanic culture, and
discrimination.

Six different terms concerning their heritage were
chosen among this group of students. These terms included:
(a) Mexican-American, (b) Hispanic, (c) Mexican, (d) Latin,
(e) Spanish, and (f) American. Red, Bob, and J.C. were not asked this question. Several reasons were given for why the students chose the term they use. The following illustrates the diversity among the group on this issue:

Elizabeth provided a good introduction for this discussion:

People with our skin color in America don't want to be put in one group. We’re not one group of people, just like Americans that are white are not one group of people; they come from England, Irish, Scotland, Germany . . . So it's the same thing with our race. We're really not just one.

Four students said they prefer to be called Mexican-American. Luis prefers the term "because I was born in the States, but my family background is Mexican". Puff, Belinda, and Carolina prefer the term Mexican-American, but did not explain why.

Kirstin had a different perspective.

I have gotten to the point that [using Mexican-American] is overproudness. I don't think I take it that seriously. Nobody is better than anyone else. When people say Mexican-American, then you just want to be a little bit better than the rest of the Hispanics like Puerto Rican or Spain or Venezuelan.
Sop said, "I was born in Dallas and raised here, but I won't say Mexican-American. I'm Mexican."

Four students also prefer to use the term Hispanic. Kirstin said, "I feel like I should be more inclusive of everybody else." Alicia stated, "I'm Hispanic, not Mexican, not Puerto Rican; I'm Hispanic. I'm Castillian." Anthony and Baka San also prefer the term Hispanic. Sop admitted that he will use Hispanic on an application, but that it is not his preferred term.

For further clarification, Puff observed, "Hispanic means of Spanish descent." Naomi said, "I am Mexican. Our people are Hispanic." Jesus said, "Not Hispanic, that term was given to us as a whole group." Elizabeth contributed, "If Mexicans knew the history of the term Hispanic, they wouldn't have labelled themselves that. Spain conquered Mexico and it's like calling yourself a conquered person."

Six students prefer to be called Mexican. Naomi said simply, "My family is Mexican." Sop said, "I used to always say Mexican until I felt pressured to say something other than Mexican. So I always say Hispanic. If someone says, 'What are you?', I say I'm Mexican." Jesus was born in Mexico so this was an easy decision for him. Soledad said that her parents taught her to say Mexican. Robert and Suzanne also prefer Mexican.
Maria, who is from Peru, observed "I would like that people not think that whoever speaks Spanish is Mexican. There are other places in the world . . . People ask me, 'Do you speak Mexican?' Mexican is not the language." Maria refers to herself as Latin; she said that many Latin students attending American colleges come from wealthy and well-educated families because it is expensive to go to school in another country.

Julie prefers to be called Spanish because her father's family comes from Spain. Sometimes she also calls herself Tex-Mex.

Oscar and Elizabeth prefer to be called American.

About this Oscar related:

I have never been discriminated upon. Never. And that--I guess that comes from my own idea of thinking I am an American, first of all, and foremost. I have, of course, Hispanic background, and I have been taught a lot of the history of Mexico.

Elizabeth explained her attitude:

You know, it's still a difficult thing for me to have a preference, because I hate to say that I am a Mexican, personally, because I have never even been there! It is very hard for me to associate with Mexico, but my own people would think that I just don't want to associate with it because I want to be better than. . .
So, for those people, I always like to say that I am Mexican. But for myself, I don't even feel like I am Spanish because I didn't come from Spain. To me, I would just like to say that I am an American. Now, if they want to say where is my ancestry, I could say part Indian, part Mexican, part American, part German, for my grandmother. I would like to be comfortable just to say I'm American, and have people ask me about my ancestry. When they see my color, right away they want to... your ancestry first and your American last.

None of these students preferred the term Chicano. Sop explained that "Chicano, at this school, is a derogatory term. From what I hear, it's not derogatory in California. In Mexico it's derogatory too." Naomi said, "People in TAMACS consider themselves Chicanos, and they consider that as positive. You ask people in AMAS, and they will say it's negative."

In summary, it is clear that there is no consensus about one preferred term. Most seem to agree that the term Hispanic is an umbrella term that includes Mexicans, Latinos, Puerto Ricans, and others, but not everyone wants to be lumped together in one big group.

The next section focuses on various parts of Hispanic culture. Six themes appeared in the students' answers:
role models, family duty, money, escape, stereotypes, and cultural traditions.

Four students mentioned concerns about not having enough positive role models in the Hispanic community. For example, Puff described the situation in which he grew up, saying, "I never heard of anyone from our high school going to college. No one had a degree in my neighborhood." Sop added, "Other people have had family who graduated from college, and they prepared for college. They know what they are getting into. I didn't know." Naomi observed as follows:

There are no big names for Hispanics. If anything, they are going to be actors. I mean, you are reaching when you are going—Ricardo Montelban, Eric Estrada—I mean come on! There is not a lot of real positive role models to look up to.

Kirstin told this story:

When I went to Idaho, I noticed a lot of my Hispanic friends were working in the farms. They tried to get me involved. "Come work on the farm!", [they would say]. I thought, why do you want to work in the farm fields? That's not something I want to do! Why don't you go to work in the mall? It's kinda like they had to follow their descendants in the farm fields. For me, it was like, I don't know why you want to sit in
this hole when you got the opportunity to go do something else. That's how I always felt.

Naomi, however, has her own role model at home. My father was a migrant worker, so he didn't get a very good education through high school, and he had to leave high school. He finally got to his senior year, and he couldn't afford to stay in school. He got his GED and then went into the military for all the years and then, from their help, went to college. He was 30 by the time he started college, and then he went all the way through his master's with my brother and sister and my mother. He put himself through. So, to him, education was a top priority.

Three students talked about duty to family. Puff explained it this way:

Whoever is oldest in our [Hispanic] household—whatever that person says is law. My education comes second. If my Mom says, "I really wish I could go fishing." I have a duty to my Mom. If she wants to go fishing, I could take that class over. We have priorities to take care of first. Education in our culture comes second. Keeping the household going and surviving comes first.

Puff admitted that sometimes his grades have suffered because he had to take care of family obligations and thus missed handing in homework.
Naomi described the dilemma some Hispanic students face:

If somebody does have money, what do they do? Probably selling drugs. So they [prospective college students] say, "Hey, I can go to school and get absolutely nothing and my family is starving while I am doing it, or I can take the easy route and do this!"

Anthony has a different view of responding to family duty.

I have seen some people deal with their parents, saying, you should be working to make money for us and the family as opposed to--but then, that is not looking on down the road, as to--once you get this degree you'll be more productive in the long run. For that reason, they [my parents] have been real supportive because they endured that with their parents, and they know that had they gotten their degrees, things would have been better for us, and it's just concern about the future.

Anthony's parents both left college 30 credits short of graduation. When Anthony encourages fifth and sixth-grade students to go to college in a program called Project Reach Out, he promotes investing in the future by going to college.
On the topic of money, Puff contributed the following: Money is something we don't have in my community. I don't place much value on it, but, without it, there is a lot of things you cannot do. Money is not the root of all evil, but it's what you do with your money. If you have a hungry daughter and you buy a car or rims, that's wrong.

Naomi said, "Hispanics don't have money, so that makes college different." She went on to explain that, for that reason, many Hispanic students do not go to college at all. Luis remarked, "Other friends, they probably have a harder time because their families don't make enough income for their support, so they have to do a lot more."

Four students made remarks that indicate they feel they need to escape a self-defeating influence from other Hispanics in order to succeed. Kirstin said, "My parents are good role models, good influencers. If I was just stagnant in one area, I probably would have been caught up with the rest of them [Hispanics]."

J.C. commented on this topic:

El Paso is not really the greatest town. It used to be—well, I guess before I was born it was okay. Now it's got too much criminal activity. Real corrupt. I just wanted to get out before I got sucked into where I couldn't get out. A lot of people that get out of El
Paso actually are successful, so I wanted an extra chance . . . Getting out of El Paso was one of the best things--In El Paso, I don't know why, but there is some kind of black cloud over, I guess, Hispanics, and there is so many of them that it kind of rubs off on everybody else.

He describes going home from college at Christmas and being uncomfortable around his high school friends because he was the only one "trying to make something out of myself."

Sop told this story:

My brother kept telling me [to go to Skyline High School]. "It's better you go there because, if you follow your friends over to North Dallas, you aren't gonna do so well." And he was right. I had a lot of friends in junior high that went to North Dallas, probably about a dozen that I personally really knew, you know, that were close friends, and I lost real contact with them when I went to the other school. Of them, two graduated. Only one of those was Hispanic.

If I would have went there, I would have been hanging around them the whole time and probably would have ended up just like them.

Oscar contributed the following:

Do you know where Ruidosa, New Mexico, is? I was up there. I had left here [and] went up there, stayed a
year, and just worked and decided this is not—I am vegetating here. I am not doing anything. I decided I need to go back to school, so that is how we came back here.

Kirstin, Elizabeth, and Naomi addressed the topic of stereotypes of Hispanics. Kirstin said this:

I think a lot of Hispanics don't take academics seriously because it's stereotypic. They [people in society] don't expect a lot [out] of Hispanics and it's true. It's not expected out of minorities [to go to college]—Afro-Americans and the Spanish are into gangs, drop out of school. Maybe they are low income and can't afford to go to school.

Elizabeth said, "In south Texas high schools, teachers think if you are Hispanic, you're not going to college. You're not college material. People [in Missouri who encouraged me to go to college] were thinking monetarily [about my G.I. bill]; not my ethnic background."

Naomi agreed:

A lot of them [Hispanic children] just don't know about college. At the recruitments I have done with little kids--I've done at elementary schools. I go, "Do you want to go to college?" They laugh. [They say,] "I can't go to college." I say, "What do you mean, that you don't have the money to go to college?" [They
answer,] "No, I'm not allowed to go to college, I'm Mexican." I go mad! But they really, honestly believe that they are not allowed to go to school; so why would they want to bother finishing high school? They see their brothers and sisters dropping out so it's real easy [to drop out]. It's like the next step."

Kirstin feels this way about stereotypes:

You know, if you just always want to be a gang member, you always want to wear a bandanna on your head, you always just want to settle for less--it's your prerogative. It's not mine! I admire Hispanics that do other things. Not necessarily the TV people, you know, [but] like Cisneros and some other people.

Oscar, Anthony, and Carolina volunteered information about Hispanic traditions, and Alicia and Kirstin remarked about sex roles in Hispanic culture. Oscar, Anthony and Carolina exhibit enthusiasm when they talk about these parts of their culture, and they continue to participate in some way in their favored activity.

Oscar described a charro as a Mexican cowboy. He said that since he was a boy, his family had been active in a charro organization. He said this about the organization:

Yes, well, there are many, even here in Dallas.

Basically, what you would call it is a rodeo team, but this is more family-oriented. The whole family gets
involved. The ladies' auxiliary—they do their benefits and all that stuff in order to keep the organization going. We've been raised around horses and stuff, so this fit perfect for us. They would bring instructors and teach us how to dance, [and tell us] what region this [dance] came from. We would go out and perform. As you grow older—I remember getting on my first bull, like a bull ride, and then getting on the horses. You just learn everything.

Oscar then described the events that are involved in the rodeo and their historical significance.

I'm glad my dad did that [introduced them to the charro organization] for us, because I learned a lot. I learned what respect meant really—respect for the elders, respect for the women, respect for the children. A charro, back in the old days, was supposedly like the hacienda owner, the man who had the money—always stood up straight, had a big old mustache like that, and walked around [like] an aristocrat. That is what a charro originally meant.

Carolina enjoys folklorica dancing and considers it one of her hobbies. She said that she used to do so much of it when she first started college that it interfered with her studies. She says that, between dancing and taking
Mexican-American studies classes, she has developed a sense of her roots and identity.

Anthony said that he enjoys playing the trumpet in a band that plays tejano or ondo music on the weekends. He describes ondo music as being like country music, but a little faster, sung in Spanish, and easy to dance to. His band has 10 members and plays mostly for Mexican birthday parties and weddings.

On the topic of sex roles, Kirstin commented on Hispanic culture:

They expect women to be docile. Our customs are different. They don't expect women to be career-oriented. We are still in that woman bondhood, or something. I'm more liberal and feministic. If a woman wants to be president, I think it's about time.

Alicia described the reactions of Hispanic men whom she supervised when working in a landscaping business.

They didn't always like being told what to do by a woman, but that was just their upbringing. But once they saw me sign that check on Friday afternoon, they didn't care! . . . A couple of times I had some problems with a couple of the younger guys, the more macho guys. They weren't gonna let this woman--especially this young woman--tell them what to do! I was like, "Get out!"
The themes in this section have to do with (a) a lack of visible and successful Hispanic role models, (b) a lack of money to afford college, (c) the sense of a need to escape a self-defeating environment in primarily Hispanic communities, (d) low societal expectations for stereotyped Hispanics, and (e) a strong sense of family duty that can cause a dilemma for a Hispanic student in college. Some of these students appear to accept some of these conditions as just the way things are, and others challenge the status quo. For example, Puff accepts the assumption that family needs come first, whereas Anthony and Naomi believe that going to college can make family support easier in the long run. Kirstin and Alicia challenge the tradition that women should take instruction from men and not have careers of their own.

Naomi, Kirstin, and Elizabeth all gave examples of how teachers and students in various grades do not expect Hispanic children to go to college. There are still people who expect them to work in the farm fields, join gangs, and sell drugs.

Kirstin, J.C., Sop, and Oscar described feeling as though they had to escape some part of their home environment in order to be successful. This fit with what Puff, Sop, and Naomi said about children who grow up in
neighborhoods where there are no role models who go to college and few that even graduate from high school. If one adds to the above, the limited financial resources in many Hispanic households, as described by Puff, Naomi, and Luis, one can see why some Hispanic children have no plans to go to college when they grow up. However, these students are examples of some changes in the status quo. They are attending college and graduating from college. Some of them have siblings who are going to college, and some are actively recruiting children in the public schools to attend college.

Three students made positive observations about the importance of learning about their culture. It appears to give them a sense of pride, and they enjoy participating in the activities.

The next section addresses the topic of discrimination as the students have experienced it on campus. In this group, 5 students reported that they have directly experienced it themselves, and 13 specifically said that they have not experienced discriminatory treatment on campus. Soledad, Carolina, and Red were not asked this question.

The majority of these students said that they have not felt discriminated against on campus, but this does not tell the whole story. Oscar responded with emotion when asked if
being Hispanic makes his college experience different from students who are not Hispanic. He replied, "No, and I can say that emphatically! No! Out of any place I have been; I have not been discriminated against. Never!" Anthony said, "I haven't encountered any problems here." Luis, J.C., and Jesus also said that they do not think being Hispanic makes any difference.

Naomi replied, "No, not academically, because everybody is just a number." Belinda made this comparison: "I have to think back to A&M because I have a lot more negative experiences there--I don't feel that here, and I can't think of any negative experiences." Puff replied, "I'll say it [being Hispanic] don't hurt me. I'm just a college student." Alicia related, "I haven't come across any real prejudice, and I think that's mostly because I look white." Julie asserted, "I really get upset when people always make it a black, white, or Mexican issue. Nobody has ever treated me unfairly." When asked this question, Sop did not mention problems with discrimination, but instead responded with comments about how little he knew about college when he first got here because he was a first-generation college student in his family.

Kirstin added an editorial comment to her denial of having experienced discrimination at this school.
I can imagine a lot of Hispanics would say, "Yeah, they have to do this for me, and they have to do that." I don't think so. I think you are an independent person. Nobody dresses you to go to school. Go to school! Go to work!—It's up to the individuals themselves.

Two other students took a similar approach; Oscar, for example, said:

For some reason I seem to think that the younger generation will say, yes, that they have seen quite a bit of discrimination. I don't know why. I can see that they have a different attitude. They are angry. A lot of it is the media.

Julie described an example of a self-fulfilling prophecy:

I think a lot of times it has to do with the individual person themself. Maybe on how they think that people feel about them. Because, if they think that people don't like you because you are black or because you are Mexican or whatever they think, then everybody is gonna feel that way.

Those students who have felt discriminated against have had a wide range of experiences, not all of which are related to being Hispanic. For example, Suzanne reported, "I don't think I'm picked on because I am Hispanic. I think I may have been picked on because I was female." She is
referring to being one of only few women in engineering classes. Bob supported her suspicion by responding, "The chairman of the [engineering] department says girls should not be in engineering."

Alicia said, "The only prejudice I have come across is from other Hispanics." She goes on to explain that because she looks Caucasian, other Hispanics think that she is Caucasian and is trying to act Hispanic.

Another form of discrimination these students reported occurs when the college administration favors other student organizations over theirs. Naomi, Sop, Robert, and Luis all believe that the fraternities and sororities on campus are given money by the administration and that the AMAS is not. They have also felt slighted in the resolution of conflicts over the winning of various contests and elections on campus.

Of this group, Bob appears to be the most vocal on the subject of discrimination. He described a number of situations in which he felt mistreated; he believes the incidents were racially motivated. He tells one story about having a scheduling conflict between an examination and a conference track meet. As a scholarship athlete, he was required to attend the meet and was supposed to have an excused absence from the examination, according to the athletic department. He said that he tried to make
arrangements 2 weeks before the test in order to take it another time, and the professor refused his request. When he missed the test, the professor gave him an F on it. Bob spent the next 6 months appealing the decision until, finally, the university president granted his appeal.

Bob related that, on another occasion, a professor refused to let him hand in his homework late, and he watched that same professor accept late homework from two Caucasian students. He told also about helping other students on a group project because he understood the assignment better than they did. When they all got their papers back, he received a 70, and the others all received 90s.

As a result, Bob said, "I feel like they grade [me] harder . . . You know in your heart what you really think is happening, but you can't prove it." Overall, he added, Most Hispanics don't feel like they can go and talk to a teacher like we are talking now. They feel like they are off at a distance."

Maria revealed how she had felt earlier as a new student on campus.

It was very difficult to make friends. I don't know if it's because sometimes people don't talk to me because they think I don't understand [English]. Always I learned to overlook that. When I first came here, it was hard because I wanted to make friends. . . . You
notice sometimes that they [other students] don't trust you very much because you have an accent.

Maria also told about confiding in a professor about difficulties she was having with another professor's class in the same department and feeling betrayed by her confidante when she told the other professor about their conversation. About that she said, "I don't know--maybe if I was an American, she wouldn't have done that."

Baka San claimed that he usually does not face discrimination for being Hispanic because he does not look Hispanic; however, he added, "It works against me when graders see my name and haven't met me." Elizabeth told of being appalled by the racist attitudes of her classmates in political science classes and of being so upset that she has left class. She said that they are not necessarily being racist toward her, but, that they are against poor people and social programs.

Robert had a hard time expressing his thoughts on this question.

Well, I guess [being Hispanic makes college different] a little bit around the dorms. There seems to be a lot of--well, I guess, I don't hang around the dorm that much. I don't know, it's just different. It seems like--I guess it would be discriminating, but it's not really to them. That's exaggerating it. I just never
really felt comfortable around the dorm. I just never hung around here.

A third group of students describe the advantages of being Hispanic on campus. Luis, Alicia, and Baka San said that being Hispanic has opened doors for them, such as the availability of minority scholarships and also programs such as McNair and tutoring, to which that they would not have had access otherwise.

Luis said, "I like my race because you can joke around with people about it. Upstairs [in Brazos Hall] we can talk and say racial stuff and nobody gets mad because we all get along."

Belinda observed the following, with a smile:

I have Spanish this semester. I kind of feel special or lucky. That's a positive. I have a friend of mine that sits next to me--she's Mexican-American, also--and we just laugh at stuff nobody else gets. It's easier for us to understand the professor.

Although the majority of these students do not feel that they experience discrimination for being Hispanic on this campus, the ones who have felt it range from feeling mildly uncomfortable to feeling harassed. Some of the students who do not feel discriminated against believe that others either see discrimination when it does not exist, or
that their attitude causes others to react negatively to them.

What Administration Can Do

Research Question 12: What could be done by the campus administration to help a greater number of Hispanic students to graduate? In order to answer this question, the students were asked the actual research question and whether they thought there was anything the university administration failed to understand about Hispanic students.

The students' responses aligned along 5 themes: money, course concerns, freshmen orientation, customer service, and first-generation students. The following is a discussion of each theme and the corresponding student perspectives.

The comments relating to money and financial matters cover a broad range. About financial aid, Alicia recommended that the financial aid ceiling for earning money should be raised to the level required for tax deductions. She also likes the idea of letting students work off financial aid debt by doing community service after graduation. She was hesitant to suggest stricter policing of financial aid recipients because she recognizes that this can complicate the process, but she thought that might help reduce the number who default on repayment.

Naomi said that the administration should look for more scholarship money. Julie noted that first-generation
college students' parents need to be told about financial aid possibilities when their children are still in high school.

Elizabeth feels that because many Hispanic students come from a financial need situation, the university should provide easy access to computers and typewriters. Robert would like to see a solution to the problem of expensive architecture supplies.

In regard to the AMAS, Luis said the following: I mean, the only thing we possibly would need is a little more funds. That way, during our Semana de Cultura, a week that we get that the university has given us to express our culture, we could express it a little bit better.

Elizabeth, Puff, and Baka San all had a lot to say about the lack of customer service, which they perceive, to be a problem on campus. Puff said that the university needs to nurture students and that there is a lack of 'la raza' at this university. He sees the campus as "kind of cold."

Elizabeth recommended that office workers receive sensitivity training and that the university needs to be more customer-service oriented.

I think if they [the administration] want to look at something that works, they could even look into the Japanese system. When you go into their stores, their
place of business, you are first. Whatever they can do to help you [they will]. These people [in offices on campus] are like--they have a job to do, and you are second. You stand in line. You wait for service. You got to wait because they have to go for lunch. If they would say, "I am here because of you. Let me service you. Let me help you, then let me get this job done"--they do it in reverse. The Japanese [system] is where the customer is first. These people [on campus] just have their priorities different.

About courses, Baka San suggested that the campus needs professors who want both to teach and to help students. He also thinks that professors are pressured to fail students, which he thinks is unnecessary. Oscar would like to see more engineering courses offered at night. He said that he discussed this with his advisor and that his advisor responded, "It's designed that way. It's designed so you have to come to day some time or another, day school." Oscar responded, "That's not a good answer!" In general, he thinks that there are not enough course options available for working students. Maria suggested that students should be given 2 weeks to both drop and add courses in order to have a better chance to see what the course will be like.

About freshmen orientation, 5 students had something to say. Sop described it as overwhelming. He remembered
everything happening faster than he could comprehend. He did not understand why he was advised to take the classes he was told to take: "I signed my name down for something I wasn't sure about. I was in the midst of it, and it was beyond me."

Elizabeth, Jesus, and Belinda think freshmen orientation should tell students what services will be available to them. Elizabeth said that she did not know about various services on campus until she joined the McNair program. She added that Hispanic students are so busy with work and school that they do not have a lot of time to go looking around campus to see what is available for them. Belinda did not go to orientation, but she feels that would be a good time to tell students what is available. Jesus thinks freshmen orientation would be more effective if the groups of students that come each day were smaller than they are presently, to allow for more one-on-one attention to students.

Puff told what he remembers from freshman orientation: "All I remember is, we took a tour and then went back to Davis Hall--one of those halls. We got advised. We went through registration, and that was it! I was never embraced."

Four students addressed the concerns that first-generation students share. Naomi said it would be
helpful if there were a book, which was easily accessible for students, listing available scholarships. She also recommended the creation of a condensed pamphlet that lists campus services and resources. Baka San agreed that students often do not know what is available for them on campus, but he thinks that professors should be the ones to communicate the information to students.

Sop explained why first-generation students need the extra assistance.

I think, to be honest, we need a little more. I want to say—I think we need a little more guidance because of the fact—like I said before—we don't have anyone who has been there already. We are basically going in on our own, and that puts us at a disadvantage, I believe, with students who know what they are getting into. We don't know firsthand, even secondhand, from family members or maybe friends.

Elizabeth expressed her feelings:
If the person behind the counter [in an office on campus] would just realize or take into consideration that the person they are facing might never--and most likely a minority . . . has never gone through the system--have never done this. Most of us are first-generation college students, so give us the information like you would a child--from a to z--each
little step--because we don't know. They might take it for granted that most students have gone through institutions; then they [the students should] know that the next step you do is this. We do not know. We are blind to it. We are ignorant of the system, so spoon [feed] us this information. It isn't because we are being babies; we don't know. We don't have the information.

Two students expressed concerns about academic advising when asked for recommendations to the administration. Other students mentioned concerns about advising during other parts of our conversations. Naomi's view is that, because advising on campus is so poor, the students have to help each other figure out which classes to take.

Sop illustrated his concern about advising with an example.

When you are in the engineering program, you have to talk to an actual counselor to get advised. They didn't let you . . . . You can't take classes without their approval. You have to go up there, and, if you are not doing well, you have to talk to the head honcho there. My cousin Jessie's problem was that he always got out of having to talk to anyone [as a liberal arts major]. In fact, I've seen his advisor forms. They just had stacks of prewritten, you know, presigned
He just went and filled out whatever he wanted. I told him, I wish I could do that. Then I'm glad I didn't.

His cousin flunked out and is now working for a courier service.

Carolina and Puff contributed suggestions about improving the recruitment of students to attend the university. Carolina proposed that the university needs to hire more than one minority recruiter and that additional recruiters should represent different races and be bilingual. The reason she recommends bilingual abilities is that, whereas the prospective college students will speak English, not all of the parents will, and recruiters also need to be able to communicate with parents. She also thinks the university should pay students to do recruiting rather than relying on volunteers.

Puff targeted the subject of recruiting as follows:

If I understand, I don't think the university has a recruitment department, do they? I think if they want the best students--I don't want to say the best because there is no best--but, if they want good students, they need to recruit.

Recruitment is important to some of these students because AMAS and TAMACS have actively assisted the minority student recruiter in visiting high schools and hosting
prospective students on campus. All of their work, so far, has been voluntary and without payment.

Carolina made a number of recommendations about minority issues. She thinks the university should offer a minority studies program and hire minorities to work on campus who are not "yes people." She believes that the Center for Multicultural Cooperation (CMC) should have its own director and advisory board because the Director of Multicultural Services has too many other responsibilities and is "spread too thin."

The recommendations that these students would make to the campus administration are concentrated in 5 primary areas. These concern money, customer service, courses, freshmen orientation, and first-generation students. The money issues include financial aid, scholarships, the cost of course materials and equipment, and, also, funding for the AMAS.

Those students concerned about customer service on campus recommended sensitivity training for staff and also treating students as a priority. The suggestion was made to look into the Japanese system of doing business.

Regarding courses, the concerns include having professors who help students succeed, offering more engineering classes at night, and allowing 2 weeks to drop
and add classes. One student believes that the university sets standards to flunk a certain number of students.

The recommendations for freshmen orientation were to tell students about services offered on campus in smaller group sessions that allow for more one-on-one discussion. In this way, the process would be more personalized.

First-generation students recommended a book of scholarship listings and a condensed student services pamphlet. They said that they need extra guidance, with more complete explanations of campus procedures.

A couple of students expressed concerns about academic advising and the recruitment of new students. One student recommended offering a minority studies program and hiring more minority employees, as well as hiring a director and appointing an advisory board for the CMC.

Other Sources of Information

Information From University Records

This section contains a summary of contents and information from university records and the local newspaper regarding Hispanic students and Hispanics in general. The sources include a Dallas Morning News article; statistical data concerning the student body in an admissions office report; results of a campuswide student survey; various student organization files; a proposal written to establish the Center for Multicultural Cooperation (CMC); and a class
Poverty and Unemployment

The following is a list of current United States Census Bureau statistics regarding Hispanic poverty, as reported in the *Dallas Morning News* on August 23, 1993: Of the nation's 22.1 million Hispanics, 29% live below the poverty line, as compared with 9% of non-Hispanic whites. About half of all Hispanics living in poverty are children younger than 18.

The following statistics paint a grim picture of the financial status of the Hispanic families from which many college students come: "In March, 1992, the unemployment rate for Hispanic men was 12.2 percent compared to 7.5 percent for non-Hispanic white men. Unemployment among Hispanic women was 9.8 percent, compared with 5.4 percent for non-Hispanic white women, (Dallas Morning News, p. 4A)."

Campus Enrollment Statistics

The total university enrollment in the spring semester of 1993 was 22,748 students. The average age of the student body was 26.4 years, which indicates a nontraditional student population. There were 1,396 undergraduate Hispanic students who were American citizens at the time of this study. Thus, Hispanic students comprised 6% of the student body in 1993.
**Student Survey Results**

The university Research and Evaluation office periodically polls the student body with a general student survey that asks about a variety of aspects of their college experience. Results of this survey are recorded for the years 1966, 1973, 1979, 1984, and 1989. Although the most recent survey results are a few years old, baseline data from 1989 is reported here in order to compare how typical this sample of Hispanic students is compared to the general campus population in 1989.

The total campus enrollment in the spring of 1989 was 21,922; of that group, 5.5% was Hispanic, which is similar to the 1993 distribution. The sample for the 1989 student survey included responses from 6,565 students, or about 30% of enrollment. Percentages are reported the way they are listed in the student survey summary. Occasionally, multiple groupings are condensed into fewer categories. The totals may not equal 100% exactly, due to rounding.

When asked how many times they had changed majors, 47.4% in the 1989 student survey reported never having changed their major; 46.5% said they changed at least once; and 6.1% had not yet declared a major. This is compared to 47.6% in the 1993 sample who never changed their major and the 52.4% who changed one or more times. In changing majors, these two groups appear to be similar.
In 1989, 68.8% of the students reported having previously enrolled at a university other than this one. In 1993, 66.6% of this sample had attended another university. Once again, the samples are similar.

In 1989, 33.5% of the student body lived with parents or relatives compared to 38% in this sample. In 1989, 54.4% of students lived in a private home, apartment or room compared to 38% in this sample. The remaining 12.2% of students in 1989, compared to 23.8% in 1993, lived in a fraternity, sorority, residence hall, university apartment, house, or another option not listed. Concerning housing, some variation exists between the two groups in that this Hispanic sample has a higher percentage living at home and on campus than the 1989 sample, and the 1989 sample has a larger group living in off-campus housing than the 1993 group.

In 1989, the 2 major reasons why students chose to attend this university were convenience or location (44.5%) and academic reputation of the school (10.6%). The 1993 sample reported similar reasons, with 42.8% choosing it for convenience and 23.8% for its academic reputation.

Although the student survey covered other topics not discussed above, this concludes the summaries of questions that the 2 studies had in common. It appears that Hispanic students comprised a similar percentage of the total
enrollment in both studies, with a slight gain from 5.5% in 1989 to 6% in 1993. The samples were similar in how often they changed majors and whether they had previously attended other colleges. The only difference that appeared in the two groups concerned where the students live. More of the Hispanic students in 1993 lived with parents or on campus than the general population in 1989, and the 1989 sample had a larger group who lived off campus.

**Student Organization Records**

In the Office of Student Activities and Student Governance on this campus, there are records for five Hispanic student organizations. These organizations include (a) Sociedad Hispanica; (b) the Association of Mexican-American Students (AMAS); (c) the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE); (d) Kappa Delta Chi; and (e) the Texas Association of Mexican-American College Students.

The files contain the organizations' constitutions, membership lists, campus event forms, profit and loss records for fundraisers, past-due payment notices, and other letters. The above information most pertinent to this study is that which indicates the purposes of these organizations and the values that these purposes represent. The following is a description of each organization that is based on information found in these files.
Sociedad Hispanica

The Sociedad Hispanica was originally founded in 1975 as the Ibero-American Club. It changed its name to Sociedad Hispanica in May 1978. According to the constitution, "the purpose of this organization is to promote and give students a chance to participate in the cultures of Spanish-speaking nations". Full membership privileges are open to any enrolled student at this university; it is not restricted to Hispanics. Associate memberships are made available to nonstudents who are interested in Hispanic cultures, which indicates the group's interest in inclusiveness.

This group has sponsored a variety of activities on campus. Its fundraisers include a bunjee jumping booth, two dances, a Peruvian sweater sale, a folkdance, a bake sale, a rummage sale, and a luncheon. Although several of the fundraisers were held in order to collect money for club activities, one was held to collect scholarship money and another for support of a pancreas transplant. The group also sponsored a film about Hispanic heritage and a week of events for La Semana de Cultura. These file items indicate a need to supplement dues with additional money, a pride in their culture, and a sense of civic duty to help others in need.
Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers

The Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers was founded on this campus in October 1990. The constitution indicates that the purpose of this organization is to do the following:

1. provide a professional atmosphere and social outlet for Hispanics; 2. recruit, train and graduate Hispanic engineers; 3. organize an advisory committee (tutors) for freshmen and incoming transfer students; 4. have fundraisers to be able to attend regional and state conferences; 5. host Hispanic speakers in the engineering profession; and, 6. create and maintain contacts with Hispanic engineering alumni.

The membership of SHPE is open to all students, faculty, and staff at this university who support the goals listed above. Associate membership is also available to others who support the goals, but they are not afforded the right to hold office or vote.

In addition to the president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, there is an officer whose title is internal representative. The internal representative is responsible for maintaining relations with other campus engineering societies. This indicates an interest in maintaining a sense of community among engineering majors. Similarly, the goals of the organization indicate an
interest in maintaining a network with new students, alumni, and Hispanic engineers in the workforce.

Two events were hosted by SHPE, according to the file. One event was a gaming convention, and the second was a science fiction fair.

Kappa Delta Chi

Kappa Delta Chi, Zeta Chapter, is a Hispanic sorority that is relatively new to this campus. The organization was founded in November 1992. According to the constitution on file, the purpose of this group is as follows:

To promote the traditional values of unity, honesty, integrity, and leadership of its members. [It is] an organization dedicated to service for [the university] and the minority community with special emphasis to the Hispanic population; a servitude based on love and friendship.

The requirements for membership include being a full-time, enrolled undergraduate student with a minimum grade-point average of 2.25 and having completed all the requirements of pledgeship. The group also stipulates that the members need to have "a positive attitude, high moral standards, and a sense of responsibility."

This organization has an elaborate list of officers. The titles of these officers include president, vice-president, pledge trainer, corresponding secretary,
recording secretary, treasurer, historian/chaplain, sergeant-at-arms, and a standards chairperson.

The historian/chaplain has the double duty of maintaining organizational records and preparing weekly devotionals and morale boosters for meetings. The standards chairperson must uphold high standards and correct members when these standards are not met. The inclusion of these two officers reflects a religious nature, as well as moral expectations, which is different from the other four organizations.

One specific example of standards regarding alcohol is listed in the national by-laws section of the constitution. The policy states, "Members may not visibly wear the official Kappa Delta Chi letters, pins and/or shield to any bar, club or where alcohol is being served at your table."

**Texas Association of Mexican-American College Students**

The Texas Association of Mexican-American College Students was founded on this campus in February 1987. The purpose, as outlined in the constitution, is to "address issues facing Mexican-American college students, namely [the] education and the recruitment and retention of Mexican-American students."

The membership of the TAMACS organization is open to all university students, faculty, and staff who support the group's mission. The advisory board is described as
including education, business, and community leaders, which indicates a more global focus than most campus clubs.

The TAMACS activities listed in the file include recruiting activities at de Septiembre Fiesta in Fort Worth, Texas; attending a League of United Latin American Citizens College Awareness Day at University High School in Waco, Texas; a college fair at Skyline High School in Dallas, Texas; and, a Halloween Festival at Charles Nash Elementary in Fort Worth, Texas. A TAMACS flyer lists the group's activities as being "participation in youth conventions, high school visitations, community events, organizational programs, and heavy involvement in the establishment of the Center for Multicultural Cooperation." The flyer also states the primary concern of the organization:

[To] facilitate the development of social consciousness and awareness among Mexican-American college students—the philosophy being the need to educate ourselves regarding social, economic, educational and political issues and their impact on the attainment of a higher education as well as their impact on the Mexican-American community.

The values of those who join TAMACS appear to revolve around taking care of their own people. They do this by recruiting Mexican-American youth to attend college and to stay in college. They also want to stay abreast of current
issues and to be politically active in order to advance Mexican-American causes.

The Association of Mexican-American Students

The Association of Mexican-American Students was founded in March 1970 on this campus. Of the five Hispanic student organizations, the AMAS has the thickest file and, accordingly, is probably the most active among this group of student organizations.

The AMAS constitution describes its purpose as being dedicated to the presentation and advancement of Mexican-American heritage as follows:

As Mexican-Americans, we seek a respect for ourselves, our history, our culture, and our values. Our philosophy is the essence of self-identity, fraternity and self-determination. These goals will be achieved by our involvement in: a. research, publication, and education designed to bring Mexican-Americans to an awareness of self-identity, and, b. service and socio-economic activities leading to the betterment of the Mexican-American.

The membership is open to all students at this university who subscribe to the purpose of the organization. Officers include president, vice-president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, treasurer, and the
chairpersons of 4 standing committees. These include executive, scholarship, service, and social action.

The activities sponsored by the AMAS included many fundraising efforts. On various occasions, the group has sold chalupas, sweetbread, hotdogs, bread, jewelry, fajitas, tostadas, and other baked goods. The group has also sponsored events such as a bilingual puppet show, an all-night fair, luncheons, dances, a "turkeython", a sock hop, a lip-sync contest, a Halloween party, an end-of-the-semester party, the fifth annual Chicano Student Conference, and an event called McPuttin on the Hits.

These fundraisers collected money for various causes, such as scholarships, club sweatshirts, the Freewheelers (campus wheelchair basketball team), and donations for earthquake victims in Mexico. Its dedication to community service is revealed again in the causes the AMAS chooses to support.

In 1979, the AMAS celebrated Chicano Awareness Week. By 1984, the week in which they celebrated their culture was called Semana de Cultura. Times change, and so does terminology. In the 1993 student interviews, the students indicated that Chicano is not presently considered an acceptable term on campus, but, according to the files, at one time it was.
Overall, the values that repeatedly surface in Hispanic student organizations on this campus include an attitude of inclusiveness; a pride in their culture; a strong sense of civic duty; a commitment to the recruitment and retention of Hispanic college students; a preference for networking rather than separatism; a high value placed on higher education; a dedication to taking care of their own; a willingness to earn money rather than ask for donations; and some emphasis on the importance of raising social consciousness among Mexican-American college students.

Ethnographic Study of the Center for Multicultural Cooperation

In the interest of collecting other sources of information about Hispanic students and their values, various university staff members were asked for their recommendations concerning sources. Zeb Strong, Assistant Director of Multicultural Services, contributed a paper written by a student, Marvin Beachy, for a cultural anthropology class. The student chose to study the social activities of the CMC by participant observation and interviewing. He did his study during the fall semester of 1992. The following is a summary of his observations:

The student organizations whose members tend to utilize the CMC include the African-American Recruitment Committee (AARC); the National Society of Black Journalists (NSBE);
various minority fraternities and sororities; several gospel groups; the African Student Alliance (ASA); AMAS; the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); and TAMACS.

The shared values that Beachy identified between these groups included (a) the importance of education for improving socioeconomic standing; (b) helping other minorities realize the benefit of higher education; (c) becoming self-educated about social issues; (d) a desire for unity; and, (e) a sense of cooperation between groups in recruiting minority students and supporting each other in campus elections.

Beachy noted that, when he asked students about a group to which they did not belong, they would sometimes describe philosophical differences by saying that the other group was more militant or radical than their own group, but they would often acknowledge that, even though the approaches were different, the two groups shared similar goals. He called this phenomenon "unity despite diversity."

In regard to recruitment efforts, Beachy noted that the various groups cooperated in spite of their differences. He said they appeared to be most interested in recruiting minority students to come to college whether they were their same race or not. This phenomenon he called "cooperation despite differences."
Beachy also noted that in conversations with various students, the students tended to add moderation to their political statements. He said that, when the students talked about fighting injustice, they clarified that they supported doing so in peaceful ways. They did not support terrorism or destruction but, rather, promoted organizing and working toward a better understanding of other cultures. This phenomenon he called "moderation."

The CMC is staffed by a part-time receptionist on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The operating hours are from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. during the week, with some weekend hours. The hours remaining after the receptionist leaves are divided between student volunteers who answer the telephone and greet visitors. The various student organizations who utilize the center decide who their resident coordinators will be in order to provide adequate supervision of the center. Beachy said that he was told about instances in which students have confronted other students about misuse of the computer or copier in order to protect the equipment. He calls this "self-government."

Beachy noted that the atmosphere in the CMC is not exclusive of any race. He said that a member of AMAS assured him that, although Mexican-American is designated in the name of the organization, the group does not exclude other Spanish-speaking students from Central or South
America. A member of the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) told him that all communications majors are welcome in that organization. Beachy calls this phenomenon "non-exclusivity."

The final value Beachy observed in the CMC during his study was the appreciation of leisure or relaxation time. He observed students dropping in at the CMC between classes to relax or talk with friends about non-academic topics.

Beachy describes Mexican-American students as comprising approximately 53% of the CMC patrons, who share values such as the importance of education, unity, cooperation despite diversity, moderation, self-governance, non-exclusivity, and leisure. There are several commonalities between Beachy's observations and the values noted in interviews with students and in the organizational files.

Rationale for Establishing the Center for Multicultural Cooperation

In the interest of triangulation, another source of information about Hispanic students' college experience at this university is the proposal for establishing the CMC. The proposal was written in March 1988, by L. Victor Collins, who was, at that time, the Director of Minority Student Services.
The rationale he used in his report gives a framework for understanding the campus environment at that time and the direction Collins and others were hoping the CMC would work to change that environment. The proposal also notes that Collins was assisted by members of AMAS, TAMACS and NAACP.

In his opening statements, Collins mentioned that the numbers of blacks and Hispanics enrolling in higher education was on the decline. He also suggested that the academic performance of Hispanic and black students may be hindered by unknown factors and that, at that time, social and cultural organizations like AMAS, TAMACS, and the black Greeks provided the majority of social outlets for minority students. In essence, he said that the campus environment remained essentially segregated. As a result, he was proposing that predominantly white universities, this one included, needed to consider new and different strategies and techniques to counterbalance this trend of segregation and declining minority enrollment.

Collins proposed that the purpose of the CMC would be to address the cultural, psychological, and developmental needs of minority students as a part of a comprehensive campus-wide outreach initiative for attracting and orienting minority students. He believed that the campus and its programs reflected the interests, attitudes and cultural
expression of the white students, faculty and staff who made up the majority of people on campus and that minority students and their needs often went unnoticed.

The stated objectives for the proposed CMC were that the number of minority students on campus would increase to 25%; 35% of entering minority freshmen would graduate; and, that minority students would grow to comprise at least 18% of students in Greek organizations, on the residence hall staff, as peer counselors, in the leadership class and on constituency councils. These objectives are not listed here in order to determine whether the CMC has reached its intended goals, but rather to review what they were in order to see what values they represent.

One value implied in these objectives appear to be the importance of recruiting minority students to attend college and then to help them graduate. The other value that appears in these objectives is encouraging minority students to get involved on campus and to be leaders. Leaders can affect direction and influence what type of activities are planned in order to provide programs that are of interest to all cultures rather than just one. In light of these, and the information from the student organization files, it appears that the Hispanic organizations are actively working in the direction outlined as the purpose of the CMC.
A Non-participant Observation of an AMAS Meeting

On March 26, 1993, the researcher attended an AMAS meeting in the university center. The following is an account of my impressions as recorded immediately after the meeting in a reflexive journal. The entry follows:

There were over 30 students in attendance and most seemed to know each other. They discussed election of officers for next year, service projects, softball, soccer and boxing teams, a trip to San Antonio, Semana de Cultura and job openings. It was the most impressive student organization meeting I have ever attended!

It wasn't just a few officers doing all the work. Many people around the room were making announcements and sending around sign up sheets. My feeling was that one couldn't have enough time in a week to do all the things that were being offered. I was very impressed with the service projects such as [making] Easter baskets for hospitalized children and [providing English] reading lessons for children who just moved here from Mexico.

There was a very congenial, relaxed atmosphere in the room. The agenda flowed without being overly task-oriented or dominated by any one individual. The president, Naomi, urged students to be ambassadors and
to get involved in student government. She described AMAS as having a good reputation on campus and stressed the importance to new officers to continue the tradition. She listed how officership helps you to network.

There was a quadriplegic student there that was amazing! He was missing both legs and hands nearly to his elbows and had serious burn scars on his shoulders. Yet, he moved around agilely and could write by putting a pen in the crook of his elbow. He impressed me.

The whole group impressed me. I wish our hall councils and other groups could be as organized, inclusive, as active and as broad-based as AMAS. That meeting was a magical experience for me!

The reason for quoting this journal entry was to capture not only the sequence of events that occurred during the meeting, but also to reveal the emotion that was inspired in an outsider attending a meeting for the first time. The researcher has worked in student affairs for 16 years and has attended many student organization meetings. This emotional response was not a typical one.

The values that were evident in this meeting of students were as follows: We should take care of our own people; we should become leaders on campus; AMAS has earned a good reputation on campus, and it is up to the leadership
to uphold that tradition; everyone is welcome to join in activities, but no one is required to do so; we are friends and a network of support; and more can get done if everyone contributes to the group leadership.

The activities and topics the AMAS discussed were a mixture of social, recreational, service to others in need; plans for continuing leadership; and helping each other find jobs. They probably did not discuss upcoming recruitment events, for which the AMAS is well known, because it was the end of the school year and just before final examinations. It appears, however, that the AMAS organization is actively working toward the goals established for the CMC, except possibly for emphasizing academic progress and graduation success of Hispanic students, which is one of the areas that Sop mentioned a concern about in his interview.

Summary

This section reports the summary of the findings related to each research question and for the information from university records and observations. Only those items mentioned as themes or in groupings will be included in this summary.

In this sample, fourteen students have attended another college previously to this one. Five of the students live in a residence hall; 8 live with their parents, and 8 live in apartments. The largest group in any one major are the 8
engineering students, followed by 3 communication majors, 2 political science majors and the remaining 8 in various other majors. The majority of these students (13) were reared in Texas. Of the others, 4 were reared overseas or travelled with the military; it is unknown where the remaining 4 grew up.

The students gave 6 different reasons for how they decided to go to college. Four said it was always assumed that they would go; 4 said they were urged to go to college by their parents; 3 said it happened as a fluke; 2 said they wanted a better future; 2 said they were inspired by someone else's example; and 1 said she chose to go in order to improve herself. For 5 students, there is no information on this question.

When asked about career goals, 10 students said they had not changed majors since they started college; 8 changed for various reasons related to self-awareness; and, 3 named external barriers as being significant contributors to their decision to change majors. For 1 student, there is no information on this question.

The information about college that these students received previous to matriculation was very limited. Of the group, 9 reported hearing nothing or nothing much; 8 cited hearing positive information about various academic departments; 2 said that they heard good things about
athletic teams; 2 said that they heard it was a big campus; 2 reported that they had heard classes would be hard at this university; and 2 heard that the school did not have a good academic reputation.

When asked why they chose this university, 9 said that it was close to home; 5 came here for a certain department or team; 3 said that they knew someone who went here; and 2 had the incentive of scholarships. The choice to stay close to home was usually made for one of two reasons. The students either preferred to stay near or with family, or finances were limited and they could not afford to go elsewhere.

There were 9 themes in the answers to the question about what surprised them after they came to the university. Nine students said they felt lost in the crowd; 6 were disappointed in the faculty; 5 said they felt like a minority; 3 said it is a diverse campus; 3 described the campus environment as conservative; 3 said the classes were difficult; and 3 reported that nothing surprised them.

There was controversy as to whether people on campus are friendly or not. Four said that they were, and 3 said that they were not.

When asked what impact their family had on their success in college, the students shared a number of family characteristics. For instance, students often mentioned
whether others in their family had gone to college. In this
group, 8 said that they were first-generation college
students; 5 said that both of their parents had attended
college; 5 reported that their father had attended, but
their mother had not; and 2 said that their mother had
attended, but their father had not. There is no information
for this question for 1 student. Of this group, 13 students
mentioned that at least 1 of their siblings had gone to
college.

Another issue that was discussed was the use and
importance of speaking Spanish in their households as they
were growing up. A total of 14 students said that they had
learned Spanish, and 7 said they had not; 4 mentioned that
they were losing fluency in Spanish because they do not use
it very much; 3 students said they either did not learn it
or were discouraged from using it because their parents, at
one time, had been punished for speaking it. This theme was
named the protected generation because parents were trying
to help their children avoid the censorship that they had
experienced during their own childhoods. Four students said
that they are embarrassed by their lack of fluency because
others expect all Hispanics to speak Spanish. This theme
was called ethnic pride. Four students told stories about
how English and Spanish were used interchangeably in their
households. This theme was called mixed languages. Three
students gave answers with the older generation theme. They each described how being bilingual is often valued by the older generation.

Of these students, 16 described their family as being supportive of their college goals; 5, including 2 who said their family was supportive, described ways that their family hindered their success. There was no information on this question for 2 students.

The ways the students' families helped them included financial assistance, emotional support, babysitting, help with homework, advice for preparing for class, and encouragement. The ways family hinder them included competing for their time, asking why it is taking so long, and expecting them to contribute money to the household.

When asked about what had helped them to succeed in college, the students discussed 3 main topics. These included favorite classes, how they spend their time, and what in general helps them to succeed. In regard to favorite classes, 7 said they liked the subject; 5 liked both the professor and the subject; 2 liked the professor; 2 liked the subject and their fellow students in the class; and 1 liked the other students and the professor.

In general, 8 students said that what has helped them be successful in college has been getting help from someone when they needed it. Five gave credit to self-discipline; 5
said determination helped them; and 3 said they like to learn.

How people choose to spend their time often reflects their priorities. Eight of these students work part-time; 2 work full-time, and 6 do not currently work during the school year. Employment information was not collected from 5 students. In addition, 3 of these students play intercollegiate sports, and 5 are rearing children.

The group was divided into 3 categories, according to how they described their weekly activities. For example, 4 students emphasized how much they make it a point to reserve time to study and rearrange other activities around their coursework. Six students admitted to doing minimal academic work, with their priorities focused on non-academic matters. Of these, 4 were involved in family activities, and 2 spent their time with campus activities. Six students described efforts to balance their academic and non-academic activities evenly. There was no information on this subject for 5 students.

When asked what hinders their college success, 4 students reported financial problems; 4 cited family obligations; 4 said they were underprepared academically; 3 said their social life got in the way; and 3 said they lacked friends with whom they could study. Two students mentioned each of the following hindrances:
procrastination, not living on campus, and being labelled as a radical.

A dislike of their classes can hinder success for some students. The courses named as least favorite include the sciences (5 students); mathematics (6 students); history (4 students); English (2 students); and Spanish, political science, and literature (each named by 1 student). One student said she did not have any least favorite classes; there is no information for 4 students about least favorite classes. The students gave 4 reasons for not liking classes: 12 said that the class was too difficult, 1 said it was boring; 1 said that the information was not relevant, and 1 said that the other students in the class were too conservative.

When asked what problems they had experienced on campus, the students' answers reflected 6 themes. Five students mentioned bureaucracy; 5 complained about being given wrong information; 5 cited academic difficulties; 4 described discriminatory practices on campus; 4 mentioned financial concerns; and 4 said they had not had any notable problems.

When asked what they would tell their friends about this university, 5 students said they would encourage them to become involved in campus activities; 4 said they would recommend it as a good school; 3 would describe it as a
nontraditional campus; and 3 would point out that it does not have a football team. On the topic of school size, 2 said they would describe it as a large school and 2 said it is not too large. Two students each said that they would tell their friends details about the size of classes; that they have had a good experience on campus; and that they would discuss the relative strengths of different majors.

When looking toward graduation, 3 of these students had plans to graduate in the next 3 months. Six others appeared to feel confident that it was just a matter of time before they would complete all their requirements in order to graduate. For others, the reasons given for anticipated delays of graduation included not passing a class; not clearing up a transcript problem; taking too few classes at a time; working long hours; socializing too much; having family obligations; dealing with the unexpected; taking a double major; having financial problems; doing research or taking extra classes to improve their grade-point average for graduate school; and not being able to take classes on schedule.

When asked whether being Hispanic makes their college experience any different than it is for non-Hispanic students, this group of students addressed issues such as preferred terms for their race, characteristics of their culture, and discrimination. Results from these interviews
indicate clearly that there is no consensus about which term is universally preferred for referring to individuals of Hispanic heritage. Of this sample, 4 students preferred Mexican-American; 4 preferred Hispanic; 6 preferred Mexican; 1 preferred Latin; 2 preferred American; one preferred Spanish; and 3 were not asked this question. The term Chicano was clearly not preferred and is presently considered to have a negative connotation in this area.

When discussing Hispanic heritage or culture, 4 students mentioned a lack of positive role models; 3 discussed the dilemma of family duty and college attendance; 3 addressed the relative lack of money in many Hispanic families; 4 felt they had had to escape from a self-defeating environment in their neighborhood in order to succeed; and 3 said that stereotypes of minorities limit aspirations for some. On the positive side, 3 students talked about aspects of their culture of which they are proud. These cultural traditions are the Charro organization, folklorica dancing, and tejano or ondo music. Two students described Hispanic culture as encouraging men to be macho and women to be docile and not career-oriented.

In discussing their experiencing of discrimination on campus, 5 students said they had; 13 said they had not; and 3 were not asked that question. Of the 13 students who said they had not experienced discrimination, 3 adamantly stated
that they thought some people go looking for it, and, that, if you want to get things done, you can. Also, 3 students said that being Hispanic has been an advantage for them because they qualified for financial aid, the McNair program, and tutoring. One said that being Hispanic gave her an advantage in Spanish class.

When asked what the campus administration could do to help more Hispanic students graduate, the students' answers addressed money, course concerns, freshmen orientation, customer service, and the unique concerns of first-generation students. Concerning money, 4 students made recommendations such as raising the financial aid ceiling, allowing students to work off debt with community service, initiating stricter policing of financial aid recipients, and having the university contribute more money to the AMAS for Semana de Cultura.

In regard to courses, 3 students requested professors that like teaching, professors who are not pressed to fail students, more engineering courses at night, and two weeks in which to drop and add classes. Concerning freshmen orientation, 5 students felt that it was overwhelming and not personalized and that they did not get enough information about available services on campus.

Three students reported a lack of a customer-service approach in offices on campus. They recommended sensitivity
training for campus office personnel. As first-generation students, 4 of these students made suggestions such as creating a book of scholarships; a condensed pamphlet of campus services; announcements by professors in class of information about campus services; and an understanding by campus personnel that these students need more elaborate explanations and extra assistance when it comes to working through campus procedures.

The United States census data for 1993 presented a grim financial picture of Hispanic households. In fact, 29% of the nation's 22.1 million Hispanics live below the poverty line. Among Hispanics, 12% of Hispanic men and 9.8% of Hispanic women are unemployed.

Concerning campus enrollment, in the spring of 1993, Hispanics represented 6% of the student body. This is a slight increase from 5.5% in 1989.

A comparison of this sample of Hispanic students to the general student sample in 1989 provided a number of insights. The comparisons showed that about half of both groups changed their major at least once during their college career; that a larger group of the Hispanic sample live with their parents than the general group; and both groups selected this campus for convenience and its academic reputation.
The review of the files of 5 Hispanic student organizations provided information about the uniqueness of each group and its values. Sociedad Hispanica seeks to promote the culture of Spanish-speaking nations; SHPE works to recruit, train, and graduate Hispanic engineers, as well as network with Hispanic engineers in the community; Kappa Delta Chi wants to promote unity, honesty, integrity, and leadership; TAMACS seeks to address issues facing Mexican-Americans such as the recruitment and retention of Mexican-American college students; and AMAS, like Sociedad Hispanica, wants to present and advance Mexican-American heritage. They also say their purpose is to work toward better self-identity, fraternity, and self-determination.

The values that repeatedly surface among Hispanic organizations on campus include the following: (a) inclusiveness; (b) pride in their culture; (c) a strong sense of civic duty; (d) the importance of recruiting and retaining Hispanic college students; (e) networking as opposed to separatism; (f) the importance of higher education; (g) a dedication to taking care of their own people; (h) the need to become leaders, (i) a willingness to earn money rather than to ask for donations; and (j) a need to raise social consciousness.

In his ethnographic study of the CMC, Beachy observed evidence of the importance of education, unity, cooperation
despite diversity, moderation, self-governance, non-exclusivity, and leisure among the black and Hispanic students who frequent the center. Some elements noted in his study are found also in this study.

In the March 1988 proposal to establish the CMC, the Director of Minority Student Services was concerned about the decline in minority student enrollment in colleges and also about the fact that this university appeared to be segregated, with the majority of activities reflecting the attitudes and culture of white students. The value of the CMC to the campus would be to aid in the recruitment of more minority students to attend this school, to encourage minority students to be leaders, and to plan activities of interest to all groups.

The attitudes that emerged in the AMAS meeting included the following: We think that it is important to take care of our own people; we need to maintain our good reputation on campus; everyone is welcome to participate in our activities; we need to build a network of support; more can be done if everyone helps out; and it is important to be leaders on campus.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

What are the values and beliefs of Hispanic students attending a large urban southwestern public university? That problem was addressed with a qualitative, ethnographic research design. Personal interviews, university records, the U.S. Census Bureau, observing student activities, and an independent ethnographic paper were used for sources of data.

Twenty-one Hispanic college students comprised the sample out of the 1,396 Hispanic students enrolled in the university during the 1993 spring semester. Eight of the 21 were randomly selected and 13 were purposely selected with the assistance of Hispanic faculty, staff, and students at the university.

The constant comparative method was used to analyze the data. This involved coding the interview transcripts for cross-referencing; preparing notecards for use in categorization; recording groupings on domain analysis worksheets; and identifying major themes among the results of all these processes.
Various methods were used in the interest of furthering the trustworthiness of the results. These methods included: persistent observation, triangulation, negative case analysis, peer debriefing, referential adequacy, member checking, providing thick description, an audit, and a reflexive journal.

A number of aspects of college life were explored with the students during the interviews. These aspects included: classes, majors, professors, problems, being Hispanic, graduation, family influence, goals, surprises, decision to go to college, extracurricular activities, Spanish fluency, how they spend their time, how they chose the college, and others.

Discussion

This section will focus on how the results of this study compare with the results of other studies about Mexican-American college students. The use of open-ended questions and a flexible interview format in this study permitted the students to discuss the subjects that were most important to them. The results reflect a variety of perspectives and that not all Mexican-Americans think alike. However, there are many points on which this sample concurs with the conclusions drawn in previous studies.

For example, in regard to barriers for seeking higher education, results of other studies indicate that Mexican-
Americans are not encouraged to go to college by their public school teachers. In two of the four community colleges he studied, de los Santos (1972) reported that the Mexican-American students felt stifled by the public education system. Feuntevilla (1981) noted that declining numbers of Mexican-American students were found when one compared high school, junior college and senior college enrollments. High school teachers were found to be doing the least of the three levels to help students plan to attend college. Kosuth (1990) also noted that Mexican-American students were not encouraged to attend college in elementary and secondary schools.

Nine of the students in this study said they had heard nothing or nothing much about college before enrolling, and four students named underpreparedness as a hindrance to success in college. During the interviews, the students reported not knowing about college preparation classes in high school.

Nevarez (1982) reported that the Rio Hondo students he studied considered their peers to be their most important source of campus information and the most effective recruiters for new students. The students in this study describe numerous instances where they were helped more adequately by other students than by their academic advisors. When describing the problems they had experienced
in college, 6 list being given wrong information and 5 said fighting bureaucracy.

Feuntevilla (1981) studied articulation patterns in the high schools, junior colleges and senior colleges in Arizona and found that the majority of articulation programs were failing to assist the enrollment of Mexican-American students. Several of the students in this study have been actively involved with TAMACS or AMAS in voluntarily recruiting Mexican-Americans to come to college. Naomi, Puff, and Robert described the reactions of public school students as often being surprised that college was an option for them.

In addition, the first generation college students often said that they needed more detailed explanations from counselors and administrators. Since they had no one in their family who had experience with university procedures, they were requesting a more personalized freshman orientation and campus office staff that were willing to take the time to more fully explain administrative procedures.

Hernandez (1980) studied the perception of support services by Anglo and Mexican-American students. She reported that Mexican-American students and part-time students in both groups as being less than satisfied with financial aid, orientation, career counseling, and tutoring.
Muro (1986), on the other hand, reported that the Mexican-American students that she studied had high opinions of campus counselors. These conflicting results of the various studies indicate a need for research to identify characteristics of support services that more adequately meet the needs of Mexican-American students.

The students on all four campuses that de los Santos (1972) studied, said that they chose their college because of its proximity, low cost, and because it was close to family. Twelve students in this study agreed with those reasons; while 3 chose it for a specific academic department or athletic team; 3 came to be with a friend who was already attending the college; and 2 came because of a scholarship.

Attinasi (1986) described many Mexican-American college students as feeling lost in the crowd and being surprised about how large the campus was. Nine students in this study reported feeling lost when asked what surprised them when they first came to college. However, since many of the students in this study had attended college elsewhere, their previous experience may have helped alleviate this reaction for some of those who did not report feeling lost.

Attinasi (1986) also reported finding no consensus among Mexican-American college students regarding a preferred name for their ethnic group. The students in this study also did not have consensus. For illustration, 4
preferred Hispanic; 4, Mexican-American; 6, Mexican; 2, American; 1, Spanish; 1, Latin; and 3 were not asked this question.

There was some general agreement among the students in this study that the term Hispanic was an acceptable word to use when referring to all those with Spanish, Latin, or Mexican heritage. The students who refer to themselves as Hispanic usually do so with the intent of being inclusive of all groups. Those who object to being called Hispanic consider the term as referring to a conquered group or because they believe the term Hispanic obscures the uniqueness of whether they are from Spain, Mexico or South America. As a group, they were divided between Mexican-American, Mexican, Latino, American, and Spanish.

The term Chicano was not chosen by any of the students in this study. Some of the students explained that Chicano is more accepted in California and other regions outside of Texas.

The importance of faculty and their relationships with Mexican-American students were addressed by several other studies. Romero (1981) concluded that teachers and the student's peer group were the most important factors affecting retention and achievement of Mexican-American students. Hogden (1990) reported that teacher empathy, enthusiasm and understanding are more important than the
teacher's ethnic or racial background. Feuntevilla (1981) found that the professors in his study appeared to be doing the least to help students. Attinasi (1986) found that professors in his study, were viewed as having inflexible attitudes, unclear expectations, and using big words.

The students in this study discussed their relationships and impressions of faculty in several parts of their interviews. When asked what surprised them when they first came to college, among other answers, they said they were disappointed with the faculty. They mentioned instances of professors giving unreasonable tests, grading unfairly, using big words, breaking confidentiality, not speaking clearly or using proper English, lying to them, being sexist, and going off on tangents during lectures.

However, when asked who they would go to on campus with an academic problem, faculty were named 16 times. The other sources named were student affairs staff, 6 times; other students, 2 times; graduate teaching assistants, 2 times; and administrators, 1 time.

When asked what their favorite class was, the professor's teaching style or personality was part of the reason 8 students gave for liking the class. Only 2 other students who answered this question said they like the class because of the subject and the other students in the class.
The qualities students described of their favorite professors were: energetic, interactive with students, good sense of humor, down-to-earth, knows their subject, open-minded, articulate, direct, good role model, and they are thrilled about the subject they teach. Regarding their relationship with their favorite professor, the students say he or she knows my name, knows something about me, cares whether I pass or fail, is supportive of me, makes me feel comfortable, expects me to excell, and reduces my fear of the subject.

The teaching methods used by their favorite professors were: going step-by-step through the course material; moving slowly through the material; does not give tons of homework; assigns group activities; does not just lecture; provides a package of pre-written class notes; is flexible; personally helps with problems; gives reasonable tests; does not force the bell curve; asks for student opinions; grades fairly; tries to relate course material; and makes the class interesting. When reviewing these lists of preferred qualities of professors and teaching methods, it appears that students want to have a positive relationship with their professors as well as learn about the subject. Their experiences with professors are mixed; some positive and some negative, but the majority of these students seem to be
willing to seek out academic assistance from their professors when they need it.

Vasquez (1990) surveyed Mexican-American college students and found that his data contradicted the stereotypes that they tend to have uneducated parents who work in blue collar jobs. The parents in this study also contradict the stereotype. In this study, 5 students said both of their parents had gone to college; 7 others said one of their parents attended college; and 8 were first generation college students. There is no information for one student. In addition, 13 students reported that at least one of their siblings is college educated.

Calderón (1988) interviewed Cuban-American college students when he replicated Attinasis' (1986) study. He concluded that parental expectations played an important role in university matriculation.

Attinasi (1986) reported that both parental expectations and fraternal modeling contribute to a students' "getting ready" to go to college. Among the students in this study, 4 said it was always assumed in their family that they would attend college; 4 said their parents strongly urged them to attend; and two said they were inspired by role models around them. The other reasons given included a desire for a better future, seeking self-improvement, and going to college due to a fluke.
Although there are complaints that the Mexican-American community does not have enough positive role models, this may be beginning to change as more families seek and promote higher education. The results of this study show an increase in college attendance among Mexican-Americans and a determination to graduate.

Kosuth (1990) reported that the two main reasons Mexican-American students gave for attending college were to prepare for a better career and to enhance their quality of life. The students that de los Santos (1972) interviewed listed the following reasons to attend college: (a) to get a better job; (b) to receive higher education, which is a necessity; (c) to improve their social and economics status; (d) to complete for higher paying jobs; (e) to have a wider choice of career options; and (f) to help out their family and community.

The students in this study often echoed a recognition of the importance of a college education for improving their ability to compete in the job market and to enhance their quality of life. Most have families who share this perspective and who are supportive of their college attendance.

In regard to discrimination, Calderon (1988) reported that the Cuban-American students he interviewed perceived themselves as being treated as inferior by whites on campus.
In contrast, de los Santos (1972) found that Mexican-American students did not feel discriminated against at three of the four campuses he studied. At Texas Junior College, however, the students said there was no inter-ethnic dating and students tended to associate only with others in their own ethnic group. Nevarez (1982) reported that Rio Hondo College students viewed the campus as providing too few social opportunities for them.

The students in this study primarily denied experiencing discrimination on campus. When asked, 13 reported no experience, 3 gave examples of prejudicial treatment and there is no information on this topic for 5 students.

This may not tell the whole story, however, when you look at who they socialize with on campus. Most of these students name primarily involvement with Hispanic organizations if they are involved in campus student organizations. Although these students may not feel openly discriminated against on campus, their membership in primarily Hispanic organizations may indicate that they do not feel fully integrated into the rest of campus life.

Another point made on the topic of discrimination by three students sheds light on yet another perspective. These students believe that some people who feel discriminated against tend to have an attitude that expects
to find discrimination. One student thinks the media emphasizes conflict between groups which contributes to many younger Hispanics being angry.

Feuntevilla (1981) concluded that campuses needed to provide more scholarships and an annual listing of financial aid options. In this study, the subject of money and the pressure of not having enough of it, was a major theme in five topic areas of the interviews. Four students named lack of money as a hindrance of college success. Four listed lack of money as a problem they have experienced in college. Three students said that money is often lacking in Hispanic households and 5 said that the university administration could assist Hispanic students in the areas of financial aid, scholarships, and reduced costs of course materials and equipment.

In general, it appears that Hispanic students and their college experiences are diverse. They major in a wide range of disciplines, come from varying socio-economic households, have parents with varying levels of education, are surprised by different aspects of college, and they do not all speak Spanish.

Although the literature indicates that Hispanic students may have low self-esteem and they drop out of college at higher rates than students of other races, the students in this study appear to be confident that they will
graduate. They have individual concerns about what factors might delay their graduation, but nevertheless, they plan to eventually graduate.

These students consistently describe the university in this study as being a non-traditional, commuter college with a diverse student body. They report hearing very little about the college before attending classes, but when they did hear something, it was usually that it was a good school or it had a good athletic team. Some noted that there is no football team and others said that it is important to get involved in student activities in order to enjoy the social aspect of college.

When making recommendations to the university administration, they suggested providing more scholarships, personalizing freshmen orientation, and revising various aspects of course offerings. They also recommended encouraging campus employees to be more customer service oriented and to give more detailed explanations of procedures to first-generation students.

These students, for the most part, do not appear to be experiencing discrimination on campus. However, a question remains regarding how comfortable they feel on campus. Some of the engineers described perceived disparities in grading and an impression that women are not welcomed to major in
engineering. A couple of students described the campus as having a conservative atmosphere.

The families of these students appear to be very supportive of them, both emotionally and financially. Many describe their parents as strongly encouraging higher education, whether their parents are college educated or not. These students speak proudly of their families and often prefer to spend their sparse free time at home on weekends. Fathers appear to be the most instrumental of all the family members in promoting college attendance.

Although many of the students are proud of their heritage and some describe the importance of music, dancing, the charro organization, and classes about Mexican culture, there are parts of Hispanic culture that do not reinforce continued education. These deterrents include few Hispanic role models with advanced degrees; low family incomes; negative stereotypes of Hispanic people; Hispanic neighborhoods that reinforce gang behavior or low achievement; and an emphasis in some families that it is more important to financially support the family than to pursue a college education.

If this sample is typical of other Hispanic college students, and there is a high drop-out rate among Hispanic students nationally, then there are three areas that appear to be contributors to this trend. First of all, their
public school preparation, encouragement to attend college, and knowledge of college preparation courses, testing, and financial aid offerings is limited. A second area has to do with how their time is spent once they are enrolled in college. Many of these students spend so much time working and taking care of family responsibilities, that there is little time left for homework and sleep. Many do not take advantage of financial aid either, which could help reduce the number of hours they have to work, because they do not know how to apply for it, or they are too proud to use it. A third area of college that seems to defeat some students is figuring out the bureaucratic system. Sometimes that has to do with signing up for the right courses and sometimes that has to do with dropping or adding the course by the deadline. Many of the first-generation students cited unfamiliarity with the system as being a big roadblock for them.

Relationships, a sense of community, and family are highly valued by these students. They often feel alienated in a big university setting when their professors do not know them, or are not available or willing to answer their questions. They also feel unwelcome when they are treated rudely by campus office staff or are given the runaround and sent to the wrong offices to complete administrative tasks. High school and community colleges are reported as being
more personalized and welcoming than this large comprehensive university. This could be a key factor in retention of Hispanic college students and something that college administrators could address.

Summary of Findings

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions seem warranted.

1. Hispanic students' college experiences vary.
2. Hispanic students appear to be confident that they will graduate in spite of obstacles.
3. Not all Hispanic students are first generation college students.
4. Not all Hispanic students are on financial aid. Many work to pay for their education.
5. The majority of Hispanic college students do not feel discriminated against on campus.
6. Hispanic students prefer to refer to their heritage with a variety of terms.
7. A college education is valued in many Hispanic households.
8. Hispanic college students do not get adequate information about college before enrolling.
9. Hispanic students report a lack of encouragement to attend college in the Texas public school system.
10. Fewer Hispanic children learn to speak Spanish than their parents' generation for a number of reasons.

11. Most Hispanic students describe their families as being supportive of and encouraging their college attendance.

12. The students choose favorite classes for a variety of reasons. Their reasons involve various combinations of professors' characteristics, having friends in classes and the appeal of the subject itself.

13. These students prefer professors who get to know them and who challenge them.

14. Hispanic college students are busy and have little unstructured free time. They are usually either working, studying, involved in campus activities or tending to family obligations.

15. Mathematics and science classes were cited as their least favorite classes, usually because they did not do well in them.

16. Limited finances in Hispanic households contribute added stress, loss of time to study due to jobs, and reduced access to materials and equipment such as computers needed for class.

17. The students would describe this University as being non-traditional, with a diverse student body, good academic programs and many commuters.
18. When describing their culture, these students mention not enough positive role models; a strong sense of family duty; low family incomes; sometimes a need to escape in order to achieve; negative societal stereotypes about Hispanics; and a pride in cultural traditions.

19. These students recommend to the campus administration that they personalize the campus experience; revise the financial aid program and advertise opportunities for financial support; personalize freshman orientation and help first generation students learn how to utilize campus administrative channels.

Conclusions

1. There is no single, unified and cohesive subculture of Hispanic students at this university.

2. If a Hispanic college student subculture exists at the university it is probably due to organized student groups on campus.

3. Hispanic college students do not, as a group, exhibit low self-esteem.

4. A lack of money is still an issue in many Hispanic households.

5. Increasing numbers of Hispanics are seeking higher education.

6. Hispanics represent a diverse culture just like any other population.
7. Hispanic college students are not fully integrated in mainstream campus life, yet there are few reported incidents of discrimination.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the results of the study and the experience and knowledge gained by conducting the study. The first seven address future research, and the next four address aspects of the methodology.

1. Future studies could replicate this study on other campuses to give administrators information about how Hispanic students are faring on their campuses.

2. Future studies could focus on public schools and what expectations or aspirations teachers and administrators have for Hispanic students.

3. This methodology could be used on this campus or other campuses to see how students of other races feel about their college experiences. Alternatively, a researcher from a race other than Caucasian could conduct the same study to see if students share different information.

4. A questionnaire could be developed which covers these same topics and mailed to a larger sample on this campus or other campuses to see if the results are similar or different.
5. Future research could be directed toward investigating how welcome female college students feel in engineering schools.

6. Future research could also focus on finding the most successful way to inform Hispanic students and their families about college opportunities, financial aid, college preparation courses in high school, and university administrative procedures.

7. Future research could seek to find out which programs on various campuses work to retain Hispanic college students and help them to succeed to graduation and graduate school.

8. Procedurally, two tape recorders should be used when taping interviews, in case one fails.

9. Group interviews are not advisable because they take too long to get the necessary information from each person and strong personalities can direct the group to focus on their personal issues.

10. A transcribing machine would be easier to use and faster than a tape recorder.

11. Fewer research questions than twelve would help the researcher to focus more in depth on fewer topics.
APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER
March 1, 1993

I would like to ask your help in an important study that could make a tremendous difference in the educational experience of Mexican American students who attend UTA. I am a doctoral student in the Higher Education program at the University of North Texas and I also work here at UTA in housing. I plan to share the results of my dissertation on the concerns of Mexican American students with the UTA administration.

I would like to interview you about your experiences at UTA if you are willing. The interview questions will focus on what you heard about UTA before you got here, how your coursework has gone, what has helped or hindered you and what could be done to improve the educational experience of Mexican American students at UTA. I plan to change the names of students in my reporting of results in order to protect confidentiality.

The interview should not last longer than an hour unless you prefer to spend longer to say what you would like to say. I am enclosing a description of the study for you in the form of a dissertation consent form. Also enclosed is a postcard on which I would like for you to indicate whether you are willing to be interviewed and when the best times are to call you to set up an interview. We can set up a time to talk on campus when you have time. My hope is to complete all interviews in February and March in order to avoid finals.

I look forward to getting a chance to talk with you. Please return the postcard to me in the mail no later than March 10, 1993.

Thanks!

Sincerely,

Laurelyn Gaede
APPENDIX B

DISSERTATION CONSENT FORM
DISSERTATION CONSENT FORM

RESEARCHER: LAURELYN GADE
NAME OF DISSERTATION: A CASE STUDY OF ONE STUDENT HISPANIC SUBCULTURE

THE PURPOSES OF THIS PROJECT ARE:

1. Conduct research for a dissertation to be published as a requirement for a Ph.D. in Higher Education from the University of North Texas.
2. Gain insight into the issues and concerns of Hispanic students on this college campus.

I UNDERSTAND THAT:

1. The information obtained during this project will be used to write a dissertation. A draft of the case study will be read by the respondents, the faculty members of the dissertation committee, and a person who will conduct the "member check" prior to its being published in final form.

2. Copies of the dissertation will be available through the University of North Texas library and members of the dissertation committee.

3. Real names of respondents and the location of the college will be changed during data collection, any publications, and in the final dissertation.

4. Any problems, concerns, or questions of confidentiality will be raised with the researcher as soon as they arise. We will try to work through any difficulties.

5. Participation in this study is voluntary. There will be no consequences for persons who choose not to participate.

6. The benefit for participants will be having an opportunity to communicate concerns of Hispanic college students to administrators in higher education.

7. No discomfort will be experienced by the participants.

8. For answers to questions about this study, Laurelyn Gaede can be reached at 273-2706 in the Housing and University Center Office at 301 W. Second Street. For reporting concerns about this research project, Dr. Barry McKeown can be reached at 273-3288.

9. The procedures used in this study will include individual interviews, attendance of group meetings and
activities, and review of organizational records when permitted.

10. Participants will be asked to complete one interview with the possibility of being asked for a second interview to clarify answers or review research findings.

11. Participants may discontinue their participation in this project at any time.

12. I give ___/do not give ___ my permission to have our interview tape recorded. (The purpose of tape recording is to help assure accuracy of reporting what is said).

I agree to conduct and report this dissertation according to the preceding terms.

________________________________________ Date ______________

I consent voluntarily to participate in this project and agree to be interviewed.

________________________________________ Date ______________
APPENDIX C

SAMPLE POSTCARD
SAMPLE POSTCARD

____ Yes ___ No I am willing to interview.

The best times to reach me at _____________
(phone #) are:

Mon:
Tues:
Wed:
Thurs:
Fri:
Sat:
Sun:
APPENDIX D

LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Do you mind if I tape record our conversation so I don't have to take notes as we talk?

What fake name would you like for me to use for you in my writing?

How long have you been going to UTA?

How did you decide to go to college? Could you describe to me your process?

Have your goals changed since you first came here? If so, how?

What did you hear about UTA before you got here?

Did anything surprise you once you got here?

Could you describe to me how you spend your time in an average week?

How would you describe an average school day?

How would you describe an average weekend?

Do you mind telling me what all you did yesterday?

How does your family affect your college attendance?

What has helped you to be successful at UTA?

What has hindered your success at UTA?

How would you describe UTA to your friends?

What problems have you faced at UTA and how did you solve them?

Do you have any problems here still unresolved?

Do you think that being Hispanic makes your college experience different than students who are not Hispanic? If so, how?

What do you think the UTA administration could do to help a greater number of Hispanic students to graduate?
Are there other Hispanic students here at UTA that you think I should talk to in order to present a realistic description of what Hispanic students face here?

What has been your favorite class at UTA? What about it made it your favorite?

What has been your least favorite class at UTA? What made it your least favorite?

Is there anything you think the UTA administration does not understand about Hispanic students?

Are there any UTA faculty or staff that you know personally that you have or would be willing to turn to for help if you needed to?

Who do you usually go to for help with school if you need it?

Are there any other things you would like to say or other areas you think I should investigate in this study?
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