Reflections of first-generation, low income, Puerto Rican college students on the impact of a high school Upward Bound program on their ability to succeed in post-secondary education.

Paulette Marie Dalpes
University of Massachusetts Amherst

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REFLECTIONS OF FIRST-GENERATION, LOW INCOME, PUERTO RICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS ON THE IMPACT OF A HIGH SCHOOL UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM ON THEIR ABILITY TO SUCCEED IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

A Dissertation Presented

by

PAULETTE MARIE DALPES

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 2001

School of Education
REFLECTIONS OF FIRST-GENERATION, LOW-INCOME, PUERTO RICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS ON THE IMPACT OF A HIGH SCHOOL UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM ON THEIR ABILITY TO SUCCEED IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

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PAULETTE MARIE DALPES

Approved as to style and content by:

Brunilda de Leon, Chair

Ernest D. Washington, Member

Henry Geddes, Member

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School of Education
DEDICATION

To my parents
Eleanor M. Dalpes and Paul O. Dalpes

and

To the participants in this study and the many other first-generation and low-income participants of Upward Bound and TRIO programs who work tirelessly to go the extra mile towards building a better future for themselves and others.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Well, it’s done, after ten years I finally get to write this page. Sheer elation! This is by far the best part, saying thank you. There are many people in my life, many families, to whom I am deeply grateful for their loving support and ongoing encouragement over the long years that it has taken me to complete this project.

Had I been left to my own devices this dissertation would never have come to be. It would have remained a pile in the corner of both my office and my mind accompanied by the looming doubt, frustration and fear that kept me from any forward progress towards its completion. However, as a result of a series of significant life events, loving guides and a profound sense of humility only a deep surrender can produce, here you are today, holding the finished product.

I clearly did not do this or anything else alone. We never do. Which is one of the important things I learned in this process. So there are many beings to thank:

First of all I would like to extend my gratitude to my dissertation committee. Dr. Henry Geddes and Dr. Ernie Washington for their clear and useful feedback. Muchas Gracias to the chair of my committee, Dr. Brunilda de Leon, I am so thankful for your presence, unwavering encouragement, guidance and faith. It was such a gift to work with you.

To my parents: Thanks Mom for your humor and faith, always. Thanks Dad for reminding me about what’s really important, to have fun and do what I enjoy. Thanks to both of you for your unconditional love and constant presence in my life. I love you and am very grateful I am your daughter.
A spin of the foosball to Dr. Bailey Jackson for being one of the primary teachers in my life. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to sit in your classroom, be it at the university or your kitchen table. Of course a tip o’the hat to my mentor Dr. Rita Hardiman. Much of what I could do and see in this study is due to your guidance as another white woman seeking dialogue about race. Thank you both for being a second family to me, for your mentorship, wisdom, and humor.

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Lastly, I believe in a Spirit of the Universe for which I am truly grateful. Thank you for this day, for my life, and for all the blessings and love that you give me.

We did it!
ABSTRACT

REFLECTIONS OF FIRST-GENERATION, LOW INCOME, PUERTO RICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS ON THE IMPACT OF A HIGH SCHOOL UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM ON THEIR ABILITY TO SUCCEED IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

MAY 2001

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Although the federally funded TRIO Program entitled Upward Bound has been in existence for over thirty years and numerous federally and privately funded studies have been conducted about the hundreds of programs available throughout the nation, there has been relatively few investigations involving qualitative research approaches. Additionally, despite the fact that first generation college students, the primary target population for Upward Bound Programs, are most likely low-income and Latino, few studies have sought data directly from these target groups about their experience in Upward Bound. In this regard, the data gathered and reported in this qualitative education evaluation research study is unique.

Twelve former first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican Upward Bound students who had completed at least one year of college were interviewed for this study. The interviews utilized a protocol from a twenty-five year old study that also interviewed Upward Bound students (Bemak, 1975). The purpose of this inquiry was to investigate how first generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college students evaluate the impact of
their participation in a high school Upward Bound program on their academic preparation for college, self-perceptions, family and social relationships, future educational goals, and ultimately their post-secondary success.

The findings of this study shed light on the impact Upward Bound has upon first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students who have succeeded in post-secondary education. Data from the study indicate that the services and support provided by Upward Bound effectively intervenes in the unique struggles of first generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students who are at great risk for educational access and attainment. Reflections of former Upward Bound students inform the field of education regarding the impact of college preparatory programs on students who face the most difficult barriers in college completion. This research identifies practices that contribute to post-secondary success and uses the words and ideas of first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students as a guide to the implementation of future support services.
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CHAPTER 1
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The term "first-generation to college student" refers to students who are the first in their family to pursue a post-secondary education. This term has been in existence for over three decades originating with the creation of federal TRIO programs in 1964. In response to the Civil Rights Movements that spanned the 20th century legislative efforts were made to implement federal programs designed to provide greater equality in access to education. The creators of this legislation developed programs, eventually referred to as TRIO programs, to serve those groups of individuals who experienced the greatest barriers to a post-secondary education: individuals whose parents did not attend college and those individuals who did not have the economic resources to attend college.

Today tens of thousands of first-generation and low-income students receive assistance with their post-secondary pursuits from hundreds of federally funded TRIO programs in existence across the United States. These programs have a solid lobby in Congress, strong bi-partisan support, and have survived changing political administrations and national economic conditions over the past thirty years. Recently, Congress appropriated $600 million dollars to TRIO Programs for fiscal year 1999. This is an increase of about $70 million over fiscal 1998.

Federal TRIO programs are unique because of their long-term focus on first-generation students who are low-income. Some of the educational opportunity
programs developed during the 1960's are still active and other private and public funded programs developed over time to address the needs of low-income students pursuing higher education also exist. However, Federal TRIO Programs are the only programs with a thirty year history that continue to specifically serve first-generation, low-income students today. This is especially true of the Federal TRIO Program entitled Upward Bound whose focus is on college bound high school students in high-risk areas where the barriers to college are most significant.

Statement of the Problem

The research literature on first-generation college students focuses primarily upon the characteristics, needs and performance of first-generation students once they arrive on college campuses (Arellano & Padilla, 1996; McGregor, Mayleben, Buzzanga, Davis, and Becker, 1991; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Reed, 1996; Rendon, 1995; Riehl, 1994; Terenzini, Springer, Yeager, Pascarella, and Nora, 1996; Zwerling & London, 1992). There is very little written about the high school experiences of potential first-generation college students and how these experiences influence their ability to get to college (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996; Terenzini et al., 1994; Velez, 1989). Rarely do studies consider the impact of educational support experiences for students prior to college, even though research indicates that the largest barrier to successful college completion, the lack of preparation in high school, occurs before the student ever steps onto the college campus (Richardson & Skinner, 1992).

Additionally, despite the fact that evidence overwhelmingly indicates that first generation students are more likely to be low-income and Latino (Nunez & Cuccaro-
Alamin, 1998; Riehl, 1994; Terenzini et al., 1996) there is little indication of this in most of the literature on first-generation college students. Research often focuses only on the first-generation classification and does not consider race and income group membership which are two categories that are deeply intertwined with parents’ educational attainment i.e. first generation status. Studies often treat parent’s education level, race and income categories separately and do not regard the combined impact of multiple factors that contribute to the low educational attainment of students.

The odds of low-income people escaping poverty are growing larger and access to education is actually decreasing (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996). Children who come from poor families, whose income falls in the lowest income quartile, are 2.5 times less likely to go to college and eight times less likely to graduate from college with a degree (Mortenson and Wu, 1990; Pratt, 1997). College attrition rates are estimated at 67% for first semester, two-year college students. Attrition rates are highest for first-generation students, students of color and those who are low-income (Rendon, 1995).

Latino students are three times more likely than white students to drop out of high school (Pratt, 1997). Latinos have the lowest enrollment rate of any group in higher education and are the most likely group to not complete a college degree (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 1992). Latino students are four times more likely to live in poverty than white students and are more likely to attend K-12 schools that are not adequately funded and do not effectively prepare them to succeed academically in college.
First-generation, low-income, Latino students who have succeeded in their college pursuits are rare. Statistics indicate that very few first-generation, low-income, Latino students enroll in college and the ones that do have difficulty completing their first year (NCES, 1995; NCES, 1996; Richardson & Skinner, 1992). While college research and resources are focused upon retaining these students once they get to college the question remains as to what can be done in high school to better prepare these students to succeed.

Millions of dollars have been spent over the past three decades on Upward Bound Programs designed to improve the college success rate of first-generation, low-income high school students. Several significant and broad sweeping studies have been conducted to evaluate the success of Upward Bound in its mission to increase the post-secondary educational attainment of low-income, first-generation students (Moore, 1997; Myers & Moore, 1997; Myers & Schirm, 1997). These studies have been quantitative in nature and have been unable to conclusively identify exactly how Upward Bound impacts students and in what ways the services that Upward Bound provides contribute to college success. Very few studies have sought to gather information directly from Upward Bound students themselves. One exception was a study by Bemak (1975) which sought to learn how Upward Bound students changed politically, socially and personally as a result of their involvement in the program.

A large gap in the literature remains regarding students’ perspectives about how Upward Bound impacts their ability to succeed in college. There has not been any research conducted specifically about first-generation, low-income, Latino, college students and their experiences in Upward Bound. Thus, an important question remains
unanswered. If the students who participated in Upward Bound, and then went on to beat the odds and succeed in college, were asked about the impact of an Upward Bound Program on their ability to succeed, what would they report? This study is designed to gather this information.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate how first generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college students evaluate the impact of their participation in an Upward Bound program on their post-secondary success.

**Research Questions**

1. How do first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican, college students who participated in an Upward Bound program during high school evaluate the impact of the Upward Bound program on their lives, specifically with respect to their academic performance in high school and preparation for college, self-perceptions, family and social relationships, and their future educational goals?

2. How do first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican, college students evaluate the impact of the Upward Bound program on their ability to complete a post-secondary education?

3. What recommendations do first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college students have for the Upward Bound Program to better prepare future students to complete a post-secondary education?

**Significance of the Study**

The primary way a researcher can investigate an educational organization, institution, or process is through the experience of the individual people, the “others” who make up the organization . . . So much research is done on schooling in the United States; yet so little of it is based on studies involving the perspective of the students, teachers, administrators . . . (Seidman, 1991, p.4)

The experiences and perspectives of first-generation, low-income, Latino, college students are rarely heard. Most of the research on these students separates them into groups and deals with them singularly by race, or class, or parent’s
education. Much of the literature about students whose parents did not attend college or who are poor or Latino focus on the factors that contribute to the fact that these students are the least likely to succeed in high school and college (Arellano & Padilla, 1996). Innumerable studies identify issues of poverty, limited English proficiency, lower academic expectations, tracking and other exclusionary school practices as factors in low educational attainment. Few studies have investigated factors that contribute to success in higher education for first generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students (Arellano & Padilla, 1996; Gandara, 1995; Olivas, 1986; Romo & Falbo, 1996; Valencia, 1991a). Even fewer seek to gain this information directly from students in their own words (Gandara, 1995; Romo & Falbo, 1996).

The importance of this study is the contribution that it makes to the literature about first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican, college students. This study seeks to listen to the students. Reflections of former Upward Bound students will inform the field of education regarding the impact of college preparatory programs on students who face the most difficult barriers in college completion. This research hopes to identify practices that contribute to post-secondary success and to use the words and ideas of first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students as a guide to the implementation of future support services.

**Dissertation Outline**

Chapter 2 briefly explores the origins and history of the revolutionary legislative actions that led up to the creation of TRIO programs. A review of the research on first-generation students will inform the overall purpose of this chapter. Included in this review will be an emphasis upon low-income students and Latino
students since first-generation students are most likely to be low-income and Latino (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Riehl, 1994; Terenzini, et al., 1996). Additionally, a review of the research on Upward Bound Programs provides information about the impact this educational opportunity program has on its target populations and hopefully informs and familiarizes the reader about the goals and purpose of Upward Bound. Chapter 3 describes the focus of the study and illustrates the significance of this qualitative research on first-generation, low-income, Latino students and their experiences in Upward Bound. The research design and methods are described utilizing the guidelines of critical qualitative research theory. Chapter 4 reviews the data results and identifies the pervasive themes gleaned from the data analysis. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a discussion about the results and limitations of the study and identifies implications for further research.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

TRIO Programs

Origins and History

Federal TRIO Programs are educational opportunity programs designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO programs are the result of groundbreaking legislation created in the 1960’s to address economic disparity. Credit for these legislative acts lie in the ongoing struggle for equality that pervaded the 20th century.

The first TRIO program, entitled “Upward Bound”, was created through The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. This act combined with the Higher Education Act of 1965 was used to establish the Office of Economic Opportunity and Special Programs for Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds, these programs would later become known as TRIO Programs. In 1968 these programs were transferred from the Office of Economic Opportunity to the Office of Higher Education Programs. These legislative acts of 1964 and 1965 were formulated to create special programs for disadvantaged students which emerged as a result of President Lyndon B. Johnson’s War on Poverty (NCES, 1998).

It is important to recognize that President Johnson’s War on Poverty did not originate in a vacuum. Many social and political factors influenced Johnson to focus on poverty as a social issue. The impetuses for The War on Poverty were many civil
rights movements that culminated in the 1960’s with massive demonstrations and demands for equal access to everything from labor and education to drinking fountains and restrooms.

The civil rights movements of the 20th century have many arguable points of origin. One example is the early formation of the first black union entitled, “The Brotherhood of the Sleeping Car Porters”, which played a significant role in forcing early Presidential action for civil rights thus laying the ground work for the legislative acts of the 1960’s. This organization was a union of black porters organized by A. Phillip Randolph in 1925 to promote civil rights and equal access to labor for African Americans.

Randolph, a civil rights pioneer, was the first person to conceptualize a massive march on Washington banning racial discrimination. In 1941, as president of the “Brotherhood” union, he organized a large march on the U.S. capitol to demand more jobs for blacks in the defense industry as the United States began to prepare to enter World War II. The day before the march was to take place President Roosevelt agreed to meet with Randolph and proposed a compromise. The meeting resulted in President Roosevelt issuing an executive order prohibiting discrimination in the employment of workers in the defense industry or government based on race, creed, color or national origin. This executive order 8802 was the strongest civil rights action since the post-Civil War Reconstruction era (Williams, 1987). As a result of this executive order and the establishment of the Fair Employment Practices Committee, Randolph agreed to cancel the demonstration. However, Randolph continued to play a significant role in civil rights movements during the 1950’s and 1960’s. He was one of
the key people behind the planning and implementation of the 1963 March on Washington where he acted as an “elder statesman” and finally saw his idea for a national march for civil rights come to fruition (Williams, 1987).

Civil rights demonstrations and actions gained momentum and reached national audiences in the 1950’s and 1960’s successfully identifying critical conditions of social injustice. African Americans were often seen on the forefront of these movements. However, other racial minority groups were actively challenging the status quo especially regarding equal access to education. For example, Mexican Americans who were the second largest minority group during this time organized widespread demonstrations and pressured federal, state, and local educational policy makers to promote the desegregation of school systems and advance curriculum reform (Donato, 1997).

Political leaders and especially the presidential administrations of Kennedy and Johnson experienced unwavering pressure to make significant changes to many unjust social conditions. The federal response to these powerful social movements culminated in The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1965 and the Higher Education Act of 1965.

What made the Higher Education Act of 1965 unique was that it tied economic progress for the poor directly to college attendance. This landmark piece of legislation established the immutable principle that a college education was a means of breaking the poverty cycle by providing social mobility. With the passage of the initial legislation, access to college by the poor became an explicit element of national policy (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996, p.34).

As a result of these legislative acts additional educational opportunity programs were developed including college work-study, financial aid, and low-interest loans. A program entitled “Talent Search” was developed as part of the Higher
Education Act of 1965 and in 1968 the “Student Support Services” Program was
developed which resulted from amendments to the Higher Education Act. The term
“TRIO Programs” was developed in the late 1960’s to include these two programs and
Upward Bound. These programs were specifically designed to increase access to
education for students who were the first in their family to pursue a college education
and/or who were low-income.

Overall Mission of Federal TRIO Programs

Today, TRIO includes five outreach programs designed to serve and assist
students from middle school to post-baccalaureate programs. The legislative
requirements for all of the TRIO Programs are available in the Higher Education Act
of 1965, Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2. The overall mission of Federal TRIO Programs is
stated below:

Our mission is to maximize educational opportunities for low-income
and potential first-generation college students through direct services
that provide access to education and encourage retention through the
education pipeline. Ultimately, the goal of the TRIO programs is to
help students succeed in attaining postsecondary education and
graduating from degree programs (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998).

Data from a national longitudinal study tracking first-time college enrollment
during the 1989-90 school year indicated that 66% of the students entering college for
the first time would qualify for TRIO programs as first-generation college students
because their parents did not have a bachelor’s degree (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin,
1998). Projections into the year 2000 and beyond indicate that an increasing number
of students potentially entering college will be low-income and first in their family to
pursue a postsecondary education (Levine and Associates, 1989).
The following section will explore the definition and common characteristics of “first-generation to college” high school students. These students are most likely to be low-income, Latino, and under prepared for college. They also often possess low academic and overall educational aspirations and perceive a lack of familial support for their educational endeavors.

**First-generation to College High School Students**

The term first-generation college student is defined as “those students whose parents’ highest level of education is a high school diploma or less” (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998, p. 7). The maximum education level of either parent is the determinant of how the student is categorized in the case of two parents who have different levels of educational attainment. The majority of the research defines first-generation status as those students whose parents have no postsecondary education. However, the U.S. Department of Education TRIO programs defines eligibility of first-generation as students whose parents have never earned a bachelor’s degree but may have some postsecondary experience (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998).

First-generation students are more likely than their non-first-generation counterparts to come from low-income backgrounds, not be white and be Hispanic, be older, be independent from their parents/guardians, be married and have dependents, have lower achievement on standardized tests, and have lower academic degree aspirations (Joyce, 1989; McWhirter, Larson, & Daniels, 1996; Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Richardson & Skinner, 1992; Riehl, 1994; Terenzini et al., 1996). They are also more likely than non-first generation students to attend two-year postsecondary institutions, enroll in fewer courses, work more hours off-campus,
receive less support from family and friends for their enrollment, and finally, they are less likely to attain a postsecondary degree (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Richardson & Skinner, 1992).

A report by the U.S. Department of Education entitled: *First-Generation Students: Undergraduates Whose Parents Never Enrolled in Postsecondary Education* (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998) summarizes data gathered from two longitudinal studies. These two studies were the 1989-90 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:90/94) and the 1993 Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study (B&B:93/94).

The first study (BPS:90/94) was a nationally representative sample that gathered data about students entering all types of postsecondary educational institutions for the first time during the 1989-90 school year. The chosen postsecondary institutions ranged from 4-year public and private colleges and universities to less-than-2-year vocational institutions. Follow-up statistics were gathered on this cohort in 1992 and 1994. This longitudinal data proved informative especially regarding postsecondary educational persistence and degree attainment five years after initial enrollment. This is the most comprehensive study to date on first-generation college students.

Out of the entire population surveyed in the longitudinal study 43% of the students were first-generation college students meaning that their parents never attended an educational institution beyond high school. Twenty-three percent (23%) of the students had parents who had some college experience but no degree, and 34% of the students had parents who had obtained a bachelor’s or advanced degree. Federally
defined racial categories data indicated that in comparison with their non-first-generation student counterparts, first-generation students were less likely to be white and more likely to be Hispanic. More female students were first-generation. First-generation students were more likely to be older, especially above the age of twenty-five, more likely to be married or separated, and more likely to have children (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998).

First-generation students were also almost five times more likely to come from low-income backgrounds. Data from the Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin (1998) study indicated that nearly one-quarter (23%) of first-generation students fell in the lowest income quartile compared to 5% of non-first-generation students. Conversely, 59% of students whose parents attended college were in the highest income quartile compared to 18% of first-generation students.

The educational aspirations of first-generation students are lower than their counterparts. Thirty-two percent of first-generation students seek completion of a two-year degree or less in comparison to only 12% of non-first-generation students. Likewise, students whose parents have attended college are more likely to seek an advanced degree beyond a bachelor’s (53% versus 30%).

Additionally, performance on standardized achievement tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is lower for first-generation college students. Over one-third (37%) score less than 800 compared to 22% of non-first-generation students (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). This is consistent with the results of a study by The College Board (1992) which found that SAT scores were strongly related to parental educational levels. A review of national SAT scores indicated that the higher the
academic degree obtained by parents, the higher the test scores of their children (The College Board, 1992).

Terenzini et al. (1996) found, in a similar exploration of first-generation students entering college in the Fall of 1992, that differences existed between first-generation students and students whose parents had attended college with specific regard to pre-college characteristics, among other categories. In this study first-generation was defined in the same manner as Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin (1998) cited above. Students whose parents do not have any college or university experience were identified as first-generation. Data was obtained from a total of 2,685 students (1,860 were “traditional students” and 825 were first-generation students). Subjects were entering 23 different educational institutions nation-wide (18 four-year and 5 two-year colleges and universities).

The largest differences in pre-college characteristics identified in this study were in total family income and being Hispanic. Additionally, first-generation students were more likely to be women, have lower degree aspirations, and reported receiving less encouragement from family to attend college. First-generation students also tended to be older and to have more dependent children (Terenzini et al., 1996). All of these differences between first-generation students and “traditional” students were consistent with the findings in the study from Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin (1998). Additionally, Terenzini et al. (1996) found that first-generation students were more inclined to score lower on a pre-college standardized test measure of critical thinking skills, spend less time socializing with peers and talking with teachers while in high school and expected to need additional time to complete their degrees.
A study conducted at Indiana University attempted to identify specific information about their incoming class of first-generation students. The purpose of the study was to learn more about academic preparedness, aspirations and first-year academic performance of first-generation students in comparison to other first-year students. The results of the study indicated that, in terms of academic preparedness, first-generation students had lower SAT scores and high school grade point averages. Academic aspirations were measured by student's self-prediction of first semester grades and their academic degree aspirations, both of which were significantly lower for first-generation students than for other students (Riehl, 1994).

Joyce (1989) found in a survey of college-bound high school seniors that first-generation students were more likely to come from low-income families and to have lower college degree aspirations. Likewise, McWhirter et al. (1996) found that gifted high school students of color whose parent's educational levels were low were more inclined to have lower degree aspirations than students whose parents had attended college. Finally, York-Anderson & Bowman (1991) found that differences in basic knowledge of college, personal commitment, and level of family support also exist between first-generation students and their non-first-generation counterparts.

The characteristics most common to first-generation college students combine to paint a picture of students at academic risk (Terenzini et al., 1996). Many of the variables in which differences exist between first-generation and "traditional" students are strong identifiers for academic performance and persistence (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Richardson and Skinner (1992) summarize the differences between
first generation students and students whose parents earned a college degree as
differences in: opportunity orientation, preparation, and mode of college attendance.

Differences in opportunity orientation, preparation, and mode of
attendance influence the degree attainment and transfer rates for all
students but have a particularly strong effect on African Americans,
Hispanics, and Native Americans because they are more likely to be
first-generation college-goers. Hence, they are less likely to understand
fully the relationship between higher education and desired careers, less
likely to have experienced detailed preparation, and more likely to
attend in nontraditional modes (Richardson & Skinner, 1992, p. 30).

In summary, these studies uncover common characteristics of first-generation
college students. These students are most likely to be low-income and Latino, receive
less academic preparation in high school and for college, have lower academic degree
aspirations and report less familial support for their post-secondary academic
endeavors. The following section will explore in greater depth the five most common
characteristics of first-generation college students.

Common Characteristics of First-generation College Students

Common differences between first generation college students and non-first
generation college students appeared repeatedly throughout the literature. Although
there were many factors cited that distinguished first generation students from students
whose parents had attended college there were a few themes that consistently appeared
in the data. The five most frequently cited factors that describe first generation college
students and set them apart from their non-first-generation class mates were that first
generation students were more likely to be 1) low-income, 2) Latino, 3) have less
preparation both academically in high school and about college, 4) have lower
academic degree aspirations and career goals, and 5) report less familial and parental
support for their college pursuit. The following sections will provide an in-depth look
at some of these common factors that differentiate first-generation college students from non-first-generation students.

Low-income

The process of defining low-income is complex. Currently the Bureau of Census can use as many as seven various definitions to determine money income (Dalaker & Naifeh, 1998). Presently, studies are being conducted to revise the current definition used to determine money income thresholds that in turn determine the definition of poverty and low-income guidelines. The working definition of low-income is determined as follows:

Following the Office of Management and Budgets (OMB) Directive 14, the Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to detect who is poor. If a family’s total income is less than that family’s threshold, then that family, and every individual in it is considered poor. The poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated annually for inflation with the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). The official poverty definition counts money income before taxes and excludes capital gains and non cash benefits (such as public housing, medicaid, and food stamps) (Dalaker & Naifeh, 1998).

Poverty thresholds for 2001 for the 48 Contiguous United States and the District of Columbia, Alaska and Hawaii are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Poverty Guidelines for 2001 (Federal Register, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of family unit</th>
<th>Poverty guideline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$8,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>17,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>20,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>23,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>26,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>29,730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For family units with more than 8 members, add $3,020 for each additional member. (The same increment applies to smaller family sizes also as can be seen in the figures above.)

The Department of Education and Federal TRIO Programs use the calculation of 150% of the poverty rate to determine low-income categories. These categories are detailed in Table 2 for the 48 Contiguous States and the District of Columbia, Alaska and Hawaii.

Table 2: Poverty Guidelines for 2001 at the 150% level (Federal Register, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of family unit</th>
<th>Poverty guideline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$12,885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>17,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21,945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>26,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>31,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>35,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>40,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>44,595</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For family units with more than 8 members, add $4,200 for each additional member. (The same increment applies to smaller family sizes also, as can be seen in the figures above.)

Families who are at or below these income levels are eligible for financial assistance through subsidized breakfast and lunch programs, reduced school fees, and they are also eligible for admittance into Federal TRIO Programs.

We want one class of persons to have a liberal education, and we want another class of persons, a very much larger class of necessity in every society, to forgo the privilege of a liberal education and fit themselves to perform specific difficult manual tasks (Loewen, 1995, p. 198).

This quote by President Woodrow Wilson described the unjust process of education in our society and unfortunately, as statistics would prove, nothing much has changed in the past sixty years since his tenure as President of the United States. Access to a quality education still eludes anyone who can not afford to live in affluent
areas and attend sufficiently funded school systems. The result is that there is always a pool of people who are unable to receive the educational support that they need to successfully complete a high school or post-secondary education.

Statistics indicate that high school dropouts and people without a college education are disproportionately low-income and first-generation learners. Mortenson (1993) found that it has become increasingly more difficult for poor people to get to college. In 1970, people from families in the bottom quartile of income level had sixteen percent the chance of an individual from the top quartile of earning a four-year degree. In 1993, that percent fell below ten percent.

Levine and Nidiffer (1996) summarize the situation for poor students in the following excerpt:

Not only is the number of poor people expanding, but the condition of poverty under which they live is becoming more permanent. The odds of mobility out of the poorest neighborhoods in America are getting slimmer and slimmer. The traditional path to economic mobility in the United States for the poor – education – is becoming less and less accessible. College costs are rising and income inequality between the rich and the poor is growing. For our country's poor, the American Dream is dying (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996, p. 6).

Inequality between the rich and the poor impacts all aspects of the educational process for students. Income determines place of residence, which in turn determines the quality of school systems, which inevitably impacts the level of educational resources that are available to students. Poorly instructed students do not perform well on standardized tests and are then often channeled into non-college preparatory, vocational track, academic programs.
The income stratification that concentrates large numbers of low-income students into poorly funded schools is followed by instructional stratification, most often on the basis of prior performance. Low-achieving students are likely to be exposed to instructional practices – tracking and grade retention – that deny them educational opportunities, stigmatize them, and contribute to their sense of uncertainty and alienation. Many disadvantaged adolescents are unable to overcome these conditions (National Research Council, 1993).

In The Condition of Education 1997 (Pratt, 1997) The U.S. Department of Education utilizes a variety of indicators to measure student success in education including high school dropout rates, post-secondary enrollment rates, and racial and ethnic differences in higher education participation. Comparing data yearly from 1990-1995 and bi-yearly from 1972–1990 the study reveals that in 1995 the gap remains significant between low-income students and high-income students and between white students and black and Hispanic students with regard to educational achievement.

In this study, low-income was measured as students whose family income was classified in the bottom twenty percent of all family incomes. High income was designated as anyone whose family income fell within the top twenty percent of all family incomes. Middle income is the sixty percent in between high and low income categories (Pratt, 1997).

“Low socioeconomic status is one of the most frequently mentioned causes of dropping out [of high school]” (Velez, 1989, p.120). In the measure of high school dropout rates described above, Pratt (1997) found that the data indicated that students whose family income was classified as low were over six times more likely to drop out of high school in 1994 and 1995 than students whose family income was high. This number increased to eight in 1996 (NCES, 1998).
High school dropout rates for students of all income levels have increased steadily over the past five years after a general decline from 1972-1990. Low-income students have seen the greatest increase in drop-out levels between 1990-1995 ranging from 9.5 to 13.3% compared to a range of 4.0 to 5.7% for middle income students and 1.1 to 2.1% for high income students (Pratt, 1997). The barriers to educational attainment created by a lack of economic resources are compounded for Hispanic students.

Although Hispanic young adults from families with low and middle incomes are more likely to drop out than Hispanic youth from families with high incomes, Hispanic young adults at each income level are more likely to drop out than white and black youths at the same income levels (NCES, 1998, p. 5).

Data on the percentage of high school graduates who make an immediate transition to college is informative because it reflects the accessibility of higher education and also indicates how students value attending college compared to other alternatives to higher education such as working or entering the military. The proportion of high school students enrolling in college directly after graduation has increased from 49% to 62% between 1972 and 1995. With few exceptions the increase has been steady over the 23 year time period for all levels of income and across all racial categories (Pratt, 1997).

However, high school graduates from high-income families have remained, over the past 23 years, far more likely than high school graduates from low-income families, to go directly to college. In fact, the percentage of high income, high school graduates, enrolling in college directly after high school has increased at a much faster rate than for low-income students. High income graduates attending college increased from 63.8% in 1972 to 83.4% in 1995, in comparison to the percentage of low income
graduates who enrolled in college which increased from 26.1% in 1972 to 34.2% in 1995. Thus, high school graduates who come from high income families are almost 2.5 times more likely to enroll in college directly out of high school as their low income classmates (Mortenson & Wu, 1990; Pratt, 1997).

The current educational system that is in place unfairly favors students who have access to economic resources. High income guarantees better school systems, better educational preparation and higher success rates through the educational process. Students who are first generation are most likely low-income and also Latino. Focusing on Latino students provides an opportunity to look more in-depth at the impact of poverty on a specific group of people. Latinos as a group have the highest rate of poverty in the nation. A review of the literature and data on Latino students provides information about the role of the educational system and the larger society in exacerbating the devastating effects of being a first-generation, low-income student.

To say that our vocabulary is limited regarding the naming and categorization of people across race is an extreme understatement. The United States government, specifically the Office of Management and Budget, has a standard classification scheme (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997) consisting of five defining terms to label, identify and categorize people in this country. These artificial terms (American Indian/Alaskan Native; Asian/Pacific Islander; black; Hispanic; and white, not of Hispanic origin) randomly group together a broad range of people from widely disparate geographic areas and divergent cultural histories and practices. The term possibly most erroneous in representing a group of people is “Hispanic”.

Latino
Puerto Ricans, for example, have a rich cultural heritage with origins in three different “races”. The Taino people were native to the island which was once called Borinquen. Some 50,000 Taino Indians lived on the island dating back, according to archeological records, to the 1st century C.E. Borinquen was renamed Puerto Rico (rich port) shortly after Christopher Columbus landed on the northwestern shore in 1493 and claimed the island for Spain. In 1508, explorer Juan Ponce de Leon established a small settlement near present day Bayamon. By 1540, Spanish Colonization was in full force and the Taino people were almost completely exterminated as a result of European diseases and enslavement by the Spanish settlers. Over the next 300 years West African slaves were brought across the Atlantic by Spanish, Danish, Portuguese, British and American slave traders participating in the Middle Passage. Slavery was abolished in Puerto Rico in March 1873, about 40 years after it had been abolished throughout the British Empire and about 32,000 slaves were freed following centuries of subjugation (Cordasco, 1973). Thus Puerto Ricans can site their racial heritage to include Native Indian (Taino), Spanish and African.

Today, Puerto Ricans reflect this diverse continuum of cultural ancestry in their cultural practices, appearance and language. Puerto Ricans have many shades of complexion, hair color, and eye color. Their facial characteristics can resemble Tainos, Africans and Europeans. Some Puerto Ricans have light complexions with African features. Some have blue eyes and dark skin. Many of these combinations can exist within one family. Categorizing Puerto Ricans as Hispanic or even Latino reflects a direct omission of their history and cultural identity. This can be said about the term Hispanic in general when referring to any group of people categorized as such. At any
given time throughout history the term “Hispanic” has been used to include a wide
range of people from disparate backgrounds and origins. This misnomer has made
gathering data and statistics regarding this largely diverse and undefined group
difficult.

For example, the following detailing of the various definitions of the term
Hispanic as used by the Census Bureau reflects the wide range of people that have
been grouped together at various times throughout the history of gathering census
data:

The Census Bureau has variously counted Hispanic Americans as:
“Spanish-speaking immigrants” (1850); persons speaking Spanish as a
“mother tongue” (1910); persons who identified themselves as being of
the “Mexican race” (“all persons born in Mexico or having parents born
in Mexico who are not definitely White, Negro, Indian, Chinese or
Japanese”) (1930); persons with “Spanish surnames” in the
southwestern states (1950); persons with a combination of Hispanic
birth or parentage, Spanish mother tongue, and Spanish surname
(1960); and persons of “Spanish origin or descent” (1970). These
varying categories make it impossible to calculate long term Hispanic
population trends or to separate data into the various Hispanic
subgroups: Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Spanish
Origins. Since 1970, the Census Bureau has required respondents to
select their origin or descent from a list of possible origins. Those
selecting Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or
some other Spanish origin were tabulated as persons of Spanish origin
regardless of race (Brown, Rosen, Hill and Olivas, 1980).

In 1980 the Federal Interagency Committee on Education (FICE) of the
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare defined Hispanic as “a person of
Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or
origin, regardless of race.” “White, not of Hispanic origin” was the recommended
FICE category for people “having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe,
North Africa, or the Middle East” (Brown et al., 1980). This is how white and
Hispanic people are separated into different categories. These definitions remain in use today.

The three largest Hispanic subgroups are Mexican Americans (also referred to as Chicanos), Puerto Ricans, and Cubans. They account for four out of five Hispanic Americans. Recent immigrants from Central and South America constitute a fourth group. These subgroups are concentrated in different parts of the United States, their economic circumstances vary and the timing and circumstances of their arrival in the United States differs (NCES, 1995). For example, Puerto Ricans and Mexican Americans were forcibly incorporated into the United States through military conquest and colonization. Many Cubans immigrated voluntarily to the United States to escape the communist controlled Cuba. Most early Cuban immigrants were middle class and gained access quickly to federal and private sources of financial assistance and political systems (Moore & Pachon, 1985). These different introductions to the United States greatly impact the educational experiences of Hispanics in this country (Velez, 1989).

While it is acknowledged that the information and statistics gathered are not an accurate reflection of the group under scrutiny, they are the best that is available at this time. Many researchers seek to separate the empirical results of Hispanic subjects in an attempt to recognize the diverse backgrounds that exist within the group (Velez, 1989). Additionally, the literature has begun to reflect a slow change regarding the term Hispanic and the term Latino has begun to take its place. This review of the literature will reflect the terms and conditions used by the various authors cited.
In 1990 the census report determined that Hispanics were about one of every ten Americans (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990). The Hispanic population is expected to grow at a considerably faster rate than other groups in the next fifty years and it is projected that one of every five Americans will be Hispanic in 2050 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992). The Hispanic population is relatively young in comparison to the general population. In 1988 almost one out of every three Hispanics in the country was under 15 years of age. The median age for Puerto Ricans in 1990 was 27.0 years, for Mexican Americans it was 24.1 years and it was 33.5 years for the rest of the population (Guzman, 1997).

The social and economic realities for Hispanic people in general, and Puerto Ricans specifically, is one of few resources and high risk. Hispanics have the highest rates of unemployment and when they are working they are paid less than any other racial group (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991). Hispanics are two and half times more likely than whites to live in poverty. The poverty rate for Hispanics in 1997 was 27.1% compared to 11% for whites (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997).

While the poverty rate for all other families decreased from 1989 to 1997, the poverty rate for Hispanic families increased (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997). Hispanic families are almost three times more likely to be poor than white families. The percentage of Hispanic families living at or below poverty in 1997 was 24.7% compared to 8.4% for white families (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997). Specifically, the socio-economic status of Puerto Rican families has continued to decline relative to other families. Guzman (1997) explains that “out of every four Puerto Rican children,
one lives well below the poverty line, one lives below the line, one lives slightly above, and the fourth one lives clearly above the poverty threshold" (p.85).

Female-headed households are more likely to live in poverty than married-couple families (Guzman, 1997; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997). In 1997, 31.6% of female-headed families lived in poverty versus 5.2% of married-couple families. Hispanic families are more likely to be headed by a female than white families. In 1989, 43.9% of Puerto Rican families were headed by females compared to 12% of white families (Guzman, 1997). Forty-eight percent of female-headed Hispanic families lived in poverty in 1997 compared to 28% of white families headed by a female with no husband present (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997).

However, one still finds that Latino children are quite likely to be poor in married-couple households. One out of every five Puerto Rican children (20.3%) living in a married-couple family was poor. This figure is higher than the 7.0% figure for the white population but lower than the 28.7% level for Mexican Americans. In other words, Puerto Rican children in married-couple families are three times more likely to be poor than white children in similarly structured families, while children in single headed families have a poverty rate that is two times higher (Guzman, 1997, p. 84).

Hispanic children are the fastest growing ethnic group in public schools (NCES, 1995). Additionally, the number of Hispanic children in poverty nearly doubled (increased 98%) between 1979 and 1991 compared to an increase of 37% for all other children. Hispanics have the fastest growing number of poor children of any ethnic group (NCES, 1992).

Urban enclaves are growing increasingly more segregated with poor, Latino people isolated in economically depleted school systems, housing projects, and main streets. Dire economic conditions impact all aspects of young people’s lives. The lack of livable housing situations, adequate health care and effective school systems create
a void for Latino youth. They drastically lack the resources and support to
constructively channel their bright minds and youthful energy. Instead their minimal
options too frequently perpetuate the vicious cycle of poverty. Incidences of gang
involvement, transmission of AIDS, teen pregnancy, and youth homicides are much
higher in low-income, Latino communities where options for young people are few
and bleak.

Housing and health issues are intimately related to the educational and
economic outcomes for youth. Housing costs for Puerto Ricans are the highest
when compared to other Latino groups, and the condition of the dwellings are
the worst. Puerto Ricans have the highest rate of infant mortality and the
highest incidence of low birth rate among Latinos. In addition, the cumulative
incidence of AIDS is 2.7 times higher among Hispanics than among non-
Hispanic white youth. Another epidemic that has received less academic
attention is the question of homicides among Puerto Rican youth both in the
island and in the mainland. Puerto Rican and African American youth are
much more likely to die violently than white youth. The issue of course is not
just that youth of color are more likely to be murdered than white youth, but
that in absolute terms the quality of life has deteriorated to the point that they
are dying violent deaths in high numbers at very young ages (Guzman, 1997,
p.85-86).

There are few avenues out of the vicious cycle of poverty to which many
generations of all races have succumbed. The usual route of education is even
narrower for the Latino child seeking to improve his/her mind and life conditions.
The current condition of educational access for Latinos is in a critical state.

Considering the increase in the Latino population in the next several decades,
if changes are not made in the rates of educational success for Latinos the nation will
be dealing with the serious ramifications of an alienated and desperate group of people
with few options and tremendously underutilized human potential. “If [Latino
students] drop out [of high school] at the rate that their older siblings do today, the
consequences to this nation and its institutions will be devastating” (Secada et al.,
The data on the lack of Latino educational attainment presents a bleak picture for the future of Latinos and for the nation.

At nearly every major point of the educational pipeline, Hispanics fall behind whites:

- A lower proportion of Hispanic children receive preschool education;
- A lower proportion of Hispanic school children keep up with their age group;
- A lower proportion of Hispanic children complete high school;
- Hispanics drop out earlier, so Hispanic dropouts end up with fewer years of schooling than those from other groups;
- A lower proportion of Hispanics are enrolled in college. While the Hispanic college enrollment rate has improved dramatically in recent years, most Hispanics are in two-year community colleges, not four-year colleges. Moreover, Hispanics attending college experience high dropout rates (NCES, 1992, p.2-9).

Event dropout rates, which are defined as the percentage of students in grades 10-12, aged 15-24, who were enrolled in high school the previous October, but who were not enrolled and had not graduated the following October is one of the ways that high school dropout rates are determined. In 1991, only 61% of Hispanics age 20 to 21 years old had completed a high school education compared to 81% of non-Hispanic blacks and 90% of non-Hispanic whites (NCES, 1992). In 1995, Hispanic students were almost three times (12.4%) more likely than white students (4.5%) and almost twice as likely than black students (6.4%) to dropout of high school.

High school event dropout rates have begun to increase in the past six years after a general decline for all groups between 1972 and 1990. However, event dropout rates for Hispanic students have increased at a much faster pace than other federally defined racial groups studied between 1990 and 1995. Event drop-out rates for Hispanic students ranged from 6.7% to 12.4% during the six years studied between
1990 and 1995 compared to a range of 5.0% to 6.4% for black students and an increase from 3.3% to 4.5% for white students (Pratt, 1997).

Dropout rates for Latino students are compounded when the differences in actual grade completion are compared with white and black student dropouts.

The educational gap between Hispanic young adults compared to their black and white peers is made worse by the fact that taken as a group, Hispanic young adults without a high school credential have completed less schooling than black and white young adults in the same situation. For example, one-third of the Hispanic young adults in this group of dropouts have less than a 9th grade education and one-half have less than a 10th grade education. Comparable estimates for whites and blacks show that about one-tenth of the dropouts in each group have less than a 9th grade education and about one-quarter have less than a 10th grade education (NCES, 1998, p. 4).

Another way to determine dropout rates is to refer to the U.S. Census Bureau statistics. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1990) nearly one in five (20%) of all Hispanics in the United States between the ages of 16 and 24 who ever enrolled in high school have dropped out prior to earning a high school diploma or a GED. The high school dropout rate for Hispanics increases to 30% when immigrants who never enrolled in United States schools are included. Currently, Hispanics make up 56% of all U.S. immigrants, however they account for nearly 90% of all immigrant dropouts (Secada et al., 1998).

There are some additional factors linked to high school dropout that are more common among Hispanics than other groups such as: foreign birth, non-English language background, and short duration of U.S. residence (Wojtkiewicz & Donato, 1995). All of these factors impact a student’s ability to speak and understand English, which generally impedes academic performance.
Hispanic people who are not born in the 50 states and the District of Columbia are known in federal educational statistics as immigrants or "foreign born" (NCES, 1995). While these are misnomers, especially because Puerto Rico is part of the United States, it is a factor that is taken into account when determining dropout percentages. "Dropping out is strongly related to the length of time a Hispanic family has lived in the United States and to the family's country of origin" (NCES, 1995, p. 7). For example, the dropout rate for students whose parents were born outside the United States was 44.1% in 1996. This is much higher than the 16.7% dropout rate for those Hispanic students with at least one parent born in the United States and the 22% dropout rate for Hispanic students with both parents born in the United States (NCES, 1995).

It should be noted, however, that Hispanic dropout rates are still double those of non-Hispanics when the length of residency in the United States is taken into account. In other words, high status dropout rates among Hispanics are not just a problem associated with recent immigration (NCES, 1995, p. 7).

The consequences of dropping out are compounded when the impact on employment opportunities and future generations is taken into account. The NCES (1996) found that in 1995, Hispanics age 16-19 with less than a high school degree had a higher percentage of unemployment than all other groups at this age. Additionally, there is a direct correlation between high school drop out rates and low parental educational attainment.

High school students whose parents did not finish high school were three times more likely to drop out of high school, between 1990 and 1995, than those students whose parents had at least some college education (Pratt, 1997). The parental educational attainment of Puerto Rican and Mexican students is much lower than the
educational achievements of parents of white students. Sixty-five percent of Mexicans and 58% of Puerto Ricans had parents who had not completed high school compared to only 16% of whites (Wojtkiewicz & Donato, 1995).

The U.S. Department of Education found that between 1990 and 1995, the higher the education level of a student’s parents, the more likely the student was to enroll in college the year after high school graduation (Pratt, 1997). Wojtkiewicz & Donato (1995) found that Hispanic high school graduation was significantly increased for those students whose parents were college-educated while less than two-thirds of the students whose parents had dropped out of high school were able to graduate with a high school degree.

College enrollment rates are indictors of the accessibility of higher education. Hispanics have the lowest enrollment rate of any group in higher education (NCES, 1992). The number of students that enroll in college immediately after high school is informative with regard to the percentage of the population that will ever pursue a post-secondary education. Data on racial and ethnic differences in participation in higher education in 1995 indicated that Hispanic and black students were less likely to go directly to college than white students (Pratt, 1997; NCES, 1995).

The type of institution that high school graduates first attend can affect their likelihood of completing a bachelor’s degree. Students who begin their higher education at a 2-year college are far less likely to earn a bachelor’s degree than their counterparts who begin at a 4-year college (NCES, 1997, p. 9).

Between 1993 and 1995 statistics showed that Hispanic students are much more likely than whites or blacks to be enrolled in two year institutions. Additionally, both black and Hispanic high school graduates aged 18-24 were substantially less likely to be enrolled in four year institutions than were their white counterparts (Pratt, 1997).
College graduation rates for Hispanics increased 6% from 1990 to 1995. The number of bachelor’s degrees earned by Hispanics increased by 10.7% in 1994, which was the largest increase among the four major federally defined ethnic minority groups. However, Hispanics posted the smallest increase in number of associate degrees earned in 1994 in comparison to African Americans, Asian Americans and American Indians.

Overall, the percentage of Hispanics earning degrees relative to their college enrollment remains low. Hispanics earned only 6% of all associate degrees and 4.3% of all bachelor’s degrees. Yet, Hispanics made up 7.9% of the undergraduate population at four-year institutions (Carter & Wilson, 1997). Hispanics are the least likely of all groups pursuing higher education to complete four or more years of college (NCES, 1992).

Hispanics are about half as likely as their white peers to complete four years of college, and this gap has not diminished over time. In 1994, slightly more than one-half of Hispanic high school graduates 25-29 years old had completed at least some college, compared to nearly two-thirds of their white counterparts. In addition, about 13 percent of Hispanic high school graduates in this age group had earned a bachelor’s degree or more, compared to 30 percent of whites. These gaps in the educational attainment rates of Hispanics and whites did not close between 1971 and 1994 (NCES, 1995, p. 17).

When seeking an explanation for the low success rate of Hispanics in education there is a tendency to focus on statistics and misperceptions of the Hispanic population and culture without looking at the larger socio-economic context (Olivas, 1986; Romo & Falbo, 1996; Secada et al., 1998).
Some have argued that the low level of educational and occupational attainment of Hispanics in the U.S. is caused by characteristics of the Hispanic culture and Hispanic families. Many studies of Hispanic culture conclude that Hispanic culture does not value education and that the poor child rearing practices of Hispanic families prevent students from achieving (Romo & Falbo, 1996, p. 14).

In their process of interviewing Latino students and their families Romo & Falbo (1996) found that parents valued education and the majority of them tried their best to help their children achieve in school. Numerous other studies confirm that Latino families value education and cultural values are not a factor in low educational attainment among Latinos (Arbona, 1990; Olivas, 1986; Secada et al., 1998). On the contrary, Romo & Falbo (1996) learned that schools, not parents, discourage Latino students from staying in school and graduating.

Guzman (1997) agrees that schools are the greatest impediment to Latino student success and argues that,

If only a few students were not completing their high school education and going on to college one might want to focus primarily on the individual factors that determine the specific outcome. However, when between one third and one half of the population is not completing their high school education, particularly in the inner cities, this seems to be evidence that there are more systemic exclusionary forces at work. In this sense “push out” is a more accurate concept than “drop out” to describe the totality of the process (p. 87).

Many studies have looked at the role of school systems in promoting student failure, especially regarding students of color in general and Latino students specifically (Ballesteros, 1986; Carrasquillo, 1985; Education Trust, 1996; Romo & Falbo, 1996; Secada et al., 1998; Velencia, 1991). According to Carrasquillo (1985), some of the factors that have been identified as affecting Latino retention in high school are:
a) Poorly equipped and overcrowded schools
b) Lower per pupil expenditures
c) Segregated schools
d) Schools at times understaffed and with limited basic resources
e) High rate of grade repetition
f) Lower expectations by the school system
g) High enrollment in vocational and general education programs

Even when students are able to stay in high school the quality of the education that they receive is not adequately preparing them for college enrollment and graduation. In addition to first generation students most likely being low-income and Latino they are also more likely to be under prepared for college than students whose parents attended college. The following section will review some of the ways that students are under served by America’s school systems. The result of which is the perpetuation of under educated, first-generation, low-income, Latino students struggling to succeed in a larger context that actually works against their moving beyond the ill-fated distinction as our nation’s largest group of unemployed and uneducated people.

Low Academic College Preparation in Primary and Secondary Education

William Ryan (1981) in his book *Equality* argues that “one of the major functions of schooling is to reproduce our hierarchically structured labor force” (p.122) and to “maintain inequality” (p.121). Ryan cites several sources of investigators who have carefully documented this to be true (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Conant, 1961; Rist, 1970; Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). Most of these studies address the impact of teacher expectations and unequal treatment in the classroom and school system at large while detailing the corresponding impact on students. Time and
again in these investigations the educational system reinforced the class and race stratifications reflected in the larger society.

Kozol (1991) in his book *Savage Inequalities* addresses the larger socio-economic structure that determines the funding of school systems and identifies how this process contributes to an unequal educational process for students.

Most public schools in the United States depend for their initial funding on a tax on local property. The property tax depends, of course, upon the taxable value of one’s home and that of local industries. A typical wealthy suburb in which homes are often worth more than $400,000 draws upon a larger tax base in proportion to its student population than a city occupied by thousands of poor people. Because the property tax is counted as a tax deduction by the federal government, home-owners in a wealthy suburb get back a substantial portion of the money that they spend to fund their children’s schools – effectively, a federal subsidy for an unequal education. Home-owners in poor districts get this subsidy as well, but, because their total tax is less, the subsidy is less. The mortgage interest that home-owners pay is also treated as a tax deduction – in effect, a second federal subsidy. These subsidies, as I have termed them, are considerably larger than most people understand. Federal policy, in this respect, increases the existing gulf between the richest and the poorest schools (p. 55).

Through in-depth interviews, long-term observations and extensive research Kozol (1991) documented how school systems across the nation unjustly serve some students better than others. The amount of money spent per student in various school systems within 10 miles of each other can range in the tens of thousands of dollars. Kozol (1991) cites districts in the state of Texas as an example. District spending ranged from $2,221 to $19,333 per student. The riches district drew on property wealth of $14 million for each student while the poorest district drew on property worth only $20,000 for each student.

Another example cited by the National Research Council describes the concrete impact of differential funding.
In 1991, for example, per pupil expenditures in the 47 largest urban school districts averaged $5200; in suburban districts, the figure was $6073. Although a $875 per pupil funding gap may not appear significant, in an average class of 25 students, the difference is almost $22,000 – enough to hire an aide, provide special instruction materials or computers, pay significantly higher teacher salaries, or improve a dilapidated classroom. When the relatively greater need of urban children for special services is taken into account (for health needs, language instruction for non-English-proficient students, etc.), the resource differences are even more critical. Differences in funding of this magnitude can make a clear qualitative difference in the total educational experience (National Research Council, 1993, p. 7).

Similarly to the National Research Council, Kozol (1991) links school expenditures with the quality of education that a student receives and in turn the success rates of students in the various school systems.

Alamo Heights is like a different world. The air is fresher. The grass is greener. The homes are larger. And the schools are richer.

Seven minutes from Alamo Heights, at the corner of Hamilton and Guadalupe, is Cassiano – a low-income housing project. Across the street from Cassiano, tiny buildings resembling shacks, some of them painted pastel shades, house many of the children who attend the Cooper Middle School, where 96 percent of children qualify by poverty for subsidized hot lunches and where 99.3 percent are of Hispanic origin. At Cooper, $2,800 is devoted to each child’s education and 72 percent of children read below grade level. Fully 10 percent of children at the Cooper Middle School dropout in seventh and eighth grades. Of the survivors, 51 percent drop out of high school.

In Alamo Heights, virtually all students graduate and 88 percent of graduates go to college. Classes are small and $4,600 is expended yearly on each child (p. 224).

Lack of preparation is the most often cited reason for underachievement in education (Richardson & Skinner, 1992). Ballesteros (1986) found in a study of Chicano and white students that the high school curriculum in which a student enrolls explains a significant amount of the differences in school performance, outcomes and graduation. Students with access to the most resources attend the best schools, take the best courses, and get the best grades. There is no coincidence that reading levels are the lowest in the poorest schools. (Kozol, 1991).
Those students from the higher social classes and those placed in a college-preparatory curriculum in the high school generally score higher on aptitude tests, make better grades in high school and college, and aspire to higher degrees than do students from lower socioeconomic classes and those placed in a vocational or general education curriculum in high school (Ballesteros, 1986, p.63).

America’s system of funding education results in a lack of resources to adequately meet the needs of poor students who have the highest need for educational intervention. The result is that the poor remain poor, uneducated, under employed and inevitably blamed for their inability to improve their conditions.

Unfortunately, too many low-income Hispanic families are not becoming productive contributing members of society due to disproportionately high academic failure. One of the reasons for this failure is that Hispanic students are not attending the most successful schools. They are often in segregated schools, made up of mostly Hispanic and African American students, in which educational resources and physical facilities are mediocre. At times, Hispanic students are placed in programs not suited for their needs. Quality programs as well as financial programs are not offered in most of the schools that Hispanic children and youth attend (Carasquillo, 1985).

One of the best ways to look at the quality of educational preparation that students receive is to evaluate the curriculum that they study. There has been a significant increase over the past two decades in the amount and level of math and science courses that high school students are taking. High school students today are more likely to take math courses at the level of algebra I or beyond and science courses at the level of biology or beyond than students in 1982. This trend is the result of the “New Basics” curriculum recommended by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) in A Nation at Risk.

The “New Basics” curriculum recommends a core curriculum comprised of 4 units of English and 3 units each of science, social studies, and mathematics. As a result, more students are earning credits in biology, chemistry and physics than in
previous years. Additionally, the percentage of students taking advanced math and science courses such as pre-calculus, calculus, and physics has increased some times as much as three times (Pratt, 1997).

Studies on academic progress focus on differences across race and gender and do not assess the course taking patterns of low-income and first generation students (Campbell, Voelkl, & Donahue, 1997). However, since Hispanic students comprise a large proportion of both of these groups of students, their academic progress can be informative with regard to the appropriate college preparation of first-generation, low-income students. Statistics indicate that Hispanic students are much less likely than white students to take advanced college preparatory courses (NCES, 1995).

Students from all minority groups are taking a more rigorous curriculum than in the past, although black and Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaskan Native students continue to trail their Asian/Pacific Islander and white counterparts in advanced mathematics and science course taking (NCES, 1997, p.3).

For example, in 1992, while Hispanic and white students earned a similar number of high school credits Hispanic graduates were less likely to have taken the “New Basics” core curriculum. Forty-nine percent of white high school graduates had completed this curriculum in 1992 compared to 36% of Hispanic graduates (NCES, 1995).

Students are not randomly assigned to the various levels of math, science and English courses. Specific academic tracks are designed to channel students into various courses. College preparatory tracks are often determined at the middle school level and at times as early as elementary school (Amato, 1980; Jencks, 1972).
Students begin taking English, algebra and science courses in middle school designed to prepare them for the “New Basics” core curriculum in high school. If a student does not begin these courses at the middle school level they very likely have missed their opportunity to enroll and successfully complete the advanced college preparatory courses in the later years. In many cases these students will not be able to obtain the necessary courses required for four-year college admittance.

Assignment into the various tracks in middle school is determined by norm-referenced tests. These tests are proven to elicit lower scores for low-income students and students of color, especially Latino students. As a result, low-income and Latino students are often tracked into general education or vocational education programs while white and affluent students are more likely to follow the college preparatory curriculum (Ballesteros, 1986; Carrasquillo, 1985; Education Trust, 1996; Nielson, 1986; Orum, 1986; Romo & Falbo, 1996). Thus, these tracking procedures reduce the likelihood that these students will acquire the skills they need to graduate from high school and succeed in college (Romo & Falbo, 1996).

Relative to advanced placement tracks, low-track classrooms are overcrowded, have the least qualified teachers, have the fewest resources, and experience a low-level curriculum focused on remediation to the virtual exclusion of any new or interesting content. If tracking is to be anything for large numbers of Hispanic students other than the final stop en route to being pushed out, these conditions must change (Secada et al., 1998, p.37).

In a detailed qualitative and quantitative study of Latino students in Texas Romo and Falbo (1996) followed 100 students through high school. In one chapter on the “Tracking of Hispanic Students”, they detail the experiences of Robert and James and the impact of tracking on their ability to gain the necessary courses for successful college preparation. While this is a lengthy excerpt, it offers an excellent description.
of how tracking occurs, unbeknownst to students and parents. The long-range impact of determining a student’s future ability based upon standardized test results from one particular day in the sixth grade, or even a student’s poor performance at the age of twelve is unveiled.

It is ironic that when Robert and James were 15 years old, they and their parents thought that they were taking college-preparatory courses. The truth is that both boys had been tracked by their schools to low-level courses when they were 12 years old. Robert was assigned to the general track by his standardized test scores in mathematics, and James was consigned to the vocational track by his scores and his repeated course failures. Neither boy understood that his fate had been sealed early in his middle school years. Both assumed that they still had a chance to graduate from high school and go to college.

Despite Robert’s strong performance in the low-level mathematics classes, the school staff did not place Robert in the college track. If he had been allowed to take the higher-level math courses in middle school, he could have stayed in the college track in high school. Because he was tracked into the low-level mathematics courses in middle school, Robert could not take the full set of mathematics courses he needed in order to do well on his SATs (Scholastic Aptitude Tests) and in college. Robert graduated before he had a chance to take Calculus or Trigonometry. He was not even eligible to take Chemistry or Physics until his last year of high school because Algebra was a prerequisite for these courses. Further, once tracked into low-level mathematics courses, scheduling conflicts made it unlikely that Robert could have enrolled in honors-level English courses, even if he had been allowed to (Romo & Falbo, 1998, p. 33).

Standardized test scores for Latinos have been low since testing first began in the 1970’s. Little change has occurred, yet schools continue to track students based upon these scores, thus perpetuating the cycle of low educational attainment for Latinos. In 1990 the reading level of Hispanics at ages 9 and 13 was virtually the same as in 1975 and the writing proficiency for Hispanics ages 9, 13 and 17 remained very low and experienced no change between 1984 and 1990 (NCES, 1991).

The gap between Hispanics and whites in mathematical proficiency remained the same from 1982 to 1988 for all three age levels (NCES, 1988). In 1990 and 1992,
Hispanics had lower scores in science, math, and reading than whites at all three ages and 17 year old Hispanics had, on average, the same science proficiency skills as 13 year old white students for both years (NCES, 1991 and 1995).

In 1992, the average mathematics proficiency scores of Hispanic 13 year olds fell about midway between the average proficiency scores of white 9 and 13 year olds. This gap suggests that, on average, Hispanic children’s level of math skills may be as much as 2 years behind that of their white peers by age 13, a deficiency that they will carry with them into high school. The size of the gap was similar in reading and was even larger in science, with Hispanic 13 year olds scoring at about the same level as white 9 year olds (NCES, 1995, p.5).

In 1996, white students had higher average scores than Hispanic students at all three age levels (age 9, 13 and 17) and in each of the four subject areas (science, mathematics, reading and writing) of national norm referenced tests (Campbell et al., 1996). This has been the case since average scale scores have been gathered in these subject areas for these groups. Unfortunately, there has been virtually no change in the gap between white students and Hispanics students with regard to academic progress in these areas over the past twenty-five years and in some cases it appears to have widened (Campbell et al., 1997).

The fact that progress in minority achievement has stopped at a time when minorities comprise a growing portion of the student population should sound a wake up call to the whole country.

But most schools don’t teach all students at the same high level. In fact we have constructed an educational system so full of inequities that it actually exacerbates the challenges of race and poverty, rather than ameliorate them. Simply put, we take students who have less to begin with and give them less in school, too (Education Trust, 1996, p.10).

The Education Trust (1996) in its annual report entitled, Education Watch: The 1996 Education Trust State and National Data Book documents the following disparities in America’s educational systems:
• Poor and minority students are less likely to be in classes with teachers who at least minored in their fields. In the 1990-91 school year, for example, only 42% of math classes in high schools with majority-minority enrollments were taught by teachers who were math majors. By comparison, in high schools with few minority students – less than 15% enrollment – 69% of math classes were taught by math majors. More than two-thirds of African-American and Hispanic students attend predominantly minority schools.

• In schools where more than 30% of the students are poor, 59% of the teachers report that they lack sufficient books and other reading resources. By contrast, only 16% of teachers in more affluent schools report such shortages.

• Poor and minority students are more likely to be taught a low-level curriculum with low standards for performance. Only one in four students from low-income families are placed in a college-preparatory sequence of courses. In contrast, poor and minority students are over represented in less challenging general and vocational education programs.

The findings previously discussed indicate that race and wealth are major determinants of educational access, achievement and attainment. One of the impacts of an educational system that does not serve the needs of poor and Latino students is simply that the students do not stick around to complete their education as is witnessed by the high drop out rates described earlier. Most low-income, Latino students who do graduate from high school rarely pursue higher education and the few remaining students who do persist towards a post-secondary degree have clearly demonstrated a commitment to education and overcome extensive socio-economic and systemic barriers to college. Once in college, the reality of the poor preparation they received in high school becomes painfully evident.

Richard and Skinner (1992) report the following self-described struggles of first generation college students regarding their academic experiences in college and the impact of their lack of preparation in high school:

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"When I got there [the campus], the things other kids knew already and you’re expected to know, I didn’t know,” said a Cuban American graduate.

“I found that some of the things I should have learned I hadn’t. I had to learn while I was in college... There were voids I had to go back and fill in. For two or three years, it’s double time,” reported an African American graduate.

“It just seemed like we had gaps. It was like we were missing part of the picture... The teachers are saying, ‘Remember when you learned this?’ and I never missed school but I kept thinking, ‘Gosh, did I miss some lectures along the way?’ But I didn’t; they just were not there,” a Mexican American graduate said.

In comparison, students whose parents had attended college reported feeling comfortable in the classroom and compared the course work to what they had experienced in high school. They spoke of learning excellent writing skills in high school that easily transferred to the college setting (Richardson & Skinner, 1992).

Many students believe that preparation must include other aspects of the college experience in addition to academic preparation (Attinasi, 1989). Richardson & Skinner (1992) found that first-generation students reported feeling under prepared with regard to how to manage their time, make ends meet financially, and how to gain information about financial aid and other important campus resources. Minority students report feeling unprepared for the racial and ethnic isolation and alienation they experience at predominantly white institutions which has also been cited in numerous other studies.

In addition to receiving poor academic preparation, and being Hispanic and low-income, first generation students are also the most likely to have low educational goals. If first-generation, low-income students do complete high school they often are unclear about their college major and lack the necessary information to appropriately pursue the career of their choice. Studies indicate that the nation’s school system has
not only failed to adequately prepare students academically for post-secondary education, they also have not provided the necessary assistance with career choice and development to set goals for the future. The next section will address the low academic and overall educational aspirations of first-generation students and identify some of the factors that contribute to these issues.

**Low Academic Degree and Overall Educational Aspirations**

First-generation college students are more likely to have lower academic degree aspirations than students whose parents attended college. Students who are the first in their family to attend college are more likely than students whose parents are college educated to limit their college goals to a two-year degree. Several studies have found that parent’s educational attainment has a direct correlation on the degree aspirations of white students and students of color in high school (McWhirter et al., 1996; Sariagiani., Wilson, Peterson & Vicary, 1990).

Kao and Tienda (1998) found that socioeconomic status influenced the educational aspirations of students throughout high school.

Parental SES (socioeconomic status) exerts a strong influence on educational aspirations and is vital to their maintenance through the high school years. Parents who invest their financial resources into scholastic activities further increase their children’s educational aspirations, but financial resources appear especially crucial in eighth grade, before students are sorted into college and vocational curriculum tracks in high school (Kao & Tienda, 1998, p. 370).

In 1990, 47% of Hispanic sophomores aspired to a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 61% of whites (NCES, 1993). Although the proportion of Hispanic high school seniors who planned to attend a four-year college increased by 9% between 1972 and 1992, the corresponding proportion for whites increased 20%. Thus, the gap
between Hispanic and white students regarding their educational plans continued to widen.

Likewise, a larger proportion of black and Hispanic seniors planned to attend a two-year college in 1992 than in 1972. Black senior’s choice of two-year colleges increased from 5% to 11% and Hispanic students increased from 11% to 26%. There was no change that occurred in white seniors planning to attend two-year colleges between the twenty-year time span. In 1992, Hispanic seniors were more likely than their white peers to plan to attend a two-year, post-secondary, educational institution (NCES, 1996).

However, studies on the formation of educational aspirations have primarily focused on the experiences of white male youth. There have been a few studies on girls and African-American youth, however, there has only been one study that has examined the aspirations of Asian and Hispanic youth (Kao and Tienda, 1998). In this study, Kao and Tienda (1998) found that Asian youth have the highest educational aspirations at all three grade levels that were measured (grade 8, 10 and 12) and Hispanics have the lowest educational aspirations with whites and blacks falling somewhere in between. The transition from junior high to high school was an especially significant time when black males and Hispanic females lowered their educational goals. The aspirations of Hispanic males also proved to be particularly unstable over the course of the four years studied.

Repeating a grade at any time in a student’s educational career also greatly impedes aspirations to college. This is a crucial factor for Hispanic students who are more likely to be delayed in school (Brown et al., 1980; Hirano-Nakanishi, 1986).
Hispanic students make up 13.2% of the total school population but comprise 17% of the students who repeat a grade between kindergarten and fourth grade and 18.5% of those repeating a grade between fifth and eighth grade (Kao & Tienda, 1998).

A critical factor to consider when investigating academic degree aspirations and attainment is the residential patterns and level of segregation within the United States of Latinos, especially Puerto Ricans, and people with low-incomes (Donato, Menchaca, Valencia, 1991; Levine & Nidiffer, 1996; Romo & Falbo, 1996; Verdugo, 1986). Many U.S.-mainland born Puerto Ricans reside in places with little economic opportunity (Massey & Denton, 1993). “The ethnic isolation of Hispanics has risen. For example, between 1968 and 1992, the percentage of Hispanic students attending schools that were 90-100% minority increased from 23 to 34%” (NCES, 1995, p. 3).

Schools often lack the resources and personnel to successfully meet the educational goals of students (Ballesteros, 1986; Education Week, 1996; Kozol, 1991). The impact of residential segregation is that high school students have fewer people in their lives that have obtained a college degree (Romo & Falbo, 1996). “The perceived value of a high school degree and a college education may be less than in other more economically successful neighborhoods and the result is that more youths drop out of school without receiving a diploma” (Wojtkiewicz & Donato, 1995, p. 572).

Levine & Nidiffer (1996) state the following regarding the impact of the increasing segregation and isolation of poor people in the United States as it pertains to educational aspirations and attainment:
The growing isolation of the poor and the increasing concentration of very poor people in low-income areas decreases their contact with other kinds of communities and reduces their knowledge of other life possibilities. The effect is to increase the odds against poor people escaping poverty (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996, p. 18).

Kao & Tienda (1998) found that Latino youth self-reported that their biggest obstacles to college attendance was a lack of information about college and financial aid and the lack of financial support for college. Additionally, Latino high school students lacked knowledge about specific educational majors and the necessary requirements for white-collar jobs. They were primarily interested in pursuing higher education to avoid factory and labor work. In contrast, Asian high school students were well informed and more precise about occupations in the specific medical and engineering fields they planned to pursue.

There is a dearth in the literature on career counseling of ethnic minorities despite the fact that studies show that African American, Latino and Asian American students express a need for more information and support regarding career decision making (Arbona, 1990; Bowman, 1993; Koa & Tienda, 1998). Most students (89%) indicated that they needed career counseling more than any other service from their high school counselors, although only forty percent indicated that they received it (Hutchinson & Bottorff, 1986).

Counselors and guidance departments have been criticized for their role as gatekeepers. Lee & Ekstrom (1987) found that African Americans, Hispanics, and poor students were significantly less likely than white students or affluent students to receive counseling for their academic course selection. Those students that did receive counseling were more likely to be placed in academic rather than non-academic or
vocational tracks. Limited minority student access to guidance counseling is compounded by large student-to-counselor ratios that impede the counselor’s ability to reach students (Hawks & Muha, 1991). The shortage of guidance counselors often exists in under funded schools that are primarily attended by low-income students of color.

A very important factor in the career development of ethnic minorities is the availability of modeling. Role models who demonstrate that college is possible and that certain careers are accessible to people of color can combat the lack of information students receive. Yet, little effort has been made to provide models of people of color in professional fields to aspiring college students (Bowman, 1993).

Low academic degree aspirations can be attributed to a lack of access to the traditional four-year, residential, college track due to the absence of resources and a college path not yet trodden by previous family members. Misinformation and missing information about college can limit a student’s academic pursuits. Isolation in segregated communities creates an absence of opportunity orientation according to Richardson & Skinner (1992). The scarcity of role models within the community sharing their lived experience of academic success can serve to impede college aspirations. Overall, low academic aspirations are most aptly explained by a lack of opportunity, poor academic preparation, low socioeconomic status and other structural and societal factors (Arbona, 1990; Ballesteros, 1986; Romo & Falbo, 1996; Secada et al., 1998).

The final characteristic common to first generation students in addition to being low income, Latino, possessing low academic preparation for college and low
educational aspirations is their perceived lack of familial support. First generation students are more likely to report an absence of support for their educational endeavors from their family than are students whose parents attended college. The following section will explore this fifth and final characteristic common to first generation students.

Perceived Lack of Familial Support

Parental support can be a critical indicator for academic success. Arellano & Padilla (1996) found that first-generation, Latino, university students were able to overcome the educational risks in college if they had supportive families and teachers. York-Anderson & Bowman (1991) found that second-generation college students perceived more family support for college attendance than first-generation college students. These results confirm similar findings from other studies (Billson & Terry, 1982). Mexican-American women attributed their college success to the emotional support of their families, having attended highly integrated schools, and the strong role models that their mothers provided (Ybarra, 1988).

The two most influential factors that impact educational attainment, parent’s education and income, often have nothing to do with whether a parent supports and values their child’s educational success. Time and again, especially regarding Latino families, studies reported that parents were extremely supportive of their child’s educational goals and accomplishments (Romo & Falbo, 1996; Secada et al., 1998; Ybarra, 1988). Yet, Latinos have the lowest high school graduation and college attendance rates of all racial groups.
Low parental educational attainment and a lack of financial resources to promote educational development can be mistaken for a lack of support towards a child’s academic goals. Some researchers believe that by simply having more education parents can provide a more supportive home environment that encourages educational success and that the income available to parents with higher levels of education can serve to better finance education and other related academically oriented activities (Wojtkiewicz & Donato, 1995). In addition, parents who have attended college can provide more experiential information to their children regarding college life while parents of first-generation students do not have access to this form of supportive information (York-Anderson & Bowman, 1991).

In addition to low parental education, there are other family background characteristics linked to low educational attainment including: living in mother-only families (Krein & Beller, 1988; McLanahan, 1985), living in stepparent families (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Sandefur, McLanahan & Wojtkiewicz, 1992; Wojtkiewicz, 1993) and having many siblings (Blake, 1989; Powell & Steelman, 1990; Wojtkiewicz & Donato, 1995). All of these factors are most dramatically characterized by a decrease in family income and parental resources that can contribute to the perception of low academic support from the family. Wojtkiewicz & Donato (1995) found that these family background characteristics were more common in Puerto Rican and Mexican families than in non-Hispanic white families and were directly linked to low college completion rates.

Stage and Hossler (1989) found that parental encouragement was significantly related to the college plans of ninth grade high school students. Likewise, Attinasi
(1989) found that in Mexican American families the parent’s expectations of college attendance had a strong influence on a student’s decision to pursue higher education. In turn, the higher a parent’s educational attainment is, the more likely they will be to have high educational expectations of their children (Stage & Hossler, 1989).

Secada et al. (1998) in *No More Excuses: The Final Report of the Hispanic Dropout Project* reports, after numerous interviews with students, parents, school personnel and community leaders across the nation, that many inaccuracies and misconceptions exist about Hispanic parents and their level of support for their children’s education.

Hispanic parents and families are frequently perceived as being indifferent to their children’s education, moving too frequently, not speaking or wanting to learn how to speak (read or write) English, and being too undereducated to properly educate their children. The schools that we saw working effectively with Hispanic parents prove that these stereotypes and descriptions are wrong. Hispanic students, whether they stayed in school or had dropped out and then returned, almost unanimously reported that they wanted to “make it” as a way to thank their parents and families for the sacrifices that they had made on the students’ behalf. These students wanted to make their parents proud of them. They wanted to better themselves and did not want to disappoint their parents by quitting school (Secada et al., 1998, p. 21).

Lack of familial support for educational endeavors can be perceived and accounted for in a variety of ways. Many personal writings of first-generation Latino students describe the struggle of bridging two cultures in multiple ways (Rendon, 1992; Rodriguez, 1975). In other words they not only have to cross the divide between their own racial background and the culture of the predominantly white post-secondary institution, they must also find a way to bridge the gap between their family responsibilities and academic success. Whether families are supportive or not of the academic success of the first-generation college student, the pressure alone of living is
these disparate cultures may cause the student to perceive lack of support from their family.

It is only when we see that mobility involves not just gain but loss—most of all the loss of a familiar past, including a past self—that we can begin to understand the attendant periods of confusion, conflict, isolation, and even anguish that first-generation students report (London, 1989, p. 168).

Richardson & Skinner (1992) describe one first generation African American student who reported that he did not receive support from his family and friends for his educational pursuits. He stated that these significant people in his life repeatedly told him that he was wasting his time and that the education would do nothing for him.

In a study of first-generation students at Miami-Dade Community College (MDCC) (Padron, 1992) a major problem was identified in the home life of commuting first-generation students. These students lacked a home atmosphere that was conducive to studying. They had no designated place or time to study at home and they often struggled with the demands of home life and schoolwork. Parents often expected students to care for younger siblings in place of attending classes and denounced higher education as frivolous if it contradicted other cultural beliefs within the family. Older siblings who did not attend college were reported to be antagonistic to the younger child’s educational pursuits. Parents often put pressure on students to use hard earned educational funds for other things such as the purchase of a car.

Some sources report that there has been a shift in the parental support of their children’s educational pursuits over the past two decades. This was the case for Cuban immigrant parent’s who appeared to be increasingly less supportive of financing their children’s education.
This lack of adequate familial support for education typifies some alarming changes that have occurred in the last two decades. There has been a general change of attitude on the part of recent immigrants as well... immigrant parents in the late 1960's, when they were unable to subsidize their offsprings' [sic] college education entirely on their own, would literally scrub floors so that their children in college would only have to work a minimum number of hours to pay tuition costs. Now, parents sometimes allow their children in college to hold full-time jobs so that the parents can purchase a new car (Padron, 1992, p. 74).

The reasons behind these changing attitudes about education could be explained by the issues addressed earlier regarding the increasing isolation of low-income, minority students in poor residential and school communities. Additionally, the increasing marginalization of the poor out of higher education and into these isolated communities, reflected by the fact that it is more difficult for the poor to attend college than it was twenty years ago (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996), undoubtedly impacts the parent's attitudes towards education. Simply put, if fewer people are making it out of the poor communities via higher education, than parents will no longer encourage their children to pursue that avenue, far less invest their limited resources into an increasingly apparent dead end.

The literature review of first generation college students identified the five most frequently cited factors that describe first generation college students and differentiate them from their non-first-generation classmates. First generation students are more likely to be 1) low-income, 2) Hispanic, 3) have less preparation both academically in high school and about college, 4) have lower academic degree aspirations and career goals, and 5) report receiving less familial and parental support for their college pursuit. This section has provided an in-depth overview of these common characteristics of first-generation college students. The following section will
review the literature on early intervention programs for first-generation students with a specific emphasis on research about Upward Bound Programs.

Strategies for Successful Intervention with First-generation, Low-Income, Latino, College Bound High School Students

There are numerous programs designed to address the educational needs of at-risk youth, which as described earlier, are most likely to be first-generation, low-income, Latino, students. Individual school systems, communities, colleges and universities have developed numerous special programs, also known as early intervention programs, to address various target populations. These early intervention programs have found renewed interest in the 1990's and the increase in funding, resources and programs indicate that this may be the latest trend in addressing the need for improved educational attainment (Fenske, Irwin, & Keller, 1999).

There are so many programs that it is difficult to calculate the exact amount and their level of success (Fenske et al., 1999; Levine & Nidiffer, 1996). One report surveyed forty programs nationwide targeting at-risk youth at the elementary level and seven programs at the secondary level (Secada et al., 1998). Some of these programs, while only named once, represent hundreds of programs, such as Upward Bound.

Chaney, Lewis, Farris, & Greene (1995) in a survey of higher education institutions found 1,576 colleges or universities answered affirmative to inquiries about the existence of early intervention programs on their campus. In 1992 the Federal Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (of 1968) established the National Early Intervention Scholarship and Partnership (NEISP) program which provides federal funds to states to furnish scholarships, college information and early intervention services to low income students. Fenske et al. (1999) state: "NEISP was a
‘defining initiative’ because it represented the first federal-state collaboration aimed at early intervention (p. 122).” Additionally, in the 1998 Higher Education Amendments, a program entitled GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) was created to both supplement NEISP and to partner with President Clinton’s “High Hopes” proposal, all of which are part of an overall federal initiative to increase educational success for at-risk youth (Fenske et al., 1999).

Finally, Perna (1999) identifies innumerable state funded early intervention programs that have been in existence since 1989.

Many programs are tailored to meet the specific needs of at risk populations in the various schools or communities in which they are located. Levine & Nidiffer (1996) in their investigation of how poor students get to college identified some important components of early intervention programs. They found that programs need to start early, last long, reach out to the student’s families, offer enrichment activities, reduce the dissonance between elite education and the home environment, and have the potential for large-scale replication while remaining local.

Additionally, Secada et al. (1998) recommends the following strategies to assist Hispanic students:

Hispanic students should be recruited actively into the highest [academic] tracks and provided with the support to succeed. In addition to placing students in more demanding curricular settings, schools should provide added support for students such as libraries, after-school programs, individualized tutoring, counseling and social service referrals (Secada et al., 1998, p. 37).

These recommendations are valuable guidelines to inform the effectiveness of current programs that serve first-generation, low-income, Latino, students. There are a few longstanding programs that meet the above recommendations and have a proven
track record of success. A couple of these programs are reviewed below followed by a specific focus on Upward Bound Programs.

While there are a multiplicity of programs that address the educational needs of low-income youth there are only a few programs specifically designed to assist students from high school to college (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996). Some of these programs have received national attention and have persisted over several decades. The most notable of these programs: A Better Chance (ABC); I Have A Dream (IHAD); and Upward Bound. These three programs target low-income students and emphasize college attendance as an explicit goal. Some of these programs have been around for over thirty-five years. In many ways these programs represent the best efforts at addressing the needs of these target populations (Fenske et al., 1999; Levine & Nidiffer, 1996).

A Better Chance

One of the first early intervention programs developed for low-income youth was A Better Chance (ABC). ABC was created in 1963 when twenty-three preparatory schools in the Northeast joined to increase the enrollment of talented minorities, specifically black students, in their schools. Initially funded by private foundations and corporations with additional financial assistance from the Office of Equal Opportunity, students are recruited in the eighth grade and participate in the program through high school.

ABC includes an eight-week summer residential component on college campuses to provide students with the opportunity to become familiar with the lifestyle and culture of college. The summer program consists of intensive academic
work, social, cultural, and athletic activities. Summer internships at business schools across the country are also available. During the academic year students receive ongoing academic support from program staff that monitors their academic and social progress.

Approximately 150 private and public schools enroll a total of 1100 students per year, with new student enrollment averaging 325 each year. From 1964 to 1991, 7,300 ABC students had graduated from college preparatory schools. High school graduation and college attendance rates are impressive for ABC students and have remained so throughout the history of the program. Levine (1989) reports that “For black students in ABC, college participation rates of almost 100 percent stand in stark contrast to the rate for non-ABC black high school graduates, which hovers near 25 percent” (p.167). Additionally, the program reports a 90 percent college graduation rate from selective colleges and universities (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996).

Initially, ABC recruited low-income students into the program. However, as funding sources changed and foundation support declined, recruitment and scholarships for low-income students were reduced. ABC now recruits middle-class, black students that are considered the most talented in the country.

It focuses on students who are in the top 10 percent of their class, have a grade average of at least 85 percent, and have good academic and personal recommendations; and on students from middle-class or poor but “stable” families (Mabry, 1991, p.44).

In addition to improved educational attainment, students report “personal changes that they attribute specifically to the program, including more social awareness, independence, tolerance, academic competence, and awareness of possibilities open to them” (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1991, p. 65-66). The limitations
of the ABC program are in the small amount of students that are served and the question as to whether the ABC approach would work with less able and more academically and economically disadvantaged youth (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996).

I Have A Dream

The I Have A Dream (IHAD) Program was created amidst a commencement speech by Eugene Lang in 1981. He spontaneously promised the members of the sixth grade class at his alma mater that if they stayed in school he would give them money for college. He ultimately promised to pay the difference in the financial aid and scholarships that they earned and the cost of college.

However, Lang soon discovered that the promise of college tuition does not prepare students for college however willing they may be to go. The sixth grade graduates at this particular school were low-income, black and Latino and they would be the first in their families to pursue a college education. Their elementary school was ranked as one of the lowest in academic performance in New York City. Many obstacles existed between seventh grade and college admission (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996).

Lang developed a program within the community that provided services to the students and their families. These services included counseling, tutoring, mentoring and enrichment activities. He hired a member of the community to coordinate the program and they worked with the students from sixth grade through college graduation.

In 1991, ten years after the initial promise, ninety percent of the sixth graders had graduated from high school or earned their GED. The norm for a sixth grade
graduating class from this school was that seventy-five percent of the students would drop out of school and none of them would attend college. Following high school graduation, fifty percent of the IHAD students went on to college (Coons & Petrick, 1992).

National media attention about the IHAD program increased interest in the program and Lang created a foundation to assist in the establishment of more IHAD programs. Currently, 140 programs serve more than 10,000 students. Each program requires a sponsor to fund an entire elementary class and to implement the necessary academic, cultural and support services. Some sponsors have been business leaders, others have been churches, synagogues and local colleges. Additionally, there must be a program coordinator and a physical location within the community from which to run the program (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996).

The IHAD program successfully meets many of the recommendations cited above. Students have access to an individual who supports their educational success and they receive academic support and development at an early age and for a long period of time. The program is based in the student’s community and includes community members who serve as important mentors. Additionally, IHAD focuses on the critical institutions in students’ lives—families, schools and community organizations. IHAD is replicable and can serve many students, yet remains small and individualized. Finally, IHAD provides complete financial support for college (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996).

The limitations of IHAD are that it is not selective and may include students for whom college is not their best choice. Additionally, programs vary in quality and
can be impacted if sponsors leave or do not follow through. Finally, while the program has the potential to be widespread, it only serves 10,000 students. Despite these shortcomings, Levine and Nidiffer (1996) believe that IHAD is one of the best comprehensive interventions ever attempted for increasing college access for low-income students.

The purpose of this literature review is to evaluate the current state of first-generation, low-income, Latino students. Additionally, an overview of the programs that have had an impact on improving the condition of educational success for these students is important. The final section of this literature review will focus on one specific program, the federally funded TRIO program, Upward Bound, which is designed to promote the educational attainment of first-generation, low-income students and which also serves a large population of Latino students across the nation. The review of research specifically on Upward Bound, combined with the general information about first-generation, low-income, Latino, high school students cited above, informs the direction and focus of this dissertation.

Upward Bound Programs

As described earlier Upward Bound Programs have their origin in The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The first seventeen programs began in 1965 as pilot projects and by 1966 the program increased to 200 colleges and universities serving 20,000 students (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996). There were 601 programs funded in 1996 and 1997. The average award was $297,513. The minimum grant award amount is $190,000. Currently 44,470 students participate in Upward Bound Programs across the nation at an average cost per participant of $3,997. Upward Bound is one of
the largest federal intervention programs that helps students attain a postsecondary degree. Second only to the Federal Student Aid program (Myers & Schirm, 1997).

Every Upward Bound Program is different. Each program is funded through an application process. Colleges and universities usually apply for Upward Bound grants. Competition for grant awards is very high. “Historically, priority has been given to programs targeted at inner-city school systems with large percentages of low-income students and high dropout rates” (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996, p.161). Although the competition is very intense to secure grants for Upward Bound, once a program is funded it often remains active for a long time. “In 1993, for example, 75 percent of active Upward Bound projects had been operating for more than 10 years and half for more than 20 years” (Moore, 1997, p.xiv). The duration of Upward Bound Programs has allowed graduates and alumni to return to their respective programs and to pass on their experience to younger generations.

Upward Bound Programs are federally funded grants serving high school students from grades 9 through 12. Each program has a pre-college focus with an emphasis on developing the skills and motivation necessary both to gain admittance and successfully complete a post-secondary educational program. Upward Bound is intended to address the academic needs of low-income and first generation to college high school students. According to the federal requirements, two-thirds of the student enrollment in each program must be both low-income and first-generation to college. The remaining one-third of the participants can be either low-income or first-generation. Most programs enroll a higher percentage of low-income and first-generation students than is required by law (Moore, 1997).
Upward Bound demands a significant time commitment of students. During the school year students attend tutoring, enrichment and skill building courses in math, science and English after school. Additional activities during the school year include field trips to local colleges and universities, career days, cultural awareness activities, guest speakers, social issues and study skills workshops.

An intensive six-week academic program for all Upward Bound students occurs each summer. The summer often has a live-in component, ranging from three to six weeks on a local college campus to provide students with an opportunity to experience some aspects of college life. Program staff live in the residence halls with the students to create a feeling of community and provide appropriate guidance and supervision. The summer program offers an assortment of courses that enrich student’s educational experience, give students a head start on the courses that they will take the following academic year, and help them work on areas that need improvement.

Upward Bound staff work closely with students, parents, and school personnel throughout the year and the summer to ensure academic progress. They also provide personal, career, academic, and family counseling to students and their families. Parents are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the program including parent meetings and program activities and to take and active role in monitoring academic progress.

All Upward Bound programs must provide instruction in math (through precalculus), laboratory science, composition, literature, and foreign language. Other services include:
a) instruction in reading, writing, study skills, and other subjects necessary for success in education beyond high school
b) academic or personal counseling
c) exposure to academic programs and cultural events
d) tutorial services
e) information on postsecondary education opportunities and student financial assistance
f) assistance in completing college entrance and financial aid applications
g) assistance in preparing for college entrance exams
h) mentoring

To participate in Upward Bound students must be between the ages of 13 and 19, have completed the 8th grade, and have a need for academic support to successfully pursue a program of post-secondary education. Students are selected based on recommendations from local educators, counselors, social workers, clergy or other interested parties. Students are recruited for participation in Upward Bound through their high schools. These high schools are identified as “target schools” in the grant proposal. Upward Bound programs serve approximately 3,300 target schools across the country.

Two significant federally funded longitudinal series of studies have been conducted on the impact of Upward Bound Programs. The first study was conducted in 1973-74 (Burkheimer, Levinsohn & French, 1976) ten years after Upward Bound began. The second series of studies has recently been concluded and was published in 1997 (Moore, 1997; Myers & Moore, 1997; Myers & Schirm, 1997).

The first study by Burkheimer et al. (1976) found that Upward Bound participants had higher educational aspirations, entered college at a higher rate, were more likely to apply for financial aid, and were more likely to attend four-year colleges than students who did not participate in Upward Bound Programs.
Additionally, Upward Bound seemed to have a positive impact specifically on minority students, poverty-level students, and students considered academic risks. These students were more likely to go to college than students who fit these characteristics who did not participate in Upward Bound programs (Levine & Nidiffer, 1996).

Conclusions of the study are summarized as follows:

It can be concluded that the Upward Bound program is effectively meeting its mandated objective to provide participants with the skills and motivation necessary for entry and success in education beyond high school (Burkheimer et al., 1976, p.133).

and

It is strongly suggested that substantial numbers of former Upward Bound participants enter postsecondary education who would not have gone otherwise, and that a substantial percentage of these students will successfully complete a postsecondary program of study. Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that, as a result, these young people will obtain better jobs and, in general, lead more productive and satisfying lives (Burkheimer et al., 1976, p. 135).

The series of studies conducted in the early 1990’s and published in 1997 provides the most comprehensive review of Upward Bound Programs and outcomes ever conducted. This national evaluation of Upward Bound was a six-year, longitudinal study. A nationally representative sample of students who applied to an Upward Bound Program between 1992 and 1994 were randomly assigned either to Upward Bound or to a control group. Additionally, field visits were conducted at twenty Upward Bound programs to collect additional data. Many aspects of Upward Bound Programs were evaluated including project operations, first year impact, short-term and long-term impacts and operational issues. Results as detailed below indicate that overall, Upward Bound Programs are successfully meeting the reported objectives.
and there is always room for growth and improvement. As a result of these in-depth studies much more is known about the quality and quantity of support provided by Upward Bound to the target population served.

A review of project operations found that although every Upward Bound Program is different there is also a great deal of consistency across programs. Most projects begin working with students in the early years and also provide a bridge program after their senior year to provide additional transitional support into college. The students selected for Upward Bound are usually students with “educational motivation, few behavioral or disciplinary problems, and grade-point averages at the B or C level” (Moore, 1997, p. xv). Upward Bound staff are usually college educated and have similar experiences as low-income, first-generation students.

Programs consistently reported placing a high priority on academic preparation over financial aid, cultural awareness, skill development or exposure to college. While these other aspects were also valued they were secondary to insuring that students receive the academic support and development that they often lacked prior to enrollment into the program. The study on operational issues (Moore, 1997) found that three indicators summarized the focus and intensity that Upward Bound Programs placed on academic preparation.

Number of courses offered: Fifty percent of Upward Bound projects offer more than 17 academic courses in the summer session and more than 10 academic courses during the regular school year. These courses are in addition to the tutoring, academic counseling, study skills and SAT/ACT test preparation courses that almost all projects offer (Moore, 1997, p. xv).
Nature and content of courses: More than two-thirds of Upward Bound projects focus on instruction that is not remedial. These projects adopt either a support focus that parallels (or anticipates) the curricular content in the college preparatory program of the high schools or an enrichment focus that teaches content that is unlikely to be included in students' high school courses. Most projects offer courses reflective of a fairly traditional pre-college preparatory curriculum even as they put forth a wide range of subjects for students to study (Moore, 1997, p. xv-xvi).

Course Requirements: Eighty percent of projects require students to complete at least six courses, and the majority of these prescribe the set of courses that must be taken. Projects that specify courses fall into two groups. One group, which represents one-third of all projects, emphasizes completing a "foundational" curriculum comprising of reading, writing, algebra I and II, geometry. A second group, which is slightly larger pursues a math/science orientation that involves additional requirements for precalculus, calculus, and science courses (Moore, 1997, p. xvi).

The evaluation of program operations found that Upward Bound projects placed more emphasis on student-centered activities and that involvement with parents and schools was secondary. "Upward Bound activities focus on directly influencing students, not on changing the student's family or school" (Moore, 1997, p.xvi). Yet, research found that parents wanted more opportunities to participate with their children in Upward Bound activities and expressed an interest in being more involved with their child's academic pursuits. Myers & Schirm (1997) found that Upward Bound students described their parents as engaged in their school work and in discussions about their future education. Additionally, target schools reported that Upward Bound could be improved by increasing parental involvement in the program.

There are far more eligible students for Upward Bound Programs than are actually served. Most projects work with an average of ten target schools and have eight students per school.
Less than one percent of all income-eligible youth in grades 8 to 12 were served by Upward Bound in 1992-93. Measured another way, Upward Bound served students in about eight percent of the nation’s schools with grade eight or above in 1992-93. While these estimates tend to overestimate unmet need, even if they were lowered by one-third, sizable unmet need would remain (Moore, 1997, p. xvi-xvii). Strikingly, only one-fifth of the schools with a high concentration of poverty (that is, schools with 40 percent or more of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches) are served by Upward Bound projects, and only 8 percent of rural schools are served (Moore, 1997, p. 61).

Despite the fact that there are numerous other pre-college programs in existence at the schools in which Upward Bound operates, studies indicated that five times as many students who entered Upward Bound were eligible for but were not receiving other pre-college support services. Target schools reported that Upward Bound could be improved by expanding program services to more eligible students. Yet, target schools discouraged the tightening of eligibility standards to focus on students with the greatest need. They believed that this would harm the overall impact the Upward Bound had on the target population (Moore, 1997).

An investigation of the impact of a student’s involvement in their first year of Upward Bound (Myers & Moore, 1997) found that students who were most likely to benefit from Upward Bound Programs were those with low academic expectations and Hispanic students. Students with low academic expectations increased the amount of math and English credits that they earned. Additionally, students with low expectations significantly increased the number of credits earned in all academic subjects by 3.1 compared to an increase of 0.5 credits by students in Upward Bound who had higher expectations. Likewise, Hispanic students in Upward Bound gained more than two credits compared to African American and white students in the
program who gained less than a half a credit. Hispanics gained more credits in all core college preparatory curriculum.

The program also increased the educational aspirations of all students and the number of academic courses they took during high school.

- Participants earned about one credit more than nonparticipants. This impact is quite large when compared with the experiences of a typical high school student, who each year is expected to complete about five academic and/or elective credits.
- Participants earned substantially more credits in science, math, English, foreign languages, and social studies than nonparticipants.
- Participants also earned more credits than nonparticipants in vocational education and remedial math courses (Myers & Moore, 1997, p. 4).

In addition to an intense academic focus on the number of courses offered, the nature and content of courses, and the course requirements, research found that students also received a great deal of direct contact from Upward Bound. “Among first year participants, the typical number of academic and nonacademic sessions attended was 274. Two-thirds of these sessions took place during the summer and the rest took place during the academic year” (Myers & Moore, 1997, p. 6). Target schools surveyed overwhelmingly reported that Upward Bound had a positive effect on participants' grades, homework completion, classroom participation, class attendance patterns, likelihood of taking college preparatory classes and interactions with teachers, counselors and peers (Moore, 1997).

College enrollment rates for Upward Bound students were significantly higher than for their peers who did not participate in Upward Bound. In 1993, 86% of Upward Bound students enrolled in college for the following fall. This is compared to a 62% college enrollment rate of all low-income, high school graduates with similar educational expectations (Moore, 1997). Additionally, more Upward Bound graduates
went to a four-year college than two-year colleges (66% versus 20%). This is a much higher rate than first-generation, low-income, students across the nation.

Although college enrollment rates were high for Upward Bound participants, researchers also found that a low rate of student persistence through Upward Bound programs almost self-selected successful students. A large percentage of students do not stay in the Upward Bound program through their senior year. Over one-third (37%) of the students who enroll in the program leave within the first 12 months (Moore, 1997). Many students leave during their junior year to work at jobs. Moore (1997) explains:

The program’s drop-out rate, however, impedes the program’s potential effectiveness. An important area for staff attention is devising programmatic strategies that more effectively contend with work pressure on teenagers and allow entrants to achieve the benefits associated with sustained involvement in Upward Bound (p. xviii).

Overall, the attrition rate from Upward Bound may serve as a selection process of those who will actually succeed in college. Therefore, it is difficult to measure the actual impact of Upward Bound services on a student’s college success.

Extensive academic support, on going one-on-one contact, and long term program involvement provided in Upward Bound clearly has the potential to improve the educational attainment of participants. To date the most common recommendations to improve Upward Bound’s effectiveness include “increased collaboration with target high schools, more frequent and focused opportunities for parent involvement, accommodations for working students, and transition services for participants entering college” (Moore, 1997, p. xix). Overall, everyone involved with
Upward Bound programs, including parents, teachers, students and staff, continue to report significant successes.

In addition to these two federally funded longitudinal investigations, numerous independent studies have been conducted about or involving Upward Bound. Many studies investigate the impact of the federal program by evaluating specific Upward Bound Programs (Burris, 1969; Dottin, Linton, & Roberts, 1981; Farrow, 1976; Franklin, 1984; Johnson, 1995; Jones, 1991; Lewis, 1982; Mullins, 1974; Okuwa, 1994; Richardson, 1974; Seelie-Fields, 1972; and Selsky, 1975; Tanara, 1989). Other studies Butler & Gipson (1975), Garns (1971), Greenleigh Associates, Inc. (1970), James (1979), Joseph (1968), Lewenstein (1974), Stewart (1978) and Waite (1968) report about Upward Bound in general.

Additional research describes the specific impact of Upward Bound on such areas as participant’s self-concept (Geisler, 1968), level of academic achievement (Beavers, 1992; Casady, 1991; Dansby, 1999; Exum & Young, 1981; McCormick, 1971; McCormack & Williams, 1974; McLure & Child, 1998; Palmer, 1979; Roland, 1981; Young & Exum, 1982), motivation (Herson, 1968), self-esteem (Merchant, 1986; Young, 1973), high school attendance and graduation and college enrollment (Egeland, Hunt & Hardt, 1970; Faulcon, 1994), affect and cognition (Hollis, 1974), student development (Lowery, 1985), mathematics and English performance (Laws, 1999) and reading achievement (Merchant, 1986; Slaughter, 1983). Effective teaching in Upward Bound (Coron, 1969) and the impact of counselor training (Allen, 1975), art counseling (Nash, 1974), communication curriculums (Hattman, 1974; Moore, 1974; Thompson, 1973; Wright, 1997), science courses (Bybee, 1969) interpersonal
skills training (Darrah, 1986), adventure based training (Grube, 1998) and other services provided through Upward Bound have been investigated.

Many of the independent studies cited above are unpublished doctoral dissertations. A majority of the research was conducted in the late 1960’s and 1970’s when Upward Bound was a relatively new federal program. About a dozen studies were conducted in the 1980’s. Research increased about a third in the 1990’s which coincided with the 30 year anniversary of the program and the renewed focus on Upward Bound brought about by the updated, federally funded, longitudinal study cited earlier (Moore, 1997).

Most of the research concerning Upward Bound has been quantitative. Few studies (Bemak, 1975; Grube, 1998; Okuwa, 1994; White, 1991; White, 1998; Zulli, 2000) investigate Upward Bound qualitatively. Most studies evaluating Upward Bound seek quantifiable changes in such areas as participants’ academic achievement levels or rates of high school graduation and college enrollment as determined by standardized, quantitative measures. Rarely have studies investigated Upward Bound’s impact by seeking direct feedback from the participants themselves about their perceptions of the program (Bemak, 1975; Okuwa, 1994; Powe, 1990; White, 1991; White, 1998; Zulli, 2000). Even fewer gather this data through qualitative measures (Bemak, 1975; Okuwa, 1994; White, 1991; White, 1998; Zulli, 2000). White (1998) also cites the dearth of Upward Bound qualitative research as she argues for more auto-ethnographic studies from former students and staff of Upward Bound programs.

While some studies focus on certain populations of students within an Upward Bound program such as: underachievers (Ehrbright, 1969), low-income low achievers
(Jackson, 1976), Native Americans (Brown, 1993; Gill, 1969; White, 1991), African Americans (Dease, 1979; Ferguson, 1994; Laws, 1999; Nash, 1974; Zulli, 2000), African American males (Butler, 1999); and Latinos (Carreras, 1998; Fashola & Slavin, 1997). Most research about Upward Bound often groups all program participants together and does not consider differences in race, class, gender, ability, etc., despite the fact that Upward Bound is comprised of a wealth of diversity in these areas.

It is rare to find data about the impact of Upward Bound that both contains the perspectives of Upward Bound students and is gathered in their own words. Even throughout the detailed, federally funded, longitudinal studies (Moore, 1997; Burkeimer et al., 1976) limited data was reported about student observations and experiences in Upward Bound outside of standardized measures. Thus, a unique approach to investigating the impact of Upward Bound seems to lie in gathering qualitative information from a specific group of Upward Bound participants and detailing their perspectives in their own words.

Conclusion

This review of literature began with a recounting of TRIO legislation that gave birth to the term “first generation college student.” An overview of the research about first generation college students found that these students were most likely to be low-income, Latino, receive less academic preparation, have lower academic and career aspirations and perceive less familial support for college. A thorough examination of the literature on each of these areas indicated a great need for early intervention to better prepare these students for high school graduation, college acceptance and
completion. Key early intervention programs were highlighted with a specific focus on Upward Bound. Both large-scale government funded studies were reviewed along with a survey of research conducted since Upward Bound’s inception. The apparent paucity of research representing the voices of Upward Bound students and Latino students in particular presents reason for a qualitative study on the experience of these students to provide a new facet of evaluation for the program.

The next chapter will detail the design and methods of the research study.
CHAPTER 3

DESIGN AND METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and describe the chosen methodology for this research design. The rationale for selecting a phenomenological approach and utilizing qualitative methodologies based in educational research designs to evaluate the impact of Upward Bound programs on first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college students will be described. Additionally, the specific qualitative methods utilized in determining sample criteria and selection as well as data collection and analysis will be detailed in this chapter. Overall, this chapter will provide an in-depth description of the research design used in this study.

A Phenomenological Approach

The two most common and often competing research paradigms are logical-positivism and phenomenological inquiry (Fetterman, 1988, Patton, 1990). The logical-positivism approach emphasizes the collection of quantitative data through experiments based in scientific theory designed to prove or disprove a conjectured hypothesis that can be generalized to an entire population. Phenomenological inquiry “uses qualitative and naturalistic approaches to inductively and holistically understand human experience in context-specific settings” (Patton, 1990, p.37).

Historically and currently the extensive debate regarding which approach is the most effective and valid has drawn intensely opposing viewpoints. Educational researchers are deeply entrenched in this heated discussion (Lancy, 1993). Both sides
argue that one approach is better than the other and that their respective technique should be the only method of inquiry utilized (Boruch & Rindskopf, 1984; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, Patton (1990) disagrees with the idea that one research philosophy must be chosen over the other. He advocates a paradigm of choices:

A paradigm of choices rejects methodological orthodoxy in favor of methodological appropriateness as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality. The issue then becomes not whether one has uniformly adhered to prescribed canons of either logical-positivism or phenomenology but whether one has made sensible methods decisions given the purpose of the inquiry, the questions being investigated, and the resources available. The paradigm of choices recognizes that different methods are appropriate for different situations (Patton, 1990, p. 39).

The purpose of this inquiry was to investigate how first generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college students evaluate the impact of their participation in a high school Upward Bound program on their academic preparation for college, self-perceptions, family and social relationships, future educational goals, and ultimately their post-secondary success. Therefore, this study can be considered “evaluation research” as defined by Patton (1990). “When one examines and judges accomplishments and effectiveness, one is engaged in evaluation. When this examination of effectiveness is conducted systematically and empirically through careful data collection and thoughtful analysis, one is engaged in evaluation research” (p. 11) (Italics cited as used by author).

The increased use of qualitative approaches for educational evaluation has marked a shift in paradigms that Fetterman (1988) refers to as a “silent scientific revolution in evaluation.” He explains,
As is the case in many fields of scientific endeavor, educational evaluation is experiencing a change in direction. A critical component of this change is a shift in the paradigms underlying the method and aim of research. A marked shift is taking place in the professional allegiance of evaluators. Increasingly they are turning away from traditional positivist approaches and toward the acceptance and use of phenomenological or qualitative concepts and techniques (p.4).

This evaluation research study attempted to gather specific information directly from former Upward Bound students regarding their personal assessment of the impact of Upward Bound participation on their lives, specifically regarding their educational endeavors. A phenomenological approach utilizing naturalistic inquiry provided the best means to acquire and analyze the data necessary for this study. Qualitative frameworks from the fields of educational research and evaluation informed the design and implementation of the research. Qualitative approaches allow for maximum and direct input from participants which was a priority in this research design.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions served as guideposts for data collection and analysis. The research questions were designed to gather individual responses from participants regarding the effectiveness of Upward Bound Programs on their educational success.

1. How do first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college students who participated in an Upward Bound program during high school evaluate the impact of the Upward Bound program on their lives, specifically with respect to their academic performance in high school and preparation for college, self-perceptions, family and social relationships, and their future educational goals?
2. How do first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college students evaluate the impact of the Upward Bound program on their ability to complete a post-secondary education?
3. What recommendations do first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college students have for the Upward Bound Program to better prepare future students to complete a post-secondary education?

Site Selection

Upward Bound programs in Massachusetts and Connecticut were utilized as sites from which to select participants. Specific programs were contacted and a list of alumni from each program that met the specific participant criteria were identified.

The Puerto Rican communities in Massachusetts and Connecticut are reflective of the larger Puerto Rican population in the nation. Latinos in Massachusetts and Connecticut, most of whom are Puerto Rican, are the least likely to graduate from high school and pursue a college degree. A high percentage of Latinos in Connecticut and Massachusetts are low income and do not have a college education. These demographics are also reflected in the Upward Bound enrollment in these states.

Participant Criteria, Recruitment and Selection

Purposeful sampling was utilized in the selection of participants for the study. Patton (1990) provides several purposeful sampling strategies to acquire “information-rich cases” that are instrumental in qualitative methodologies and serve the particular purposes of evaluation research. Two sampling strategies identified by Patton (1990) were utilized in this study to identify participants: homogenous sampling and extreme or deviant case sampling.

Homogenous sampling is a strategy utilized to gather in-depth information about a particular subgroup of the overall program population that is being evaluated. The purpose is to reduce variation in the case samples and to learn more about this specific subgroup. First-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college students, who
are former Upward Bound students, are the homogenous group that is sampled in this study.

Extreme or deviant case sampling is designed to identify those cases that are outside of the norm. The rational for using extreme cases such as notable failures or outstanding successes is that this information will provide a unique in-depth insight into a specific dimension of an otherwise typical program or population under investigation. In contrast to standard random sampling which provides a breadth of information about all of the cases, extreme case sampling sacrifices breadth for depth. Conclusions about the extreme cases sampled can not be generalized to the overall population but will provide significant information that may otherwise be lost in random sampling. By utilizing extreme case sampling researchers consider what cases they can learn the most from and then select these cases.

The extreme cases sampled in this design were students who are low-income, first-generation, Puerto Rican and who have experienced success in their post-secondary educational endeavors. As evidenced in the literature review in Chapter 2, first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students are the least likely group of all high school students to graduate from high school and enroll in college. They are also the least likely to obtain a college degree. Thus, students who met these criteria and who demonstrated post-secondary success are considered outstanding among their peers and could be considered for this study. Their perspective about the impact of Upward Bound programs on their lives is valuable and unique. The goal of gathering information from these unique cases is to focus on information from students who
have embodied the objectives of the Upward Bound Program and to evaluate if, from their perspective, Upward Bound impacted in any way their ability to succeed.

Participants were selected on the basis of their involvement in Upward Bound, level of post-secondary educational attainment, and status as low-income, first-generation, and Puerto Rican. For the purpose of this study, post-secondary success is minimally defined as the completion of at least two semesters of college and current enrollment in a third semester. Additionally, any student that surpassed these minimum criteria and was actively pursuing or had obtained a college degree was also eligible for the study.

Subjects were selected based upon their Upward Bound participation. Potential subjects for the study participated in Upward Bound for at least two years and attended at least two summer programs during their enrollment. The two years of participation must have occurred during the student’s eleventh and twelfth grades. Studies indicate a large unmet need for Upward Bound services nationwide. However, 37% of students enrolled in Upward Bound drop out of the program in the first year due to the high demands of the program. Additionally, close to two-fifth’s of students are projected to leave the Upward Bound program in the first 12 months of enrollment (Moore, 1997). Thus, if a student remains in the program for two years, especially through their junior and senior year, they have demonstrated a clear commitment to the program and have completed the program as it is designed.

Research indicates that college attrition rates are highest for first-generation, low-income, Latino students (Rendon, 1995). College persistence rates are directly related to parent’s education level (Nunez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998) and first
generation college student attrition rates are highest during the first year of college (Riehl, 1994). Therefore, students who have completed at least two semesters of college and have enrolled in the third semester are considered to have successfully overcome significant odds in their post-secondary education.

Alumni from Upward Bound Programs in Massachusetts and Connecticut who meet the criteria for the study were contacted by telephone and by electronic mail. Attempts were made to contact students from several different Upward Bound Programs and to balance the sample by gender. During the initial contact, the researcher identified herself and provided information about the purpose and goals of the research project. An invitation to participate was extended to each person contacted until a total of 12 subjects agreed to an interview. A total of eight women and four men were interviewed for the study.

Upon agreement to participate in the study, a date, time and location was determined for the face-to-face interview. Additionally, each person was asked to sign an Informed Consent Form (Appendix A). This form was sent to each participant by mail along with a confirmation letter detailing the scheduled interview. The participants were asked to bring the completed forms to the interview. Additional copies of the forms were available at the time of the interview in the event the participant forgot their original copies and could complete them prior to the interview. Interviews were conducted at sights and times that were mutually agreed upon by the participant and the researcher.

Methodology

While there are many perspectives as to what constitutes qualitative inquiry (Eisner & Peshkin, 1990; Jacob, 1987; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and a great deal of
comparisons of the characteristics of qualitative and quantitative studies exist, there is no universally accepted definition of qualitative research (Lancy, 1993). However, Patton (1990), who is reported to have written the definitive text on the use of qualitative research in evaluation (Lancy, 1993), has defined ten themes of qualitative research that can be useful in determining if a research design is consistent with the intent of qualitative methodologies. These themes are listed below, accompanied by an explanation of how this present study attempted to remain congruent with the suggested phenomenological framework.

**Naturalistic inquiry**: The purpose of the design was to acquire data that is not controlled or manipulated in advance by the researcher. In other words, there is no hypothesis to prove or disprove regarding the effectiveness of Upward Bound participation.

**Inductive analysis**: The design attempted to be open to whatever emerged in the data collection and analysis process. Open-ended questions were utilized to allow for maximum participant response.

**Holistic perspective**: The design recognized that the participants are components of complex, multi-dimensional systems and that a specific cause and effect relationship is impossible to establish with regard to Upward Bound participation and post-secondary academic success. Thus, the research focused on “complex interdependencies” that exist in the larger structure of the students’ lives by gathering the student’s perceptions of the impact of Upward Bound participation on these various facets of their lives.
Qualitative data: Open-ended interviews provided data from participants designed to capture, through direct quotations, their personal descriptions, perspectives and experiences regarding their participation in Upward Bound. Specific focus areas or as Layder (1993) terms them “background concepts” were identified to guide the interview. These focus areas, which have been identified in previous research to be important in determining the academic success of first-generation, low-income, Latino students, were utilized as guideposts for the inquiry. However, these guideposts were not used to limit the participants’ responses but rather to enhance them.

Personal contact and insight: The role of the investigator was that of interviewer. The researcher personally interviewed the subjects one-on-one. The researcher’s personal experiences as a first-generation college student and professional experience as a counselor with Upward Bound was also utilized in the study.

Dynamic systems: The research assumed that the individual perspectives and contexts are ever changing. The data gathered is considered part of the larger process by which each subject comes to understand and make meaning of the impact of the Upward Bound program on their lives.

Unique case orientation: The research design acknowledged that each person in the study and their experience in Upward Bound was unique and impossible to duplicate. Every effort was made to respect each case, maintain the integrity of the subject’s responses, and accurately gather and represent the information provided by the participants. In this manner, cross-case analysis was strengthened by the quality of the individual interviews.
**Context sensitivity:** The setting, timing and context of the study was unique and not necessarily generalizable outside of the specific circumstances identified in the study. The findings of the study are not necessarily true for all Upward Bound students or even specifically for first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students. However, patterns were identified and themes did provide insight into the experiences of some students that may inform future Upward Bound experiences.

**Empathic neutrality:** The researcher sought to understand the experiences of former Upward Bound students without trying to prove or advocate for a particular conclusion or point of view. The researcher’s personal involvement and familiarity with Upward Bound informed the study.

**Design flexibility:** The research design was open and easily adapted to whatever emerged as the study unfolded in an attempt to encourage a variety of responses. The interview protocol was edited as interviews occurred to assist in the optimum acquisition of data.

**Data Collection Techniques**

The purpose of interviewing in qualitative evaluation research is to gain an understanding of the participant’s opinions, experiences and perspectives of the program under evaluation. The goal is to acquire this information in the participant’s own words utilizing their terminology, perceptions, and frame of reference. Interviews allowed for the maximum acquisition of this data in the rawest form possible.

There are many different kinds of qualitative interviews that researchers may utilize to collect their research data. Patton (1990) identifies three basic approaches to evaluative research interviews. Standardized open-ended interviews were the qualitative interviewing approach used in this research study.
Structure and Content of the Interviews

Standardized open-ended interviews consist of a set of questions that are used with each participant without variation. The same questions are used in the same order with essentially the same wording. The structure and format of the interview protocol provides a standardized format used in each interview. Variation from the protocol is kept to a minimum but is not prohibited. While the format and order of the interview questions remain consistent in each of the interviews it is also possible to ask follow-up questions or to pursue a line of questioning that was not otherwise anticipated when the protocol was conceived (Patton, 1990). These are the principles that guided the standardized, open-ended, interviews conducted in this study.

This research design sought in part to replicate parts of a similar qualitative study that evaluated the personal, social, and political changes that occurred for participants in an Upward Bound program over twenty-five years ago (Bemak, 1975). Bemak (1975) interviewed former Upward Bound students to obtain information about the influence of Upward Bound on the personal, social, and political development of students. The interview protocol utilized in Bemak’s study guided the development of the protocol for this study. Bemak’s protocol explored student’s perspectives about themselves, their family, friends, academics, and their future. These areas focus on the various aspects of a student’s life that may be impacted by Upward Bound. Additionally, these areas provide a segue to explore such issues as low degree expectations, lack of familial support and poor academic preparation identified in the literature as barriers to post-secondary success for first-generation students (Nunez &

Utilizing the principles for standardized, open-ended interviews cited above (Patton, 1990), each participant was interviewed individually for approximately one to two hours. All interviews were audio-tape recorded and transcribed. An interview protocol was used to guide each interview (Appendix B). The protocol, derived from Bemak (1975) covered basic background concepts identified in the literature as indicators of post-secondary success for first-generation, low-income students.

The first set of questions gathered basic information about each participant’s involvement with Upward Bound. Additionally, some of the questions were designed to help the participant reflect upon their experiences in Upward Bound and to establish rapport with the interviewer. The second set of questions explored the participant’s opinions regarding the impact of the Upward Bound Program on her/his academic performance and preparation for college. The third set of questions asked students about their feelings about themselves and inquired about the impact of Upward Bound on their personal development. The fourth set of questions investigated the impact of Upward Bound on the student’s relationships with family members and friends and specifically explored changes in familial support of their college educational pursuits. The fifth set of questions explored the impact of Upward Bound on the participant’s future plans specifically regarding their educational degree aspirations. The sixth set of questions attempted to identify the overall impact of the Upward Bound Program on participant’s lives and provided an opportunity for respondents to contribute any additional information they considered relevant. Finally participants were asked
specifically about the impact of the Upward Bound program on their ability to complete a post-secondary education and for their recommendations for future improvements to Upward Bound programs.

Data Analysis

The data for this study consisted of audio-tapes from the interviews and the audio-tape transcriptions. A demographic table (Table 3) was produced indicating general information about each participant. Transcriptions of the interviews were reviewed and coded by the researcher. Coding categories were distinguished as suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1992). Emergent patterns, themes, categories and topics as they relate to the research questions and the interview guide were identified through a process of inductive analysis (Patton, 1990). Computerized analysis assisted the overall integration of the data and was conducted utilizing Ethnograph 5.0.

Limitations

The limitations of this study include the fact that a narrowly defined group of students were studied to determine the impact of an Upward Bound Program on student’s lives. This study investigated the experiences of first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students who successfully completed a year or more of college. Basically, this group of outstanding successes provided a very specific, in-depth, and valuable perspective about the Upward Bound experience, which is a greatly needed addition to the literature on first-generation, low-income, Latino students. However, the ability to generalize this data to a larger population is limited.

Another limitation of this study was that respondents were asked to recall their experience in an Upward Bound Program that ended a minimum of one year prior to the interview. While this period of time could provide an important opportunity for
reflection and allow student’s to gain some perspective outside of their involvement in Upward Bound, this length of time away from the experience may cause specific recollections to fade and compromise the accuracy of the data.

The researcher, as investigator, may have contributed to the limitations of the study. There are some aspects of the study in which the researcher was very familiar and others in which she had absolutely no experience. The researcher is a first-generation college student who did not come from a low-income background and who is white, not Puerto Rican. At the time of the study she was also working as a professional staff member in an Upward Bound Program and previously served as counselor to some of the participants in the study. Every aspect of the research study was most likely influenced by these experiences. It is impossible to determine how the conception, design, implementation and analysis of the research was limited or enhanced by the researcher’s personal experience or lack there of with the participant’s in the study and the topic under investigation.

In qualitative research intimate involvement with the participant’s and in the field of study is seen as a benefit of the research design. Lancy (1993) argues that the strength of qualitative research lies in the depth to which the researcher is immersed in the arena that is being studied. Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggest that the limitations of a researcher’s bias is “offset by the flexibility, insight, and tacit knowledge that is a peculiar province of the human instrument” (p.113). Thus, what one person sees as a liability, another considers strength.

The results of the data analysis, discussion of the findings, and implications for further research will be presented in the following chapters.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter will review the data gathered from twelve participants in standardized, open-ended interviews, utilizing the protocol in Appendix B derived from Bemak (1975). The data is organized according to the three research questions guiding this study. Question #1 has six parts and details participant responses to the impact of Upward Bound on their lives specifically with respect to their academic performance in high school, college preparation, self-perceptions, family relationships, social relationships and future goals. The second question explored student’s evaluation of Upward Bound’s impact on their ability to complete a post-secondary education. Finally, question #3 sought participant recommendations for Upward Bound improvement in preparing future students to complete a post-secondary education.

As described in the previous chapter the twelve participants in the study were selected through contacts with Upward Bound programs in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Students participated in Upward Bound for at least two years in high school. They attended both private and public high schools. All of the participants completed a year or more of college and some had earned their bachelor’s degree at the time of data collection. All of the participants are first-generation, low-income, and Puerto Rican. Finally, pseudonyms were chosen by participants to disguise their identity. Additional information that risked disclosing the identity of participants was
altered or deleted from the reported results. Table 3 details the demographics of each participant.

Table 3: Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>College</th>
<th>Year in College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adnoloy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>4 year private college</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Alisha</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>4 year public university</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Briana</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>4 year private college</td>
<td>Graduated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Carlos</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>2 year community college</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Diego</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>4 year private college</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Isaac</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>4 year private college</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Keyla</td>
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<td>4 year private college</td>
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<td>4 year public university</td>
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<tr>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>4 year public college</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<td>4 year private university</td>
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<td>4 year private college</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Veronica</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>2 year community college</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question #1: How do First-generation, Low-income, Puerto Rican College Students Who Participated in an Upward Bound Program in High School Evaluate the Impact of the Upward Bound Program on Their Lives, Specifically with Respect to: Their Academic Performance in High School; Preparation for College; Self-perceptions; Family Relationships; Social Relationships; and Their Future Goals?

Personal reflections of Puerto Rican students who were formerly involved in Upward Bound and who have successfully completed a year or more of college provide a unique insight into Upward Bound’s impact upon program participants. The purpose of Upward Bound is to assist first-generation, low-income high school students in the completion of their secondary education and to prepare and assist these students in their application to, enrollment in, and completion of, a college degree. Upward Bound is designed to help students develop academically, socially and personally and become better prepared to effectively manage the many barriers that students encounter in their pursuit of a post-secondary education. Question #1 asks students to reflect on their
Upward Bound experience and to discuss how Upward Bound affected their lives academically, personally and socially in relation to their goal of becoming the first in their family to earn a college degree.

Question #1 has six parts. The first part investigates how students described the impact Upward Bound had upon their academic performance in high school. The second part reports the impact Upward Bound had upon students’ college preparation. In the third part, participants discuss how Upward Bound influenced their self-perceptions. In the fourth and fifth section, participants identify changes that occurred in their family relationships and social relationships as a result of their Upward Bound involvement. Finally, in the sixth part of Question #1, students reflect upon how their future goals have been effected by their participation in Upward Bound.

Question #1, Part 1: Academic Performance in High School

Since Upward Bound programs are designed to help students complete high school and to prepare for a post-secondary education, this question aimed to gather information from former Upward Bound students about how Upward Bound impacted their high school academic performance. Students describe a variety of ways in which they felt Upward Bound had an influence on their academic performance in school.

Participants began by describing the quality of education they received in high school and then related how Upward Bound supplemented their high school experience. Most of the participants in the study attended public high schools. Two of the students attended private high schools. Some of the students attended the same high school. The twelve participants attended a total of eight different high schools in Massachusetts and Connecticut.
The high schools where Upward Bound students attend often enroll high populations of students from low-income families. Additionally, these schools are often under-funded and student performance is often below the average on state assessments. The quality of secondary education that a student receives is an important factor in their post-secondary success. However, it is difficult to really measure education quality. In this study students were asked about the quality of their high school education.

Quality of High School Education

Participants in the study were divided on how they evaluated the quality of their high school education. Students used their own experience in class, comparisons of their own attendance in other high schools and their level of preparedness once they arrived at college as factors in determining the quality of education they received in high school. Five out of the twelve students in the study felt that they received a good education in high school despite the fact that their schools were ranked among the lowest in the state in standardized test scores or were subject to accreditation problems.

Raynor transferred from another state and found a vast improvement in the education that he received even though the school he transferred to had a low state ranking in standardized test scores.

I'd say the high school I [transferred] to is one of the best high schools, probably in America. I can't picture any high school being better. I absolutely loved my high school. The teachers that were there... they were amazing! I have good memories of every teacher I had senior year. And they all influenced me in one way or another. So, yes, I speak highly of [my] high school. The reason we moved out of [the other state, to this state], honestly, is because the school I was going to was completely horrible. It was the worst. In my English class the teacher was giving me 3-letter spelling words. I would do my homework for English, and at the bottom I wrote them a letter saying, 'I think we can handle more than 3-letter spelling words. I don't understand why
you’re giving us this. You don’t have stupid students on your hands. We can
do more.” And he said, ‘Well, this is what the State Board of Education is
giving me to teach you, and I can’t sway from that. I’ll get in trouble...’ and
all this other nonsense. And I talked to my one good teacher who I had there.
He told me that it was not true. That what the Board of Ed set out as guidelines
was like the very minimum that you could teach, and if he was teaching that,
it’s not because that’s what he has to teach. It’s because he’s just not putting
any effort into making his own curriculum. So, it was this completely horrible
school.

Carlos, while reporting that he was satisfied with the education he received in
high school, also recognized that he had been tracked into a low level math course in
eighth grade which eventually prohibited him from being accepted into the state
university engineering program. As described earlier in Chapter 2, students are often
tested and placed in specific math levels between 6th and 8th grade. These math levels
determine which math courses they will take throughout high school.

Students are often placed in these levels based upon test scores alone,
irrespective of academic performance in class. Once a student is placed on a specific
track it is very difficult to advance beyond the courses that are prescribed for that track.
The math tracks begin with different levels of algebra. Beginning in ninth grade there
are usually at least three different levels of algebra: college algebra, algebra (first half),
and pre-algebra. Algebra (first half) is a two year course of algebra that covers what
college algebra accomplishes in one year.

Carlos evidently was placed in algebra (first half) in his ninth grade year. By
the time he was accepted into Upward Bound in tenth grade it was not possible for him
to catch up with what he had missed. Therefore, he was unable to complete a calculus
course in high school, which is a basic requirement for students seeking to major in
engineering.
In eighth grade I had no idea, but, when I was a junior [I realized] that I should have taken Algebra I [in ninth grade], because [instead] I had a two-year thing of Algebra I. It sort of messed me up. I could have done more. I had no idea in eighth grade, because that was the day you picked your classes for freshman year. That was the first time I saw my guidance counselor ever! And he told me to take this [two-year] version of Algebra. I didn’t know any better. I was pretty good. In eighth grade I had honor roll, so . . . I had a B [average].

Another student reported that she received a very good education despite the fact that her high school lost her accreditation two years after she graduated.

[My] high school is having a lot of problems about being accredited and I don't think that is justifiable because I got a good education from [that] high school, there's a lot of people that got a good education from [there]. I think it is more of a personal thing, you get out of education whatever you put into it.

Most of the students, whether they felt positive, negative, or neutral about the quality of their high school education, ascribed to a philosophy that education is what each person makes of it and that each individual is responsible for the quality of education that they receive. Several students did not want to criticize their education and explained that they did the best they could with the education that they experienced.

I try not to put down my education because you make of education what you want to make of it and I feel that with the resources that I was given I made the best of my education. So, coming here [to college] I know how to start a paper. I may not know how to write a paper well, but I know how to start a paper, I know how to formulate a thesis. It may not have been written well but I knew how to start, I knew the resources that I needed, or the stuff I needed to do.

Sonia was torn in evaluating her education's quality. She attended a public high school for the first two years. She then received a full scholarship to a private high school as a result of her involvement with Upward Bound; she repeated her tenth grade year and finished her secondary education. She describes the differences that she noticed between the two schools.
At that time there was a lot of chaos and things like that in the public school system in [my first] high school, because I remember that really clearly. The strikes were going on with the teachers and that kind of thing. I think the quality of education at [that] high school, at that time, when I was there, we have to admit was really poor. I mean, I think that, because there was the stress around teacher salaries and things like that, things were going on that they weren't happy about. And so, that, of course, makes the students suffer as well. So, going from being at [the public] high school and going on to [the private] high school, I think that made a big difference. The quality of education that I got at [the private] high school and through the summers [in Upward Bound] was up to a good standard. I appreciated the teachers and how they were able to be very open to you and sit down and have lunch with you and talk about other things besides the classroom and [the teachers] participated in trips with us and things like that. So I think that makes a big difference. It was very easy for me and for the teachers to see me after class, or to take that time aside. Whereas, you know, you go to the [public] high school and, once the bell rings, the teachers are gone, just like you are. Some of them have office hours on certain days, but they have a bigger group of people that need help and you have a bigger classroom when you’re in a public high school. You’re talking about 25 students as opposed to 15. So, that’s a big difference. And so you get that sort of special attention, being at a private school. And, I think that whole thing about being able to discuss your work with your teacher also has a lot to do with that.

Diego also attended a private high school and he made this comment about the education he received.

It kinda sucked. For all the money that was spent to go to [the private] high school I don't think it was worth it. It was better than the public education but it wasn't such a big thing. If I wanted to learn it I would learn it. Many times I thought it was boring. I thought, ‘I gotta get out of here, this is just a waste of my time.’ But, it gave me enough, I soaked up enough information to be successful. It could have been better in many areas, but it was enough for me to get by.

Six out of twelve students, 50% of respondents, reported that their high school education was poor and did not meet their needs to prepare for college. Four of these students had aspirations to become doctors or work in the medical field in some way. Three of these students were accepted in nationally ranked private colleges and the fourth graduated valedictorian of her high school class. All four of them struggled so
significantly during their first year in science and math that they had to change their major to an area of study that demanded less rigorous work in math and science.

When I came to [college] I was pre-med. And I remember that they put me in calculus and chemistry back to back my first year and that whole dream went out the window. I can’t do that. I can’t comprehend it. The first day of chemistry and they went through three chapters in half an hour and I was so lost. I remember calling the Upward Bound staff and crying that I was so dumb, I didn’t even know why I was here.

Some of the high schools did not offer Advanced Placement or Honors courses which are widely considered essential curriculum for college preparation, especially for students planning to major in science or math. Alisha described in detail the quality of work that she did in high school and what she found lacking, especially in science, math and English.

I think it was very poor. They could have done much more with us. I think that, personally, I feel that one of these days, I would like to go back to the school committee and talk to them about our curriculum. It could be much better. Because I wasn't really challenged a lot in high school. So, I feel, like now I am totally challenged in college. I don't feel that they taught us enough. They were called lab sciences but we didn't do too much lab stuff. We just really did a lot of tests and memorizing and we maybe did two experiments throughout the whole year. In my chemistry class we made slime for our first experiment and we had one other experiment the entire year. In biology we just looked under microscopes, that's about it, and prepared slides a couple of times.

[In math] the things that they taught in high school were pretty basic. I went up to trigonometry and so called pre-calculus. But we didn't do any pre-calculus.

English was very easy. All we did was read books and get a test weekly about the books. It wasn't, grammar wise, it didn't teach us hardly anything. They corrected our papers, they didn't correct grammar, they just corrected for content. And that's one thing I have trouble with all of the time is grammar. We did one research paper in our senior year, which was supposed to prepare us for college. I don't feel that doing one research paper was going to prepare us. My school was very, very easy, it wasn't challenging for me at all.
Briana and Isaac described their frustrations with the monoculturalism of the English and history curriculum in their high school, which then had an enrollment of 30% Puerto Rican and African American students.

Briana: Most of the teachers were nice. The education itself I'd say it was okay. There were some things that I struggled with when I went to college because I was not prepared in high school. I think Upward Bound helped me in writing. But I don't think that my high school really helped me with that per se, and not at all with being aware of other authors, like non-white authors. In English, for example, we always read books by people who were dead. I just couldn't see the connection to my life. For example I can remember this one book, A Separate Peace. I just didn't want to read it because it just didn't make sense to me, truly I was bored with it. So, it just seemed that everything was just the same year after year. I found it very boring.

And history, everything was repeated year after year. And I just thought, all right already, let's learn about some other countries, and other cultures were never really emphasized in school. I always thought I was learning about the other people that were in my class and not about myself and I didn't think it was fair. But I just went with the flow because I just wanted to get to college and it was in my mind that if I wanted to get to college I needed to take these certain courses and I need to do as well as I could to get to college.

Isaac: There were some courses that got me mad coming from my Latino background. We took American History and Problems of Democracy but we only had one course that was taught for the first time, History of Puerto Rico and I felt that was one of the courses that I wanted to take but I couldn't because of my schedule. I think there should be more courses based in diversity like on other cultures and other countries and there wasn't any of that. There was just basic American History and I felt that there should have been more on other countries to broaden everybody's views and open their minds to other than American History to other things that are out there.

Participants also reported concerns about the learning environment in their high schools, which they believed compromised the quality of education they received.

Briana: I remember my graduation year there was a big budget cut and a lot of teachers left, a lot of teachers were laid off and there we were, 30-35 kids in a class and nothing got done. That was the year of my pre-calculus class.
Isaac: [My] high school wasn't much of a good school to begin with, my freshman year it was one of the worst schools ranked in the western part of the state. There was a lot of violence, a lot of drugs, a lot of negative things going through the school.

Despite having different perspectives on the quality of their high school education, all of the participants identified various ways in which Upward Bound improved their high school academic performance. The program was often cited as a significant vehicle for influencing academic performance in areas from improvements in attitude and grades to assistance overcoming various barriers to academic success.

While most of the students in the study described being dedicated to school and attending classes consistently, a few of the participants reported that Upward Bound significantly improved their attendance in school and most of the participants described that Upward Bound improved their attitude about academics. Veronica explains,

[Without Upward Bound] I don't think I would have done that well in school. I just think back on my freshman year [in high school], I didn't care about school, I just cared about skipping and having fun and stuff like that. I was bad. Before that at the middle school I was a nightmare, always in the office. I used to fight and stuff. My god! I used to fight.

Veronica became involved in Upward Bound during her tenth grade year. She described how Upward Bound helped her to see college as a possibility for her and how that changed her attitude about school.

I saw that going to college was easier for me, and while my friends, to them, college was really something far away. But because I was in Upward Bound it was like I'm going to college and preparing for it now. It was something that was going to become easier to me than it is for my friends. So it really helped me a lot.

Sonia found that Upward Bound also changed her attitude about her grades.

I think once I did Upward Bound and realized what the goal was it just made me see things in a different light. Whereas, before I probably would have been compliant with just getting a C in class, it was more like, 'Okay, I need to do better anyway because I have to go to Upward Bound.'
Additionally, Raynor, who saw college as a possibility, found that his involvement in Upward Bound changed his attitude about school and motivated him to pay more attention to his academics.

[Upward Bound] gave me goals. I have college as my goal now, and so it was a lot easier to focus on classes. Just the fact that they helped me focus more on getting into college and having that as my goal. Just having that in mind helped me focus more on my subjects. And knowing that my first semester of senior year was going to be one of the most important that [colleges] looked at. So, I'd say that helped a lot.

Diego believes that Upward Bound was instrumental in keeping him in school. His involvement in Upward Bound took him away from outside influences such as guns, drugs and gangs that are common ground for adolescents living in poverty in U.S. cities. He described living in the city and the trouble he avoided by going away to Upward Bound for the summer.

I was a gang member since [the age of] 14. [The city I lived in] got very much involved in gangs during the early '90's and that was it. My mother used to send me to the store at 10 or 11 at night to go get milk and I had to jump fences in order to get to the gas station just to avoid a certain part of town because I couldn't go through there. Being such a small city, people know who you are, if they don't know who you are they know who you hang with and they know who you hang with is down with this clique or this organization, so you're in danger regardless. So, that's the main obstacle. It was crazy, and it wasn't like if it was fighting. Nothing was fighting, everything was shooting, stabbing. So, that was the biggest thing, just trying to make sure I'd be alive.

I used to walk from my bus stop to my house. And right when I got off the bus from school and have my book bag full of books, guys would come up, roll the window half down, throw up a sign at me. And I'm like, 'Ah, shit here we go.' And the next thing you know I see a knife or a gun and I gotta run all the way home and go through yards and cut through houses.

I was always out on the street, basically, that was it. I loved being out there with all my boys and just that life. Being on the corner and throwing the dice on the curb and drinking the forty. Fifteen or sixteen years old drinking your beer, doing things that people talk about in like Rap [music] or whatever. I was living it. I loved that life. I loved it. I was like, 'Man this is it, this is what I like
doing! So that was a big distraction, that was a major distraction. So just, being involved in gangs, I don't regret it just because that's what I had to do, I liked it, but not anymore.

I was accepted [into Upward Bound] and I didn't want to go because it was summer time. I wanted to work that summer and make some money so I could buy school clothes and stuff of that nature. I didn't want to spend my whole summer studying, especially not at that point. [At the age of] 13, 14 you want to have fun, go swimming, play ball, whatever. My mother made me do it. She said you're not going to stay here, you're going to go, so I went. Can't fight with your mother, you know?

So, [Upward Bound] got me away from [the city] basically. That's something that I thank Upward Bound for because I figure if I would have stayed in [the city] in the summer, the summer is the worst time of the year to be in the city. You have a lot of free time, the heat gets on people's nerves, people are more agitated, people are just on edge and anything could just set something up and there could be a shoot out or whatever. It is not a nice city, summer time is horrible, you don't want to be around there, and [Upward Bound] helped me by taking me out of there, by taking me out of that environment. It's bad enough being there all year round. And with certain affiliations that I had, at least during the summer I could get away for six weeks and my face wouldn't be seen and that's just less trouble I could get in when I came back. So, it got me away from situations like that. I was able to just be out of there and people wouldn't see me. I would come back and they would be like, 'What were you in jail?'[and I'd say] 'No, boy, I was up [state]. I was up there going to school.' So, that was the main thing, it just got me out of the city which was basically the worst place for me to be at that time of the year.

Despite his initial resistance Diego enjoyed his summers in Upward Bound and he was motivated to do well enough in school during the year in order to return the next summer.

To be in Upward Bound you had to have a certain G.P.A. to maintain. In the summer time I'd be dedicated to my work and Upward Bound but once I got back to high school I really didn't care too much. I played football and ran track in high school so I was involved in that. And when I came home, I really wouldn't care about schoolwork. I hung out on the street. Once Upward Bound was over with I would just block out and once high school would start I wouldn't really take school that seriously. I'd do my work, I'd do enough to get by, but I wasn't really hitting the books. I don't know if there was really a correlation, but I just made sure I did well enough to go back [to Upward Bound] because in the summer time I always had a good time and I'd want to go back to see my friends.

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Upward Bound made me realize that you gotta grow up eventually. Like school, you have to take it seriously the whole time. It made school more fun in the summer. But once I got back to the regular routine of 7 to 3, it just got boring to me and I cared more about socializing and being the cool guy. I really didn't care too much about school until my Junior year, then I realized that my grades sucked. ‘What am I going to do? Am I going to go to college or what? Am I going to stay out here [on the streets] like everybody else?’ Upward Bound made school more fun, but when you come back to regular school it was a drag. That's how I saw it.

Adnoloy, Alisha and Briana reported already feeling positive about school prior to their involvement in Upward Bound, and they believed that Upward Bound gave them an extra boost of motivation to do their best.

Adnoloy: My attitude about school was a lot better [in Upward Bound]. I love school. Not a lot of people can say that, not a lot of people think about school as something good. I love learning so my attitude about school was good my first year, but I think your love for school can dwindle, and by going to Upward Bound, it gave me that umph that I needed to keep loving school.

Alisha: If anything [my attitude] got more positive [in Upward Bound] because I was always positive in school and knew I did well and stuff. But, I guess I got more into doing better because I was always surrounded by academics.

Briana: Well, in Upward Bound you have to have a certain average to stay in the program. And I've always done good in school but I think the fact that I wanted to go back the next summer made me not go down in my grades. I think I was just motivated to really go for my all, definitely.

Upward Bound Summer Program

Participants consistently described their experience in the Upward Bound six-week academic summer program as a significantly different academic environment from their high school setting. Upward Bound provided smaller classes in a more respectful and comfortable environment. Students received more individual attention and tutoring. They found more racial diversity in the college preparatory courses and felt more comfortable asking questions and voicing their opinions in class. Participants reported that this different environment increased their confidence in their academic
abilities. Students reported that their grades improved in their weaker subjects such as writing, mathematics, and science. They felt better prepared for the next academic year, which also increased their academic confidence.

Briana described her experiences in her Upward Bound English and math courses and how they were different from her high school experience.

My [Upward Bound] English writing teacher, I liked her style because it was a different environment from the regular environment in school. It was smaller classrooms. We used to have a class in the library where there was more couches where even if we were writing we could sort of slouch down and be really comfortable writing. She tried to motivate us. She talked to us like we were human beings, that we could do anything that we set our minds to. We wrote a lot about ourselves as students and who we were. It really helped us individually. So, we had a lot of individual attention that I never got when I was in school, or rarely did I ever get. [We did a lot of] journal writings, writing things that were on our minds. I remember numerous times when we were in our writing class where we would be there and everybody was bawling, everybody was crying because it was so intense, emotionally.

The math teacher, he was like a tutor in class, not only a teacher. If you were really having trouble, he really helped us individually.

Adnoloy reported that her experience of feeling more comfortable in Upward Bound transferred to her high school experience.

The thing about Upward Bound, I felt more comfortable speaking with my teachers because there you have such a close relationship with your teachers that you can take that into your school.

There was a consistent theme among the participants regarding the impact of the Upward Bound summer program on their performance and confidence in school during the following academic year. Students agreed that they took the positive experiences of academic success and confidence during Upward Bound back to their high schools. They felt more comfortable speaking up in class and asking for help and the result was better grades.
I think the fact that teachers were helping me and I was seeking more help made a difference, whereas before I was very quiet and didn’t come forward. So, I think having the teachers that I had at Upward Bound be so giving of their time and their energy and just being patient and saying, ‘It’s okay, we can do it again, we can go over it again until you understand it.’ That built up my confidence, and I was able to go to teachers [back at school] and say, ‘Look, I’m not doing well in this class,’ or ‘I don’t understand this particular topic.’ So it made me a lot less shy. And I think that, in essence, improved my grades because I think teachers not only see what you do on paper, they also see your effort and they see that you’re interested. So I think those skills sort of started coming out of Upward Bound, because I was talking to people more and being more open about saying, ‘I don’t understand this’ or ‘Can you explain this to me better?’

Students definitely felt able to voice their opinions and speak up in class during the Upward Bound summer program. They found that Upward Bound teachers encouraged their input, a different experience from in high school. Briana explained the difference she experienced between high school and Upward Bound and how currently as a teacher she brings her Upward Bound learning into her own classroom.

In high school, there wasn’t much chance to voice your opinion in that way. There was no reflection back and forth. It was almost always comprehension about what you read. There was never, that I remember, there was never a good, what I call now, a teaching moment. There was rarely a teaching moment in my experience where the teacher sat down and we maybe went off the subject a little bit and talked about what was really on the student’s mind. See, I got that at Upward Bound, and right now as a teacher, I do that. I do that. But, we never got that in high school. There was no time for that, or at least the teachers didn’t make time for that, because I make time.

The Upward Bound summer program offered a curriculum similar to the student’s next academic year in high school. Exposure to the material ahead of time, along with the personalized and individualized instruction, increased students’ confidence in their ability to succeed in subjects in which they had once struggled. This sense of preparedness for their high school curriculum also increased their likelihood to
speak up in their high school classes and more actively participate in their own learning.

I think it helped me improve in terms of my writing. It helped me be better prepared for the next year. Instead of spending my summers in front of the T.V., I was doing schoolwork. So when I started school I felt like I was ready. I felt better prepared to be in the class and to hear something that was familiar that I might have just touched on in the summer and just to be in class and be like ‘we did this!’ and I can give it my all. And in terms of myself, I was one of the few girls in the advanced classes in math and science. So, doing my math and science in Upward Bound and coming there I felt a little stronger in terms of speaking up in class or going ahead and knowing what I was doing. And I saw myself as stronger in my math and sciences as opposed to other girls in my class. The writing got better, and I always felt that in Upward Bound I was a really good writer. In school I was like, ‘God, I can't write.’ But in Upward Bound I just felt so confident and [I was told] ‘Write because you want to write’ and ‘Write well because you can write well’, and I felt like my writing really did improve. Once I learned it in Upward Bound, I felt like that's how I got the confidence so I felt like I could do better in my schoolwork [in high school].

In addition to Adnoloy above, Alisha, Briana, Carlos, Keyla, Maria, and Veronica also attest to the Upward Bound summer program’s impact on their high school academic performance.

Alisha: The biggest thing that I loved was to be able to sit in class [in high school] and think, ‘I already did this.’ I remember the most specific thing was when I took a physics course in Upward Bound. And then when I took it in high school everything was a review and I was like, ‘Oh, I already did this, I know how to do this.’ That’s what helped me with my grades too, just already being able to know how to do certain things. And if I didn’t catch it the first time, the second time around in school I’d be able to catch it.

Briana: I'd say [my performance] improved in a lot of areas, like math for instance. I found that having six weeks of pre-algebra or geometry, or whatever it was, helped me a lot when I got back into school in September. My writing skills improved a lot more.

Carlos: I thought [my performance] improved. Math a bit, kind of; and science, too. Yeah, I thought it got easier. School wasn’t as hard as I thought it was. My freshman year was hard. And the sophomore year it was easy. I guess [Upward Bound] helped me learn better, to learn easier.
Keyla: I think [my performance] improved because I got ahead in the summer time. And the skills that I developed, I could bring them to the classroom and develop up from there even more. So it was a very good help.

Maria: I guess it would have an impact considering that we were learning concepts of math and science right before we went to high school. Each consecutive summer they always provided the courses prior to going into high school that we would take for that semester and we would always go into school knowing the stuff so that would help a lot. I remember taking algebra in Upward Bound before I actually took it in the fall of the school year and I already knew the information. And so I went into school and had that extra boost because I was already exposed to it.

Veronica: The classes that I had there prepared me for when I had the class [in high school]. Like algebra, when I had it I already knew a little bit about it. I felt like I knew something, I didn't go there all lost.

Many of the students had difficulties with specific courses. Sonia described how her experience in Upward Bound helped her transition from English as a Second Language (ESL) courses to what is commonly referred to as mainstream courses, a common struggle for Puerto Rican students.

I had a really tough time in my English class, because I had just been mainstreamed. And I didn’t do very well that year. But, when I went to Upward Bound during the summer and I wrote a couple of pieces, there was a lot of support in what was written. I think that having those six weeks and having sort of intensive courses helped me out, particularly with the English.

Students reported the greatest academic improvement in English.

So, that's why when I went to Upward Bound I felt more prepared [for high school] in my writing because I had help. By going to Upward Bound I learned skills that could help me. So I might have been in my writing skills class [in high school] and not understood anything that they were talking about. But go to Upward Bound and they would explain, ‘Okay this is this type of writing and these are ways that you can write better. And this is how you describe things and these are words and different tactics to use. Like what are adjectives that describe walking, running?’ And they would just go through different things like that. I feel like my vocabulary became stronger, my writing became stronger. I wasn't writing papers and repeating, ‘this shows, this shows, this shows’. Instead, I would write ‘this demonstrates, this exhibits, this depicts.’ So, it was just things like that that helped me and that's why I think that I was stronger after Upward Bound.
Participants valued encouragement to write; they appreciated writing about their own lives and about subjects to which they could relate. Diego, who described boredom in high school, explained how his Upward Bound English classes changed his opinion about writing and motivated him to become a better writer.

During Upward Bound I got more involved in English. Before that, I really liked math or social studies, but in Upward Bound I always liked English class because we did a lot of writing. And even today I love English, like writing. I write poetry and all this other stuff. [Upward Bound] made me take English more seriously. Before I’d go into an English class [in high school] and I was [disappointed], ‘Oh, a novel.’ Like Macbeth, or whatever might be there. And after taking those classes on writing, I started liking writing more and I think I write pretty well now.

Margarita also reported that the Upward Bound English classes impacted her writing skills.

We used to write a lot. I guess writing is one of my weaknesses. Once we got into class [the teacher] would give us a topic and we would free write. We had to proof read our essays. We wrote so much and I guess the more you write the better you become. It's just like anything else, the more you practice the better you become. So, yeah, my writing got better.

Sonia described reading skills improvement as a result of the Upward Bound English classes.

I never really read anything. I read magazines or things like that, but in general, like sitting down and reading a novel, that was a big deal. Because, not only was I a slow reader, but my attention, my interests weren’t in reading. So, I think that having to read the novels during the summer made me be able to read whatever we needed to read during the academic year.

The opportunity to read books by authors that were from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds had a significant impact on students. They learned to transfer skills learned through reading authors from their own culture to traditional authors
outside of their cultural experience. Sonia talks about her experience of exposure to these books during her summers at Upward Bound.

Usually when you take the regular English classes in the high schools, you’re reading a lot of the same things. You’re reading Hamlet, you’re reading a lot of Shakespeare; you’re reading a lot of classics and things like that. Whereas, when I was reading in Upward Bound, we read more culturally diverse books. We were reading Their Eyes Were Watching God. We were reading How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accent and The House on Mango Street. So it was a different perspective and something that I definitely could relate more to. So, seeing that there was that out there helped me to better understand what was going on in the regular English classroom with the other reading that we were doing.

Racial Diversity in Upward Bound Classes

Many students spoke of the impact of attending the Upward Bound summer program with a racially diverse group of students. Students raved at the level of comfort they felt in classes where there were more people like themselves. The participants in this study were often the only Latinos in their high school classes, especially in the higher level courses and college preparatory classes. Students described their high schools as racially segregated by academic level. The Latino students were often in the ESL or special education courses and the white students were often in the mainstream courses. Briana talked about her frustration with being perceived as different from other Puerto Rican students because she was in advanced classes.

There was a lot of diversity, or at least there was a lot of people who were Puerto Rican, as I am, in [high]school, but I was always in the advanced classes. The advanced classes were almost always all white. I was in the class with 18 other kids that I went to school with since kindergarten, but I don't think they really knew who I was. I knew who they were because that's all we read about, but they didn't know who I was. So, I was in these college prep courses and it was my cousin and a friend, that's it, us three who were Puerto Rican and we were in the classes, and we would hang out together. But it was made to seem that I was the exception, 'Oh, you're the smart Puerto Rican, oh, you're the successful one.'
Adnoloy explained some of the challenges she encountered as one of the few Latino students, and sometimes the only woman, in her advanced classes in high school.

I went to [the local] high school and it’s not segregated but it is in terms of there’s mainstream and there’s not mainstream. And I’m a Hispanic in mainstream and that’s hard because there’s not many of us. And then to be in a class where everyone’s white and there’s like two Hispanics and out of the two you’re the only girl, it’s hard. It’s hard being in mainstream and when you go to Upward Bound we’re all in mainstream, we’re all very good students and we’re all people of color. And it’s hard when you’re in school having an identity crisis in your class and there are all these white people and there’s no one to relate to.

Veronica also described her difficulties being in advanced classes in high school with all white students.

Well, I was afraid to talk to the teacher at all. I’d know the answers but I wouldn’t raise my hand or I wouldn’t have said that I didn’t understand something. I don’t know, in Upward Bound there are more Hispanics. [In high school] it’s more white people and they look at you like, ‘Do you know anything?’ It was tough. Especially in math class, I was the only Puerto Rican, and there were no black people either, it was just all white people. They’re all really smart people and they look at you as if you’re stupid. They would always treat me as though I was stupid.

Overwhelmingly the students described their experience in high school as very lonely. Isaac talked about the isolation he experienced in his classes as well.

In high school my senior year was one of my harder years because I had taken a lot of harder classes. And so I was around people who I wasn’t used to being around. And in some classes I was sometimes the only Latino, the only person of color, the only minority in that class. I was by myself because some of them, either because they didn’t know me, wouldn’t speak to me thinking that I would react to them in a violent way, so I felt very alone. So, I couldn’t associate myself with them because we wouldn’t click. I mean, I would say ‘hi’ to them and we would be fine but in those classes I basically did my homework by myself.

Margarita provided some specific examples from her high school experience as the only student of color in her classes.
I remember my freshman year, that was the worst year of my life. I went into my English class and I was the only student from a public school. I didn't know anyone around me. I was the only student of color. Everyone knew each other because they all came from [she names several private Catholic schools]. I thought, ‘Oh my god, I don't know anyone.’ No one would talk to me and it was so hard for me to do anything. It was like, ‘Where am I?’ And I felt so stupid. I was like, ‘Oh my god, these kids are super smart, what happened?’ So, yeah, it was a big difference. You're the only one with an accent. So when you raise your hand or when you read, people giggle because it's, well I guess it's kinda funny because I know if I listen to someone from France or something... but, I'm not going to laugh because I'm over that. I'm mature enough to know all that. But I know that I could tell the difference. They were immature, they were high school kids and they didn't know that by the giggle they were hurting someone.

Margarita found that the racial diversity in the Upward Bound courses helped her to feel more comfortable taking risks in class because she no longer felt alone. She opened up and asked for help and didn’t feel that she would be judged as inferior academically.

In Upward Bound there's white students, there's black students, Latino students, Asian, all kinds of students. It was a mix and even white students could understand. We all got along great, we were all best friends. I thought, ‘Wow, I wish I could go here all year round, I wish this could be an all year round thing.’ I knew we would all be ‘A’ students because you don't have to worry about what other people think, you don't have to worry about your accent, or your color doesn’t matter. But, it was just great, everyone understood. I understood where you were coming from and everyone helped each other. I remember in my English class [in high school], I would never show my essays to anyone because I would feel too stupid. What if they think, ‘She’s dumb. Why is she writing?’ I didn't feel comfortable to do that. In Upward Bound I would be like, ‘Brian, could you proofread my essay? Raymond, could you proofread my essay?’ I didn't care if they would proofread it, I would proofread theirs and it was great.

In some cases the students attended a predominately white high school and Upward Bound was a welcome relief from being one of the only Puerto Rican students. Diego spoke about the enjoyment and comfort he found in being able to speak Spanish and no longer be the minority.
In Upward Bound all the dudes were Puerto Rican and it was totally the opposite because in [my] high school the majority was white. In my graduating class there was about four, maybe five of us, and many of them were from the suburbs. They were mostly like the white kids, they weren’t like us, because there’s a big difference when you come from the city. In Upward Bound the minority was the majority. So it was totally different from high school, where there was only a few of us. I could speak to only a few in Spanish. Until you get into Upward Bound and you hear Spanish everywhere so it was more comfortable for me.

Grades Improved

In addition to the summer academic program, students received academic support throughout the year in the form of tutoring and supplemental classes. All twelve of the participants reported that their grades improved as a result of Upward Bound’s academic support. Keyla, Margarita, Maria and Veronica described how this additional support helped them enhance their academic performance in high school.

Keyla: They offered tutoring and if you needed it they would hook you up with someone who was very good in that subject.

Margarita: And for midterms we would all meet, all the students from Upward Bound, and study during midterms. And there were a couple of us, if we were in the same grade, we had the same classes, so we would meet in study groups. So that was really good. Just meeting in a group and studying together. I think that really helped especially because everyone’s with the same goal, they want to do well on the midterms and finals.

Maria: They always provide tutors after school. You could just go to the Upward Bound office and they had tutors for you any time that you needed any help with anything. And sometimes they brought the tutors to the school so that definitely helped.

Veronica: You got help all the time, and tutoring and I just always knew that I had help there and I could always find someone to help me with my grades and classes. We always had good tutors and the kids, we always helped each other in tutoring. And I got my homework done which was a big problem for me. It helped me out that way and always got me a head start in my classes.

Nine out of twelve participants reported that they definitely felt that Upward Bound helped their academic performance improve in specific courses.
Upward Bound helped in math definitely, and writing and reading. I learned how to read faster, focus on the important words, how to organize my thoughts, how to write an outline, how to put my thoughts on paper so that I understood them.

Alisha, Briana, Carlos, Margarita and Raynor stated that their grades improved as a result of Upward Bound.

Alisha: I would say that [my grades] improved. I was getting many B's and A's and as soon as I started coming to Upward Bound and I guess getting into the studying a bit more I started getting straight A's.

Briana: I think that in math my grades were better as a result of Upward Bound.

Carlos: Freshman year [my grades] were like Cs, Bs, and Ds, and I got a lot more Bs and A's my sophomore, junior and senior years.

Margarita: My grades all went up. I was getting B's and C's before Upward Bound and in Upward Bound I was getting A's and B's. I did really well.

Raynor: [My grades] increased dramatically, I'd say. I was in the maybe 3.5 average [before Upward Bound]. For senior year it went up to 4.26 or something like that. So, it went up quite a bit, almost a whole point.

Briana and Adnoloy explained that since they had good grades prior to Upward Bound, their grades did not change, but their skills and knowledge definitely increased through Upward Bound’s academic support.

Briana: I think my skills improved, I don't know about my grades per se because I've always been an A, AB student, even without the program. But I think the program helped keep me motivated and helped to better my skills in a lot of areas.

Adnoloy: Grades, it helped me in my grades. It didn't make my grades better, but it made my grades stronger. So I could have all A's but I was really learning and knew what I was doing as opposed to just getting by on jargon or regurgitation.

Finally, Margarita specifically relays her realization in Upward Bound that her increased confidence and comfort in class can apply to her high school. Her story
provides a concrete synopsis to illustrate the role Upward Bound played in these participants’ academic success in high school.

I remember our teacher asking us, ‘What does Upward Bound mean to you?’ And you just had to free write, and we read it [aloud] and I said, ‘Upward Bound is not a reality for me because the way it is, that's not my reality in high school it's so much different. Because here we can all talk freely in class. It was so much different from high school. [In Upward Bound] we could all talk freely and we all had the same purpose. We all knew where we all came from and everyone was at the same level and high school is not like that. There's a lot of racism and you are in the classroom where no one's like you and no one understands where you come from and that's not what it is here.’

I was trying, we were all trying to tell her how hard it was for us to be the same way we are at our high school because you can't just raise your hand and talk freely. You don't feel comfortable to do so in high school where you would have in Upward Bound. And then we were talking and she said that the whole purpose of Upward Bound is so that you can bring this back to your high school. And I never thought about it like that. And she gave us examples and she said, ‘Here you learn physics and if you learn a formula here are you going to forget it when you go to high school and not use it over there?’ And we said, ‘No, of course not, that's why we're here to learn.’ And then she said, ‘Well, it's like that in every other aspect.’

So that taught me that no one was going to do it for me, I have to do it for myself. And I was here at high school and it was my job to get as much as I got out of it. The teacher wasn't going to say, ‘If you have a question you need to ask.’ I knew I had to ask on my own. So Upward Bound helped me in that way.

In summary, review of the data from the first part of Question #1 revealed that Upward Bound provided many forms of academic support to participants, the least of which was to create an environment, albeit for only six weeks, in which they could experience themselves in a different way. The Upward Bound summer academic program clearly played a crucial role in motivating students, increasing their confidence in their academic abilities and ultimately improving their academic performance. The summer program gave students a head start in their upcoming classes for the academic year, and provided a different environment from high school.
This different environment included smaller classes, more individual attention from teachers, more racial diversity in the classroom and the opportunity to voice their opinions and to talk freely in class. Participants consistently reported that this different environment greatly increased their confidence in their academic abilities which increased their comfort level when they returned to high school and motivated them to overcome some of their high school's barriers to academic success.

Through the Upward Bound summer program and additional forms of academic assistance students learned to transfer improved academic skills to their high school setting. The transfer of these skills allowed them to deal with some of the obstacles they encountered as first generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students and helped them to be more successful academically. The final conclusion, from the data provided in the first part of Question #1, is that Upward Bound clearly played a vital role in improving academic performance in high school for these participants.

Question #1, Part 2: Preparation for College

The second part of Question #1 investigates participants' report about the preparation they received from Upward Bound to pursue a college degree. In addition to improving their high school academic performance, a primary service that Upward Bound is designed to provide to high school participants is preparation for a post-secondary education. Participants in the study reported that Upward Bound provided the resources they lacked as the first person in their family to go to college. They described that Upward Bound assisted them with each of the steps involved in pursuing a college degree including career counseling, college selection and application, and the completion of financial aid and scholarship procedures.
Additionally, Upward Bound provided training and experience with life skills such as time management, leadership development, study and learning skills, experience with diverse populations and living away from home. Upward Bound compensated for certain high school deficits such as guidance counselor support and assistance and an adequate college preparatory curriculum. Overall, participants reported that Upward Bound helped them prepare for the various challenges they may encounter in college as first generation, low income, Puerto Rican students.

Career Choice

Participants consistently spoke about being overwhelmed with the process of pursuing a college education from selecting a career to completing the college, financial aid and scholarship applications. They described in detail how Upward Bound helped them each step of the way. The first step for many was the selection of their career direction. Isaac explains what was helpful to him about the career counseling he received from Upward Bound.

[Upward Bound told me], whatever you choose to do, be happy. A lot of the things that you're doing you're not going to get paid the three digit salaries, but make sure that when you pick a career that it is what you want to do because you're going to be doing it for the rest of your life. That's one of the things that they tell you. And when you fill out those papers and you write, 'That's what I want to major in,' they'll say, 'Are you sure?' And they'll look into exactly what you want to do. Does it fit you? Is it in your best interest? And they also help you out by saying, 'If you feel comfortable go for it, but don't worry.' They reassure you that people do change their majors, so they've helped me out.

Carlos explained how meeting someone in his future profession and having success in course work at Upward Bound helped him with his career choice and the selection of his major.

I remember that the engineering guy came from the Minority Engineering Program and I talked to him. He gave me his card. I talked to him and I thought
about it because I did want to be an engineer. It made me think about trying to do that more, to try to go for that. I was always pretty good in chemistry. I was good in the Upward Bound chemistry and in high school and so I decided to try that.

Margarita remembered a workshop she attended in preparation for an Upward Bound Career Day where the presenter helped students become more aware of their interests, their learning styles, and personal characteristics that might help their career choice.

[The presenter] dealt with how students learn and she gave these little tests showing you how you learn and what's the best atmosphere for you and what things you're good at. And that was all before we had Career Day in Upward Bound so you know things about yourself.

Through Upward Bound Adnoloy explored her career interests by talking and researching with a professional in her chosen field.

I was into psychology, and [Upward Bound] introduced me to someone who was a psychologist and I got to talk to her and she supported me with books and I did a project about what I learned.

Diego described the impact that Upward Bound had upon him during one of his summers in the program. The Director of the program helped him with a project and from that experience he selected his major and became clearer about his career path.

I'd say Upward Bound had a big impact as far as what I chose for my major. As a senior in Upward Bound you have to do a senior project. I had told the director I was thinking maybe about business [as a career] or something like that. And he gave me this book, it was a cheesy book on supply and demand, it was basic. But, for my senior project he gave me the option of opening my own little type of store, right there, during the summer. He always brought me the food. He started me off with a pack of M&M's, a pack of soda, and this and that and then I had to pay him back from what we made. It was his money, but I had to pay him back. It's like a loan, you get a loan from a bank, you have to pay back the loan and from there everything you make is yours. I had to keep the books: I got this amount, I sold this much, and this was my profit. So that gave me an idea of what a business is and how to run a business and the different things like the responsibilities I had. I felt like I had my own little store. People would come in and say, 'Hey let me get a free whatever, let me get credit, and this and that.' And I said, 'No I can't. I got to
pay this, I gotta pay that.' It's like in a real business you got bills to pay, you have certain demands you have to meet. It gave me an understanding of what it was to be somewhat of a businessman and I liked it. I decided to be a business major. With the business, [Upward Bound] gave me the spark to get my feet wet and be involved in business. From that little project, that little small senior project, I ended up picking my major, which eventually is going to be what I'm going to do for the rest of my life.

College Selection

After settling on a career interest, students must narrow their college choices. Choosing which colleges to apply to was a difficult process for many students. Family members had no experience to share and so they lacked information about specific colleges and the options. Alisha explains,

I had the challenge of trying to figure out the colleges that I liked, because, I didn’t know hardly anybody who went to college so I couldn’t ask them different things.

Participants reported that Upward Bound played an instrumental role in providing information about a wider selection of possible colleges. This influence often pushed students to apply to colleges they had previously never heard about or thought they did not have a chance of attending.

I can’t imagine going through the college application process without Upward Bound. I wouldn’t know what colleges to apply to. I mean, obviously, I’d know Harvard was far-fetched, or Yale, or anything like that. But I wouldn’t know what’s the stuff under that, or what’s the highest I could get into, or maybe this is too low for me, maybe I should try to find someplace else. Whereas, Upward Bound told me, ‘Okay, well, you could get into these without even worrying about it. You’ll probably get into these, and these you might have some difficulty, but you still have a chance and it’s not a bad idea to apply.’ So, they have a lot to do with where I ended up, in terms of what college I’m attending.

Encouraging students that college was possible was an important message participants reported receiving from Upward Bound. Alisha, whose mother did not
complete high school and whose father did not finish sixth grade, felt that the support
to pursue college was invaluable.

Upward Bound teaches us that we can do it, there's ways to work around it and
stuff like that. So, it is possible.

Adnoloy explains some of the concrete ways in which Upward Bound helped
participants prepare for the college application process. Providing access to college
fairs, practice interviews and college visits helped participants see that college was
possible.

Upward Bound helps you understand that college is possible for everyone, by
doing things like bringing you to college fairs and setting up little interviews,
even if they're not real interviews, but setting up a five minute mock interview
with people from the colleges. I remember one day we had Career Day and
there were different colleges there and we sat in groups and spoke to college
admissions people. Things like that, things that made it possible. Bringing us to
colleges made it possible for me to think that I could go there.

Keyla explains the role that Upward Bound played in helping her select the
college she eventually attended which was an elite private institution.

I didn't want to come to [this] college. I thought, 'I'm not going to [this]
college! That's a woman's college.' And my Upward Bound counselor said, 'I
think you have the grades. It would be a perfect place for you.' I did it out of
respect for her. I said, 'Okay. I'm going to do this because she's always been
there for me. I'm going to give her the benefit.' And I applied to [this] college
and I was accepted and now I'm about to graduate. Before Upward Bound, [the
state university] was my college. I thought, 'Oh, yeah, I could go to [state
university]. I would go there.' And I think Upward Bound gave me a wider
perspective of colleges. So it helped me get here. The whole college process
can be difficult, finding a place where you want to go, because it's a
commitment to go there for four years.

Participants were attending or had attended eight different colleges at the time
of data collection. Some of the participants attended the same college. Two participants
attended community college, two enrolled in their four-year state university, and eight
participants earned attendance to four-year nationally ranked private colleges. Table 4
details the type, rank and cost of each of the colleges participants attended (U.S. News & World Report, 1999).

Table 4: Colleges Participants Attended

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<tr>
<th>COLLEGE</th>
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<th>TUITION</th>
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<td>$24751</td>
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<td>Unranked</td>
<td>$720</td>
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</table>

Adnoloy and Carlos stated that their Upward Bound experience influenced their college choice. Adnoloy sought a college that would provide a similar class environment to the one she experienced in Upward Bound.

In Upward Bound I was in a class with maybe twelve people. And I think that's why I picked this college. I picked this college because I needed that small class. I needed that one on one teacher connection from my past experience in Upward Bound.

Carlos chose his college because of its proximity to the Upward Bound program that was based at the college.

I went to [this college] because I knew it was where Upward Bound was. And I’m going to transfer to [state university] because I know I’ve been to Upward Bound there in the summer. So I know at [this college], Upward Bound can help me, so that’s why I came.

College Applications

The college application process involved preparing for interviews with college admission staff, writing personal statements, and completing the applications. Many participants had no idea how to manage this process and explained how Upward Bound helped them prepare and complete their applications to the colleges of their choice. Once again, as Margarita explained, first generation students do not have access to
information about college. Upward Bound helped Margarita learn what was required for her to apply to college.

I always wanted to go to college, that was my dream. I wanted to become a lawyer. I wanted to go to college, but never realized how hard it was. I guess I always thought if you wanted to go to college you could, and you could go to whatever college you wanted. I didn't realize all this admission process. I guess I always thought that it was easier than what the whole college process is. So Upward Bound helped me a lot. We did all of our applications together but the Upward Bound director checked through all of them. I applied to seven schools and he checked through all of them.

Sonia described how Upward Bound assisted her with the most difficult part of the application process, the college essay.

The other thing [that Upward Bound did was] help with the application process for college. I mean, that’s just a really major thing. The process is not easy. Having to write a college essay is not easy, because the next four years of your life depend on this essay! So, I think being able to write a college essay and having the support that you need is important. To have somebody say, ‘Okay, maybe you should refocus your essay on this.’ Or, ‘From what I’m reading, I think this is what you want to get across. So why don’t you try it this way or that way?’ I think that’s really important.

Isaac spoke about how Upward Bound helped him with each step of the process, from the interview to the financial aid award package.

They got me through the interview. They taught me to sit, relax, calm down. They asked me the type of questions that would be asked and taught me how to answer them. They told me about posture and how to maintain eye contact. They basically broke it down to what was going to happen, what my chances were. They were very honest that my chances weren't good [at certain colleges]. And if I was still willing to go for it, and no matter what my chances were, they were going to stick right by me. So, I mean they stuck with me completely, up to and including when the package came in of how much I got from the school for financial aid.

Diego reported that he believed Upward Bound was instrumental to his college acceptance.

If anything, [Upward Bound] was somewhat of a building block, like proteins. They gave me a foundation to get in [to college]. I feel they helped me a lot just
to get into school, to get accepted to the four schools I got accepted to. Basically they helped me from the beginning, which is the most important time. They helped me to get into college, which I thank them for very much. Because, like I said before, my grades were not all that good. I was an all around student. I played three sports. But I think going to school every summer for four summers showed that I was somewhat dedicated to being somebody or doing something with myself. And I think that the schools that accepted me, they saw that. That this kid, maybe his grades aren't all that, but he's involved and he really wants to do something and be somebody so they helped me get into school basically, that's how they helped.

All but one of the students was accepted into their first college choice. As evidenced by Table 4, many of the students applied to top schools in the nation. Adnoloy provided a common example of most student’s college admission experience.

I applied to Brown University, I applied to Wesleyan, I applied here [present college], I applied to Connecticut College, and the University of Massachusetts was my safety. I had to consider where I would get the most money. I think I applied to six schools and I got accepted to all of them.

Financial Aid

Financing college was an entirely new endeavor for participants. The students completed financial aid and scholarship applications with the help of Upward Bound and then waited for the results from each school. Based on the financial aid award, students then decided which school they could afford to attend. Participants described that Upward Bound helped with each step of this process, first and most importantly by portraying college as a realistic option irrespective of their income. Adnoloy explains how Upward Bound helped her to deal with the seeming contradiction of planning to go to college and having few economic resources.

Upward Bound makes college possible for you. To go to Upward Bound you have to be in a certain income. So everyone's starting off with the same thing, you're all smart, you all have the same means. We're all in this income where it might be hard for us to go forward. And then being there with all these people, we're always told to excel, to think the best, to do the best, you can do it, it's there for you. Upward Bound didn't focus on money, that's the thing. I think the
way they helped me be able to come to a school where everyone has money is by not focusing on money. When I was there I wasn't thinking that I was low income. I wasn't thinking that my parents have no money. I wasn't thinking that I don't have the money to take that test, to apply to this school, so by not making me think about money that helped me to be able to come to a school where people have money. I know that the money might not be there but that doesn't matter in the long run. I'm as smart as they are; regardless of where we come from, we're both here. I have a lot of friends whose parents pay their whole tuition, I have friends who have loans up to their necks. So the money may be a stress but it's not that important. So by not making things of the money, that's how Upward Bound helps you.

Adnoloy explains how Upward Bound helped her with her financial aid application.

I feel like I was very lucky to have that help that prepared me to come [to college] because I didn't know anything about college. I didn't know anything about applications. I didn't know anything about Financial Aid. The little workshops that Upward Bound provided like, we went to a restaurant one night and did all of our Financial Aid. While we were there with our families, we literally sat down with the Upward Bound staff.

Alisha told how she learned to do her own financial aid applications and how important that was for her.

[Upward Bound helped with] the basic teaching of how to get certain things. Like the financial aid stuff, that's [one of] the most scary things to a lot of kids in college. For me to be able to just grab my parent's tax forms, sit down and just do it myself was a huge thing for me. I didn't think I could do that. It's not that complicated when you look at it, but a lot of people feel it is. And I see how a lot of kids just throw the papers at their parents to do it. Where I don't have that option, so it makes me feel better that I can do it on my own. Teaching us how to do that, and how to call the different places in the school to be able to do this ourselves.

Empowering students to resolve their own individual financial aid arrangements helped Isaac deal with a financial aid reduction between his first and second years.

My first year package was excellent, more than the [Upward Bound] director thought that I would ever get, a lot more. It was a lot more than I thought I would ever get. It worked out. This year's package, it came down a little. So that's where I came in. I had to make some moves myself. I talked to the Director of Financial Aid and I got that all settled down and basically I got the money that I deserved. So that worked out.
Several students described the role Upward Bound played in helping them sort through their financial aid packages and make the decision about which school they wanted to and could feasibly attend.

[The Upward Bound director] laid the options out for me. We went through my financial aid packages because that's a really big matter. We went through what the schools could offer but it was my choice in the end.

Keyla described how the Upward Bound staff helped her gather the information that she needed to make her final decision about college.

I didn't hear about my financial aid and I needed to make a decision by I think it was March 1st, so I called my counselor up and I was like, 'I guess I'll go to Clark,' because Clark gave me the most money, out of all of them. I was like, 'I guess I won't be going to [present] college', and she called [present] college and she got my financial aid package over the phone. And she called me and she said, 'Okay, this is your financial aid package. I think it's a very good one. And, you know if you really want to go to [present] college, you can go.' I was like, 'Okay.' So I ended up going to [present] college.

Many of the students were awarded the financial aid packages they needed in order to attend the college of their choice. Maria described the money she was given in order to go to college.

The financial aid was there. The college is extremely expensive, it's like $30,000 a year and so I got a pretty good package of financial aid.

Finally, Upward Bound also assisted students with financial aid by obtaining fee waivers for college entrance exams such as the Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT's) and for the college application fees. Adnoloy explained how much she and her family appreciated this financial support.

Like SAT's, SAT II's, traveling to all these schools to take a look at them, fees for applications, Upward Bound helped my family a lot. And [my parents] totally understand that. I mean, my parents would sit down and say, 'If we calculate how much money we would have had to pay for all these tests and everything, Upward Bound really helped us out.'
In summary, Maria cited all the sources of support she received from Upward Bound in her college acceptance process.

Upward Bound had a nice counseling group. They were mentors to us. It’s always nice to have mentors when you don’t have them within your own immediate family. So, I’m sure it did, I just don't know how to describe it. I can't really measure the kind of influence [Upward Bound] had. As I look back now I see that the program provided me with good experiences, with resources and mentors. Through attending school four consecutive summers, through having the mentors, the help, the guidance, the college counseling, having someone available to take me to visit colleges. Anytime I had any questions there was always someone there to answer. To help me seek information that I needed as far as what to pursue, what kind of college to look for, everything. I would say, ‘Yes, substantially.’ I think [Upward Bound] was a great factor in my going to college. I can have the aspirations, the inspiration, the desire in me, but to have people that guided me through that path was even better. If I didn't have that path I don't know what path I would have taken. I knew that I wanted to pursue a better life and everything but without the information it can be difficult pursuing that on your own.

Life Skills

In addition to assistance with career counseling, college applications and financial aid, Upward Bound offered participants other services such as the development of time management, study, leadership and learning skills to assist them with their college preparations. Additionally, participants reported that Upward Bound prepared them to be open minded and respectful of the diverse groups of people they would encounter in college. Finally, some of the students reported that Upward Bound helped them prepare for living away from home while in college.

Participants consistently cited the development of time management skills as important preparation from Upward Bound to help them succeed in college. Briana talked about learning these skills in Upward Bound.

How to plan, how to budget your time, to think about it, that's something that Upward Bound showed me how to do. It helped us a lot. We would keep
agenda books and we had to learn something that was not emphasized in our high school. We had to learn when to get our homework finished, when to get reports done that they had given us two weeks ahead. You get it done, not the day before, but whenever you had time, a little bit of time here, a little bit of time there. And that's stuff that I share with my class right now, budgeting your time.

Sonia and Carlos described the importance of taking responsibility for accomplishing tasks. They cited Upward Bound as teaching them to rely on themselves, to take initiative, and to schedule enough time to complete their work.

Sonia: Now you have time management skills and it's because you go through the [Upward Bound] summer program. You go through all these things and you learn that you have to put aside time to do your work. You can't just leave it for the last minute or just find time later to do it.

Carlos: Upward Bound showed me time management, which sometimes I still don't use. But it showed me that sometimes they don't tell you what to do. You have to do it yourself, and manage your time to do it.

Diego also spoke about time management learned in Upward Bound and how this skill prepared him for college.

I remember that Upward Bound taught me how to manage my time. You can't go around and socialize when you have work to do. You knew that if you had free time you had to do your work because if not there were certain activities and trips you couldn't go to. So they tie everything into, if you do this you gain a prize. Which is good because it gives you an incentive. Some people need an incentive. You have to do your work in order to go on the trip on Friday, or to get your stipend. So, time management helps. You know what you have to do, you don't have time to be out there socializing and just wasting time. And in college that's the most important thing. If you don't manage your time you're not going to succeed because there is so much time, it's not like high school where you go from 8-3. Like me, I'll have my first class on Tuesday at 5 in the afternoon for example. So if I don't do any work from whatever time I wake up until 5 and then I get out of class at 9 then that's my fault that the day is wasted. So I have to wake up, look over some notes or do something. So time management I'd say is the most important thing I gained from Upward Bound.

In a similar vein, Isaac reported that the time management skills from Upward Bound helped him to be more successful in college.
Upward Bound helped me out a lot because one of the important things that always sticks out for me that they taught from Upward Bound was time management. In the little handbook Upward Bound gave us they had a time schedule of what had to be done at what time and so that kind of sticks with me while I'm here at college. So I make myself a little grid on what has to be done from what time to what time and then what time I actually have free and what I can get out of that free time. So I think it's helped me to improve a lot. I don't think anybody could fail out of college, you have a lot of time, a whole lot of time to do everything you need to do, so if you fail out of a class, you did it to yourself. It's just a matter of how you manage your time. Set your priorities straight which is something that I learned in Upward Bound, your priorities come first and everything will follow after that. They always said that it was important to schedule things. If you decide to drink all day and party all night and forget about everything and leave it to the last minute, then you are going to fail and you're going to wonder why you are graduating a year too late, or even if you are going to graduate at all.

In addition to time management skills, Alisha and Carlos mentioned that they gained important study skills from Upward Bound and Sonia described how Upward Bound helped her develop her leadership abilities.

I was given the opportunity to be a leader during Upward Bound and it helped me when I went to college and wanted to participate in things like clubs and things like that, and be chair of this club or that club. So, I think that, in terms of college, that was really important.

Exposure to Diversity

Several students mentioned valuing the opportunity through Upward Bound to meet a diverse group of people and to learn the importance of openness to other people’s differences. Adnoloy and Margarita provided the clearest explanation of how these experiences helped them be more prepared for college.

Adnoloy: I think one of the things that Upward Bound really teaches is being open minded and that's really important in this world in general. Just because you need to be able to have an open mind to all the things these people are bringing, and I think that's helped me in coming here [to college].

Margarita: I have learned to accept the way other people are and Upward Bound really helped. Because I guess all your life you live in the same place or you're used to the same kinds of people. Then when you go to programs like
Upward Bound and you go back to high school you realize there's nothing wrong with having blue hair or whatever, and that helped me out a lot in college because there's a lot of different people.

Additionally, Diego talked about Upward Bound’s messages regarding people who were not more open to diversity.

I think once or twice Upward Bound spoke of the different obstacles you're going to face being a non-white in a predominately white society. Like the different things you're going to go through and like just to keep your head up and do what you gotta do. Because, I guess being in Upward Bound you're in there because you have potential, they see that you have what it takes to go to college in the first place. So they're trying to prepare you from jump to what's going to happen in the real world. So, I recall once or twice they spoke about that people might not like you because of what you are or whatever, but just ignore that and don't let that bring you down. So if you want to make them happy you're just going to put yourself in the category with all the rest and be a statistic like everyone else and they'll be laughing and happy and saying, all those people, all those people. But if you just stick with it you'll be fine, it's not that difficult.

Overall, Alisha felt that Upward Bound provided good preparation for college in general; she learned she could overcome difficulties such as fitting in and getting to know people. She realized that if she could overcome difficulties in Upward Bound then she could do it in college.

I guess, it did help me prepare [for college] because I was kind of stuck on the idea ‘never give up you gotta keep trying’. I kinda knew that I was gonna have certain problems in the first place, because when you enter the [Upward Bound] program you have the problem of fitting in too. And you learn that you just fit in. There's always somebody there. And there's always the problems that you encountered in life, I mean, and you just have to overcome them.

One of the primary goals of Upward Bound is to provide an opportunity for students to experience life at college through the summer residential program that every Upward Bound Program hosts on a local college campus. Yet, surprisingly, only three students mentioned specifically the residential program’s impact in preparing them for college away from home. However, the residential program was definitely
mentioned as a useful tool for distancing them from their current living environment or
for exposing them to a diverse population of people or for assisting their growing
independence from their family. But rarely did students cite the residential component
of Upward Bound as useful in providing a pseudo college experience to prepare them
for college life. One of the three students that did comment on this benefit was Alisha,
who described that the summer residential program helped her to feel more
comfortable living on the campus.

I guess the fact that every summer we used to go up to [the college], I felt
comfortable being there after awhile. So, I felt that was pretty much my home
up there.

Secondly, Keyla described how she benefited from living away from home in
preparation for college.

I think [Upward Bound] just prepared me overall. Just being away from home.
Because college is [about] going away and being on your own. And I think
[Upward Bound] gave us responsibilities over there [on the college campus].
Just being by your self. Having your laundry [finished] on the day it was
supposed to be done. Things like that. Just from the beginning, so when I
came here I did not really have a hard time adjusting to the fact that I was living
by myself.

Thirdly, Veronica, in her summary of all the benefits she received from Upward
Bound in preparation for college included the residential component as advantageous
to her in a general way.

The only kind of college stuff that I got was from [Upward Bound]. It got me a
head start in college. Upward Bound did everything that had to do with college.
And everything was pretty real, the classes, living on the campus, and
everything.

Guidance Counselors

Many students related difficulties with their high school guidance counselors
and talked about the Upward Bound services that assisted them in college preparation
when the guidance office failed. Briana described the impact of lack of information
about college.

The fact that my high school counselors called me down maybe to change one
or two classes but never, never out of the three years that I was there, never
called me down to talk to me about going to college. And I was an Honors
student all my years there, Honor society, graduated with honors, and they did
not call me down, not even to suggest the possibility of going to college. It
really made me realize that if it hadn't been for Upward Bound, that it was
totally up to Upward Bound, I give credit to them. Maybe [guidance] did look
at the fact that I was poor, 'We're not even going to bother, she's probably just
going to go to the community college if she goes to any college, it's just around
the corner.' I didn't look at it then like I do now because I know a little more.
But I think that's probably what they were thinking. They didn't bother, they
didn't bother.

Veronica had a similar experience with her guidance counselors.

The only kind of college stuff that I got was from [Upward Bound]. [High
School Guidance] counselors just come one day to your class with everybody
else and do not talk to you personally. They come around one time every
semester and they don't really give you that much support. If it wasn't for
Upward Bound, I would never have gone to college. In high school [guidance]
didn't care, they didn't make too much of an effort to get people to go to
college. They were shocked that I was going to college. I think they need to get
some help in the counseling office. The people over there automatically think
you're stupid or not good enough because you're Puerto Rican, seriously. When
I asked for an application they said, 'Hey, you're going?'

Some students felt that their guidance counselors helped them in some ways but
were lacking in other ways. Adnoloy described that she needed more information about
college especially regarding financial aid.

My guidance counselor was good in showing me [about college] but he wasn't
good enough in helping me to know that I can go to a four-year college. He
said, 'Don't worry about the money.' But he wasn't saying apply to [the private
four-year college that I ended up attending]. He was saying don't worry about
the money if you go to [the community college], they'll pay for you. If I didn't
go to Upward Bound I'd never have known that I could go to other colleges and
receive financial support.
Isaac also felt that while he received some guidance from his high school counselor, there were other things that he had to take care of himself. He also observed other students not getting what they needed from other guidance counselors.

I felt that some advisors were good in high school. I think my advisor was pretty good, but there were some other advisors who I would notice who really wouldn't tell students, ‘You need this if this is where you want to go.’ The majority of the advisors at my high school came only to you once and that was when scheduling was coming around. Other than that they wouldn't have a close relationship with the student and I felt that that should have been something that should have been added in order to tell them this is where you want to head and this is what you need. My counselor never told me that you need to take these classes, basically I knew I needed to take these classes. I knew that if I just stayed with mediocre classes then it was not helping me at all. Upward Bound really helped me with this.

Maria explains that she also had to take responsibility for her own course selection to insure she was taking the right college preparatory classes.

I had to go down to the guidance office and tell them that for several classes that I want to get out of certain classes and get into a more advanced class because that's what I wanted for myself. I brought myself down there and demanded that I get changed into college courses.

College Preparatory Curriculum

Many participants reported that Upward Bound challenged them to take college preparatory courses in high school when they would not have done so on their own.

Briana talked about how Upward Bound influenced her high school curriculum.

Upward Bound is a program that's geared towards college bound students. One of my main purposes of being [in Upward Bound] was because I wanted to go to college. So the program itself motivated me to sort of challenge myself in a way and to take those college prep courses, those advanced courses. I don't know that if I wasn't in Upward Bound, I don't know how comfortable, how confident I would feel about myself taking those courses. See, because, I always had somebody to call. Just the fact that the people in the program believed that I could do it. I think that motivated me a whole lot. So I took college prep and advanced courses because that was my goal. I wanted to get to college. And I also figured that I should again challenge myself with these hard
courses because it wasn't going to get any easier in college. I might as well do it now.

Diego also discussed how Upward Bound helped him improve his high school academic performance resulting in his enrollment in Honors courses.

I would say that certain skills that I acquired in Upward Bound helped me as a student and therefore made me get better classes. Where [I may have taken] a general academic class [I took] a Honor or Advanced Placement class. I acquired skills in Upward Bound that helped me right then and there which led to getting better classes eventually. Like writing, I love writing. And my writing just got better. And in my English classes I just did very well. I took Honors English.

Keyla and Maria stated that Upward Bound challenged them to take advanced courses.

Keyla: I think I took more honor courses. In terms of academics I went up a notch I'd say.

Maria: I would say that the Upward Bound staff always influenced us to take the more difficult courses, the college preparatory courses.

Veronica explained that she had no intention of taking college preparatory classes prior to Upward Bound’s encouragement. However, as a result of Upward Bound’s influence she actually completed an extra year of lab science and math, beyond what was required for general college admission.

Yeah, I took some courses in Upward Bound that I wasn't planning on taking at all. Calculus, geometry, I was going to go for the basic stuff. And Upward Bound said, 'Oh, try it, try it.' So I tried it and I went on to Biology II which I wasn't even going to do.

Margarita’s frustration with being the only Puerto Rican in her advanced classes caused her to seek general classes instead. However, Upward Bound persuaded to keep trying to challenge herself with the college preparatory curriculum.

My freshman year, because I did so well in middle school, I had all these advanced college prep courses and my sophomore year I was like I'm not taking
[those courses]. I'm taking courses where the students are going to be normal where people are [more like me] and stuff. But my [Upward Bound] counselor was great. She would always motivate me to challenge myself. [She] and the Upward Bound Director would say, 'Margarita I think you can do it. Try it out. If it doesn't work you can always change. We can always help you.'

As has already been stated, some of the participants' high schools did not offer college preparatory courses such as Honors courses and Advanced Placement classes. Participants reported that Upward Bound often compensated for the learning that they did not receive in high school. Adnoloy explains that she learned a lot of her college skills in Upward Bound.

To tell you the truth, this sounds really bad, but I think that I learned how to write a paper in Upward Bound. I don't think I learned it in school. I mean school may have reinforced it. But I don't think that I learned it until I went to Upward Bound. I didn't learn how to write a thesis paper until I went to Upward Bound and I had them show me how to write. So most of the tools I use in college I think I learned in Upward Bound and I feel that looking back, I feel that high school reinforced it.

Several students mentioned specific curriculum from Upward Bound that helped them to prepare for college. The most often cited assignments were the senior projects or honors theses that were required of the high school seniors. For example, Isaac described in detail how his honors project prepared him for college level work.

The majority of Upward Bound was a lot of self-challenge. We had our honors project and it was basically here's your topic, go out and work on it and you had to motivate yourself to get your resources, how you wanted to present your project on your own. Your grade was going to resemble how much effort you were going to put into it. It was basically 'Get ready you are a senior, this is basically how it will be in college. No one is going to do you any favors. You will have some faculty and staff that are really good to work with but if you want things done, 99% of the time you have to go out and do it for yourself.' So that's one of the things that I got from Upward Bound. Upward Bound pretty much prepared me for what to expect from college and what college life was going to be like.
When Keyla was asked, “Do you feel that you were adequately prepared to succeed in college academically?” she replied,

Yes, I think Upward Bound did that though. Because Upward Bound made us do research projects, especially if you are a senior. Our last year we had the whole six weeks to do the research and then we had a final presentation and a paper to hand in. It's kind of like an honor's thesis, just a lot of work. I think whatever Upward Bound gave me it was the same kind of work that I got at college.

Margarita also described the honors presentation that was required in Upward Bound as important academic preparation for college.

Upward Bound helped me to prepare for college a lot. Like in a lot of ways, like academically. We had an honors presentation and we had to research a topic and present it with flip boards. We had to talk for ten minutes. So the last week of the program we had to present it. I did a really good presentation. I had statistics and charts. And we did a paper about a global issue. So that really helped a lot.

In some cases Upward Bound offered students the opportunity to take college credited courses the summer before they began their college education. Veronica explained the benefit she experienced with this opportunity.

I benefited from the classes that I took, for example English. We took English over the summer and I came here with those credits which was great because everybody else was in English 101 and I was in English 102.

In addition to the college curriculum, Raynor talked about how the information he received in Upward Bound about the difference in environment between college classes and high school helped him to prepare for his experience in the college classroom.

Upward Bound told me more or less what would be expected of me in college. The teachers who taught the Upward Bound courses did speak a lot about how classes were in college. The counselors and the peer leaders in Upward Bound did talk about how you would be treated in college and what would be expected of you and that did help me a lot. They told me things like, ‘Freshman year, it’s going to be completely different because you’re no longer Raynor, you’re
number three-hundred, forty- something in a class of God knows how many!’ They told me, ‘As you get into your major you start getting into smaller classes and then you know the professor and the professor knows you. But, in the beginning, it’s not going to be like that. It’s going to be a little bit harder to deal with.’ And, yes, that was true.

Overall, the results of the second part of Question #1 indicate that Upward Bound impacts students’ college preparation. Participants reported that Upward Bound helped them to prepare for college by providing support with all aspects of the college admissions process including career choice, college selection, application, and financial aid. Additionally, Upward Bound prepared participants for college by encouraging the development of certain life skills that are beneficial to college life such as: time management, study, learning and leadership skills, exposure to diverse populations and the opportunity to live away from home on a college campus. Finally, Upward Bound supplied access to important areas of college preparation that were not available to students in other ways such as guidance about the college admissions process and college preparatory courses. The data from the second part of Question #1 indicates that Upward Bound clearly provided former Upward Bound participants with valued preparation for college.

Question #1, Part 3: Self-Perceptions

In section three of Question #1, participants were asked to describe the impact that Upward Bound had upon their self-perceptions. Three themes emerged from the participants’ responses. First, respondents repeatedly confirmed that Upward Bound had the overall impact of increasing self-esteem and self-confidence. Secondly, participants described how Upward Bound positively impacted their perceptions of themselves as Puerto Rican, as the first in their family to pursue a college education,
and as low-income. Finally, participants concluded that Upward Bound helped to increase their learning about themselves which impacted their self-perceptions.

Increased Self-esteem and Self-confidence

Participants repeatedly used the word “confident” to describe Upward Bound’s impact upon them. Alisha stated,

[I am] definitely a bit more confident, more open. I know I wasn't really too shy but I kept a lot to myself. I wouldn't be the one to answer things in class. I kind of felt like the kids would think that I was too smart if I kept answering the questions. But as I kept continuing in school I would raise my hand a little bit more.

Isaac identified how his improved confidence helped him feel more comfortable asking for help and becoming an active learner in his classes.

In high school I would never raise my hand, for the first three years. I would never raise my hand. I always kept my notes and studied what I got out of it by myself. But senior year of high school and now in college, I sit in the front row and with out shame, my hand is going up if I don't understand it. It can be the dumbest question in the world. It doesn't matter. Until it's explained to me like I'm a third grader I won't stop asking questions and that's one of the things that changed me as a person in Upward Bound. I changed as a person because I was able to go out and get the help and not be ashamed to ask for it.

Several of the students talked about feeling more confident in their ability to make decisions, act independently, succeed academically, voice their opinion, and become leaders as a result of Upward Bound. Alisha described an improved ability to make decisions.

I guess I am a bit more confident when I make decisions. Basically, I know how to go about making the decisions instead of jumping right into the things. I know that I can sit back and think and go through the different pros and cons about the decision and then make my decision from there.
Carlos perceived himself as smarter and more capable to do things on his own. He also learned that he had the ability to succeed academically. His experience in Upward Bound as a role model increased his confidence in his academic potential.

I had a lot more friends [in Upward Bound]. I got to be more talkative. And I'm smarter than I thought I was, because I was selected [by Upward Bound] to do peer tutoring which is more responsibility. During study hall we could study in our rooms, we could do whatever we wanted. Some people would fool around. I did the homework. I tend to do things more on my own instead of waiting for somebody to tell me. I don't wait. I act more on my own. [Upward Bound] showed me that I could succeed academically. It wasn't that hard to do. And knowing that I had to set an example for everybody else, too. Before, I had doubts, but now I think that yeah, I can. [Upward Bound] gave me a little confidence that I can do it. Like the English class that I had last year. I thought, “This is English? I can do it, then!” [Upward Bound] gave me more confidence that I could do it. That it’s not as hard as it was rumored to be.

Briana described how Upward Bound helped her to develop the confidence to speak up and share her opinions. She discussed how Upward Bound helped her to respect herself and to feel more powerful.

[Upward Bound] made me more comfortable as a person, in getting my views across. It helped me know that I could do it, that I could do anything that I set my mind to do. I know that I have to respect myself before anybody else respects me. I mean things like that, respecting myself, having confidence in myself. I felt like I had a voice. I began to be more outspoken. I would express my feelings, and I would say, ‘Look, this is who I am.’ I did a lot of that when I was in college, but Upward Bound sort of helped trigger that in me. [They said], ‘It's okay if you have a different opinion, or another [opinion], because it's not different in the sense that it's bad, it's just different in the sense that it's your opinion, and you don't have the same opinion as everybody else.’ I think in that way [Upward Bound] made me have a voice of my own. Teaching me and encouraging me to voice my opinion, to see myself as the same if not better than the person next to me, to know that I have power. So, I feel like I have a lot of power in what I want to do.

Sonia described the impact of Upward Bound on her development as a leader.

I think that some of the things that I remember were really important were the leadership qualities that I obtained. I always wanted to be a leader, and it was just a matter of getting that shyness out of the way. I was really lacking self-confidence, particularly because I was doing very poorly in math and English.
That first summer I was really shy. Once I started coming out of my shell, I could definitely look back and say I saw myself develop and grow more mature and be more of a leader. I think it had a lot to do with just not having a lot of self-confidence. Having been really quiet and really shy and all that, that definitely changed. I became more confident through Upward Bound and I was not as shy as before. I became confident enough to be a leader and take a role in leading other students. Unless you're really self-confident, it's very difficult to take on a leadership role. So, I definitely saw a difference there. I saw myself as somebody that could do it. And I did, because there was a lot of support [in Upward Bound].

Similar to Sonia, several of the students described themselves as very shy prior to Upward Bound. They credited Upward Bound with helping them to overcome their lack of confidence. Keyla and Veronica reported the following:

Keyla: Before I went to Upward Bound I was very shy. I was very closed in. I was very timid. I wouldn't talk unless I really, really had to. And I think going to Upward Bound and living there and being without my parents, because I am the only girl and I was very sheltered, and then I go into Upward Bound and I totally changed. I became more outgoing. I could totally see that. I think I got more confidence in myself because you have to talk and make new friends and it was a whole new environment.

Veronica: I got louder. I was always more timid. I think I got a little more lose. I was very timid and my dad always tells me, 'God you've changed so much.' And I think back and I did change. I used to be so timid and if people talked to me I'd take it the wrong way or something. I couldn't speak to anybody except my friends. Oh, my god, I remember I used to cry for nothing. I'm glad I don't do that any more. I think I got over that. I got to know so many people. [In Upward Bound] if you were quiet, you just couldn't, they wouldn't let you. I was able to talk to people, and teachers. I got to know more older people. So, in school I wouldn't be intimidated and stuff.

Adnoloy also confirmed that her increased self-confidence came as a result of her Upward Bound experience, which helped her to feel more comfortable in school.

I was more confident and I felt better about school, definitely. [Upward Bound] gave me confidence, definitely, by being with people that give you a lot of, I know how to say it in Spanish and I can't think of it in English. Let me use a roundabout way of saying it. Basically there were a lot of people who would push you to be excellent, push you to do your best. And I felt that by having so many people doing that in Upward Bound, I was confident enough to do it in
school. So, I didn't get it in school, but Upward Bound gave it to me. So I feel like they gave me confidence, that's how I got it.

Increased Awareness of Self as Puerto Rican, First-generation and Low-income

Nine of the twelve participants specifically spoke about the impact Upward Bound had upon their perceptions of themselves in terms of being Puerto Rican and first-generation and low-income. In some cases participants identified a heightened awareness about more than one of these components of their identity. They described increased pride in their heritage, their educational endeavors and their economic status as a result of being an Upward Bound participant.

Several cited specific examples of how Upward Bound encouraged awareness and pride in their Puerto Rican heritage. Adnoloy relayed the result of her first History course about Puerto Rico.

I immersed myself in Spanish and Upward Bound was the key to doing that. I think it was because when I was in Upward Bound I took my first Puerto Rican History class. After that class I would go back to school and I could not stand to the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. It was all about my culture. I didn't even care about what the white people were doing. It was just all about learning my music, learning my culture, learning about myself and immersing myself into what I had to do. I made friends that were bilingual. I spoke to people who were not in mainstream [classes] and I made more connections. Now I feel like I am confident enough about my race and my culture to speak to someone about it. I go to Puerto Rico every year and it's all about being in Puerto Rico, being around my people, and learning about my culture.

Isaac discussed the impact of meeting other Puerto Ricans as guest speakers in the Upward Bound program.

Actually Upward Bound made me prouder. Upward Bound brought in a lot of people from different cultures to come in as speakers and you heard them speak and it kind of got you motivated to be proud of who you are and to go out and succeed. One guy was a poet, he was one of the speakers. He gave me a book and I was very motivated by his talk.
Sonia recalled the experience of reading Puerto Rican authors in her Upward Bound English classes.

I had never really read a lot of literature written by Puerto Rican women. And now, I know that they're out there. Not only Puerto Rican, but other Latinas. And so, just the fact that I started reading up on literature that was written by Latinas, it's like, wow! Like if I really wanted to, I could do this! You don't have to limit yourself. Before you don't see anybody Puerto Rican in that leadership role. A lot of the doctors, the politicians, the policemen, a lot of them have other ethnic backgrounds, and a lot of them are usually white. And so you don't see any role models, particularly Hispanic women. You don't see them up there, so you're like, 'Well, you know, can I do this or not?' So at first I was very limited to what I was thinking that I could do. But now I've read some of their work and read about women, Latina women who are publishers and they have their own magazine or things like that. So that's really encouraging, and it started [in Upward Bound]. Because I started seeing that Latinas could do stuff like that, like write a book. And we had a lot of influence from speakers that came into the program and talked about what they do and also we had presentations by people, Hispanic people, who are working in a theater company or things like that.

Several students spoke about how their perceptions of themselves and their interest in their Puerto Rican culture changed. For example, Diego spoke of his growing pride and love for his culture.

I have more pride. Certain things when I was younger that I was ashamed of, now, it's like that's something today I can relate to being ours. Like for example Spanish music, Salsa. When I was younger I hated it. I was, 'Hey, turn that stuff off.' I liked pop music, or just regular stuff. And now I love it. Now that I'm older I love the music because I know that's part of our people. It's not anything to be ashamed of. I guess I was trying to be, I'll say more American when I was younger and not knowing. Now I love it a lot more being Puerto Rican. I take it more to heart, a lot more to heart. I'm a lot more proud now than before. Because before all I saw was that people have this stereotype that we always have knives and are druggies. And of course there's that in every group regardless. Of course some get more exploited more by the press or whoever. But I know it's not all like that and I'm one of the ones that you can say, 'All Puerto Ricans go to college' now, as opposed to saying, 'All Puerto Ricans are druggies.' So I could be the flip side.

And Margarita discussed her search to learn more about her heritage.
In school and in Upward Bound and even now in college I want to know who I am. Like I want to know more about my culture. I want to know more about who I am. Especially since [this college] is such a big school and everyone's really into culture and political issues and stuff. I want to know what's Puerto Rico going to do? Are they going to become a state? And I want to learn about Cuba and I want to learn about Latin America in general. Because I know Ancient History, I know Medieval History, I know U.S. History, I know modern European History but I don't know anything about me.

In addition to learning more about their Puerto Rican heritage, students realized that they could be the first in their family to go to college. This new awareness, resulting of their Upward Bound experience, changed their perceptions of themselves. Veronica spoke about how a college future improved her view of herself:

I just felt that I was doing a good thing. I knew that I was going to go to college. It was just positive. It was something that I was going to do. Not many people are gonna. It's like everybody's saying, 'Oh, you're going to college.' And they always look at me like, 'Oh she's doing really good and she's going to go places now.' And I just felt good about myself. I would never have gone to college. I feel more positive about myself. I know that I can do this. I mean it's not like I might not make it. I know that I'm going to do this. I'm going to do this. It's a definite thing in my life you know? And I just feel more positive about that. And I'm going to get a job and do what I want to do.

Sonia also described how her perception of her self and her future changed when she realized that she would be the first in her family to go to college.

I realized that I did have that potential to be a leader and to succeed and to make my parents proud and that kind of thing. Whereas, before it was more like, it wasn't even there. There wasn't even that thought about going beyond high school or going on to college. So I think I saw more goals for myself. I just really feel like I saw more things in myself, I just saw more goals and more future plans. What do I want to do? Well, I really want to go to college. So, whereas before I just didn't even see that there.

Respondents also reported a change in their self-perceptions of being low-income. Diego and Briana talked about the power of the stereotypes about what is possible for people who are poor. Through their experience in Upward Bound their ideas about themselves and what they could accomplish were changed. Diego
specifically described the benefit of being in a group with other people who grew up poor and who were working towards the same goals.

I knew everybody in Upward Bound was pretty much low income. Everybody was from the same boat. When I was younger I was ashamed. Especially when I was younger and my mother was on welfare. It was like a bad thing. Kids would rank on you, ‘Oh your mother’s on welfare, and you use food stamps.’ But when you’re in Upward Bound everybody’s in the same boat. So you can’t pick on him, or pick on her, because we all are basically in the same group. Basically, Upward Bound just helped me realize my potential. To see that I could do anything that I wanted to do, regardless of where I come from. A lot of times people think just because of what they don’t have they can’t be a certain thing. In Upward Bound everybody’s in the same boat. You know what you’re there for, you’re there to be better than what your parents were, or what their parents were, or what the person next door to you is. You don’t want to live where your parents live. You just realize you could do anything that you want basically if you put your mind to it. If you don’t let external factors bother you that much. Because of course there’s always going to be things in your way, but it’s all a matter of getting by them and just keep going and reach for the stars.

Briana expressed her gratitude to Upward Bound for motivating and teaching her that she was capable of overcoming barriers and accomplishing her goals despite her economic background.

Emotionally Upward Bound helped me. It helped me deal with problems that I was having at home, the issue of being from a low-income family and not knowing that we could do it. Upward Bound helped me to see just the mere fact that I could do what I set my mind to regardless of my economic background, my social background, my academic background. I was always aware that I didn't come from a rich family. I came from a family where my parents didn't graduate from high school. Well, my father didn't get to high school and my mom got to high school but never finished the ninth grade. But they were parents that worked to give us our things and they would motivate us and they would put themselves as examples. So what Upward Bound did in terms of seeing myself as a low-income student was that [it demonstrated that] it's okay, let's look at what happened before, why are you in this situation and what can you do to better it? So I think that I felt like it was okay and I knew that I was going to make it. That's how Upward Bound influenced me in regard to the fact that I was low-income. The fact that I didn't have a computer, that I had to write stuff out, that maybe I had to do a little bit more work than that person sitting next to me. But I knew that I could do it, so I was motivated to do it. It was not a barrier anymore.
Raynor also reported that Upward Bound taught him that the impossible was possible.

Upward Bound told me that I could go to college even though I don’t have whatever the school costs right now and this school costs more than Harvard.

Sonia spoke about the benefits she received from Upward Bound activities and events that were economically prohibitive to her.

When you’re growing up low-income, it’s not very likely that you’d get to go to Boston and go on a whale trip and things like that. When you’re financially strained, it’s like you don’t even want to think that these things exist, because it’s like, ‘Well, I can’t go anyway!’ Whereas, with Upward Bound it was those little things that now I look back and I say, ‘Wow! I remember when I did this.’ And it was while I was at Upward Bound. Going to a baseball game and things like that, that you just get the opportunity to do.

Adnoloy also spoke about the limitations she experienced as a result of being low-income in terms of the quality of education she received and the level of preparedness she felt when she came to college. She described the importance of Upward Bound in helping her to overcome these deficits.

[This college] is very selective. So, when I came here, it’s hard, because first of all my parents don’t come from the same background that a lot of people's parents come from here. A lot of people could pay full tuition, so I'm pretty sure they've had the best, they've gone to private schools, they've had that history. And when I'm in classes I see my lack of knowledge. There's just this assumption that you have this background and I didn't have this background. And so to come here without this background I had to use what I got from other places which was Upward Bound to get ahead, basically.

Finally, during the conversation about being low-income, several students relayed recent events which occurred while they were in college that illustrated the ongoing struggles they encounter as low-income students. Margarita told a story about the level of ignorance she encountered from other students.

Well, I remember one time, I have a work study job, and I was in the dorms and we were all together in the lounge and I told one of the girls, ‘Well I have to go
because I have to go to work.' And she said, 'Why are you working if this is your first year in school?' And I said, 'Um, because I have to help my mom pay my bill.' I thought, 'How stupid, that is such a stupid question.' But of course I didn't say that to her. I just said, 'Well, because I have to help. I have to buy things and if I need something I have to pay for it.' I know I can always, always count on my mom, but she's paying for me to go to school. I'm glad I received a lot of scholarships and stuff.

Adnoloy had similar experiences in which she was reminded that her economic resources were different than the other students at the private college she attended.

Adnoloy spoke about the doubts that crossed her mind when she wonders if her class or race background could determine her success.

I'm still afraid that I'm not going to be able to do it because my family is low-income, because I'm Hispanic, because of this, because of that. I still have that feeling and that doesn't go away. Even now I'll be in class and I'm like, 'I can't do it.' And I have to keep moving on because people keep reminding me of where I am. So if I'm on this campus and I'm talking to someone and they say, 'Well my parents pay for everything.' I'm reminded that the reason that I'm not involved in so many extracurricular activities is because I work on and off campus to be here and my parents can't pay the tuition to come here. I'm working all year long off campus and my mom takes the bus because she gave me her car so I can work. I've had people in this school who will talk about driving somewhere and describe that they drove by this bad section of town with run down buildings and I tell them that they passed right by my house. And it's like a slap in the face but it's not a bad place. Just because you might see a run down building in one corner or something like that doesn't make it bad. Each city has its bad section. So, I mean, you're always being reminded where you are, so you always have that. But, I also learned that I have all the resources that came with being in Upward Bound and with going to school and with everyone I've met. I have the resources to keep going on regardless.

In addition to reporting that Upward Bound improved their self-confidence and had a positive impact on how they saw themselves in terms of being Puerto Rican, first-generation to college, and low-income, respondents identified additional learnings about themselves that improved their self-perceptions.
Increased Learning about Self

Participants credited Upward Bound with improving their self-perceptions in a variety of ways. Keyla described the impact of increased exposure to cultural activities and the influence this had upon her.

I think that Upward Bound did give me the foundation to believe that I could do it. They got me more outgoing, and showed me things that are out there. Because, before Upward Bound, I never really went to a play! And like I love that whole culture stuff, I don't know, going to a play, going to museums, poetry readings, things like that. Those are things that I actually like. I like doing those things and so I think it just changed my whole outlook on life.

Several respondents reported improvements that increased their self-perceptions. All four of the men in the study described personal attributes that were positively influenced by Upward Bound. Diego described the difference he noticed when he observed his behavior in different environments and his learning to be more open and trusting of others.

Now, I think I'm a cool dude. Like, I don't know, before I was pretty much, say an asshole, somewhat. Just, I don't know, I was cranky and stuff, and going [to Upward Bound] I was always in a good mood. So I saw that it's my environment that has somewhat of an effect on me. If I'm in a place where I could be myself and everything's all nice and cool, then I'm gonna act all nice and cool. So it's sort of like I got to see that I reflect whatever the environment is. If I'm in a place where everything's bad, I'm gonna act that way. Also, I'd say I became a little more open as far as expressing myself and not being afraid to express my emotions. [Upward Bound] changed me as a person because now whether or not I trust you, I give you the benefit of the doubt. So before I can get a good judgement on you, I let you present yourself to me and I judge you on what you've shown me. Before Upward Bound it was, if I don't like you, I don't talk to you. Now I'll let you present yourself to me and if you show me that you're a good person then I will treat you like a good person. I will get to know you and I am very open minded with others.

Raynor gained self-awareness through his interactions with other Upward Bound students.

So I think it did change the way I am around other people. Now that I have to deal with them on a more constant basis, I have to carry myself a little bit
differently. So, I'd say, yeah, it did change me a little bit. The other Upward Bound kids said I complained too much. And I came to realize that was true, which was kind of funny. I just complained too much. It wasn't a good thing to learn, but it was important. I try not to do that anymore.

Carlos also reported positive improvements about himself.

Upward Bound made me more outgoing, I guess. More responsible, just a better person. It had a positive impact.

Isaac also stated that Upward Bound changed him, increased his openness to other people, and helped him to see the benefits of asking for help.

[Upward Bound] definitely changed me as a person. I gave everybody a chance. I always thought that I always knew where I was headed except that I always figured that I would do it on my own, but a lot of things you do in this world you're going to need somebody to ask for favors and stuff. I was always hard headed and I always told myself that I could do this on my own. I don't need anybody's help. Sometimes you do need people's help and I changed as a person because I was able to go out and get the help and not be ashamed to ask for it.

Alisha also described a few things that she learned which helped her to feel more comfortable and confident about herself.

You get to realize your limits and stuff like that. I learned that I don't always have to be the top and always have to be smart. I'm allowed to make my mistakes definitely and that nobody's going to look down upon me if I do make mistakes.

Briana spoke about the influence Upward Bound had upon her self-confidence to seek out additional opportunities to travel and gain new experiences.

And I began to travel everywhere. I took every opportunity, as soon as I was in Upward Bound. That was pretty much the first exposure I had outside of my house to stay somewhere else. And from there I took trips with the band, we went to competitions in Virginia Beach and Canada and then I was up at college and I also did extensive traveling while I was up at college. I hardly spent any time on the campus you could say. [Upward Bound] just motivated me to do all these things, just take any opportunity that you can. Just do it, just do it, because you can and you're there. Why not take the opportunity? Upward Bound had a lot to do with my going to France. Upward Bound motivated me to take opportunities, to just do it.
Adnoloy provided a general overview of the different ways in which Upward Bound helped her to learn more about herself and positively impacted her self-perceptions.

Oh, yes! I definitely feel like when you go to Upward Bound you learn about you. You're in a multicultural group setting but you really learn about yourself. There's a lot of work about you. There's a lot of writing about you. In my writing class it was, 'Who are you?' And reflecting on that, and reflecting on who's your best friend and why. And so you think about this is my best friend, and my best friend reflects me. So then you learn a lot about yourself. You learn a lot about yourself living with someone you don't know, which you have that experience. You learn a lot about yourself living on your own on campus. We were on our own. We were 15 [years old] living on a campus for two weeks at a time, on our own, no parents around. You learn if you can make it or not. And it's really good to learn about yourself in that time of everyone's development in high school. It's a good time to learn about yourself because when you go to college you feel stronger about who you are.

In section three of Question #1, participants discussed many examples of the impact Upward Bound had upon their self-perceptions. Respondents described increased self-confidence, improved perceptions of themselves as Puerto Rican, first-generation and low-income, and a general sense of increased learning about themselves and feeling positive about who they are. Based upon the data gathered, Upward Bound clearly impacted participant’s self-perceptions.

**Question #1, Part 4: Family Relationships**

Section four of Question #1 investigated Upward Bound’s impact upon participants’ relationships with their families. Eleven out of twelve of the respondents reported that their parents were supportive of their educational objectives. All twelve of the students reported that Upward Bound impacted their relationship with their family in some way. Some participants described increased tension within the family as a result of their involvement in Upward Bound and their pursuit of a college education.
The tension was attributed to parental concerns about their increased independence and knowledge. Economic concerns about the cost of college and feelings of loneliness created by trying to live in the college world and remain involved with their family were also identified.

Despite some reports of increased tensions, all of the participants also reported that Upward Bound had a positive impact on their familial relationships. Respondents stated that their parents’ respect for them and support of their college goals increased. They also identified improvements in their feelings of closeness to their parents and appreciation for their family. Upward Bound helped participants understand their family better and increased their motivation to make their family proud and provide role modeling to younger relatives.

Increased Tensions

Six out of twelve or half of the participants described times in which their preparation for college was a source of conflict within the family. Some respondents claimed that when they attended the Upward Bound summer program and their independence increased they found themselves at odds with their parents who feared their leaving home. Additionally, parents struggled with the economic concerns college plans create. Other respondents reported hostility from family members who criticized the increased knowledge that they gained from Upward Bound. Finally, several participants identified feelings of being alone in their college pursuits as they attempted to live in two worlds: college life and their family of origin.

Upward Bound is designed to help students prepare for college. The residential component of the summer program exposes students to the experience of living away
from home on a college campus. This also proves to be a challenge for parents. Several
students spoke about the difficulties that arose in their parental relationships as they
prepared to spend part of their summer living with Upward Bound.

Veronica reported that her parents at first refused to allow her to attend the
Upward Bound program. The Upward Bound director, also a first-generation, low-
inecome, Puerto Rican woman, successfully convinced Veronica’s parents that their
daughter would be safe and benefit from the experience.

Yeah, [my parents] hated [Upward Bound]. I remember [the director] called
them and got them to agree to let me be in the program. When I was going to
[live at the college] they didn't understand it. They thought it was the worst
thing. Oh my god, that's why I never called them when I was over there. They
were upset with all those people and that there were guys there! It was hard.
They said, ‘Just stay home, don’t go over there.’ Imagine if I was going to go to
a four-year college? And the dorms! Oh!

Keyla also described some conflict with her mother when she prepared to spend
the summer with Upward Bound. Going away from home was a new experience for the
entire family and it took time for people to adjust. Keyla explains the benefits of her
Upward Bound experience in relationship to her mother and how, in time, her mother’s
concerns were eventually resolved.

My mother, when I first applied [to Upward Bound], said, ‘I don't want you to
go so far away from home.’ She was crying and my father said, ‘Well do it.’
And after [I went to the program] they used to come see me every other
weekend. They used to take me out just to be with them. I have four brothers
and we have always been close. We have never been separated. I have never
been separated from my mother either. But I think [Upward Bound] helped out
a lot. It gave me space to grow just between my mother and I. She was just a
suffocating mother. I mean, most mothers are. They are always there, [saying],
‘What do you need? What do you want?’ She never gave me a chance to be on
my own. So, going to Upward Bound for six weeks gave her more confidence
in me.
Economic concerns about their child’s college plans created additional stress for the parents of participants. In addition to their fears about their daughter living away from home, Veronica’s parents worried about the financial impact of her college endeavors.

When I was talking about college, to them college was this expensive thing, so that's all they saw. That's all they see, money. It's crazy, and they think I'm not gonna do the work. I'm just going to waste that money. So, that's how they thought.

Raynor’s mother obviously worried as he applied to elite private colleges.

My mom was worried about the financial issue, which I came to realize would not affect her in any way. And so I told her not to worry about it, because anything that would be paid in terms of college would come out of my pocket and it wouldn't be a big deal. And that’s the way it is. And I think my Mom is actually proud of me and the fact that I do pay my own bills. She helps me when she can, and lately she’s been able to help me a lot more than before. At first, it was kind of scary, mom hearing that I’m going to college where it costs $34,000 a year. And I hadn’t gotten my financial aid yet. So she was just wondering, ‘How much exactly do you think you’re going to make over the summer that you’re going to be able to go to this college?’ And then I explained to her that it is possible and that I could do it and it wouldn’t be a big deal at all. And it kind of eased her tensions a bit.

Maria described the conflicts she experienced within her family. Older siblings expressed resentment and criticism about the changes they observed in Maria: she acted superior because of her increased knowledge; she tried to “act white” and forgot who she is and where she is from. Maria spoke about her struggles to understand and deal with these criticisms.

Occasionally people have teased me about vocabulary words that I have used or something like that. Just words in general, that maybe they weren't familiar with, but I didn't think it was funny. I've been teased quite a few times by family members and it can be very irritating. I've heard from quite a few people that I'm so different. In reality I think everyone is different and I definitely don't try to be different. One older sister teased me about how I spoke. I mean the way that I speak does not really change but she just teases me once in awhile, ‘Oh, you sound like you're a white girl.’ She has said that to me
before and I don't know what that is supposed to mean. I told her, ‘You know that doesn't make any sense.' I don't understand it. I just don't understand how someone can just comment about how you are, your mannerisms or the way you speak. I don't know where it came from. I mean my experiences are going to be different. I was around a different crowd (Upward Bound) for three consecutive, going on four years. I traveled recently, a year ago, to Europe. Just doing different things and grasping so much. You are bound to be a different person overall. Everything is just bound to change, I think, as you are growing up.

Two people have commented, ‘You act very different.’ And I have also heard from another older sister of mine that I think I'm better than her because I'm in college and pretty soon I will be getting my degree. I just think that is ridiculous because never, never do I act like I'm better than anyone else. I guess she is just comparing herself with me and that's not my problem. I'm just part of the family, a 23 year old trying to do something with her life and trying to do the best that she can. I don't have any kids, I don't plan on having any kids. I feel comfortable, I'm stable because I'm still in college. I told her, ‘I'm not trying to be different, I'm not trying to use any vocabulary that is beyond you. I just happen to read often and it just becomes part of my vocabulary that is just bound to happen.’

Veronica had similar experiences with her father who expressed resentment towards Veronica because he thought she was acting smarter than him.

I'm good at college and I'm learning and doing well. It doesn't mean that I know everything. So, they get angry sometimes if I know something. I say, ‘No Dad, I don't know everything.’ That used to be a problem in my house.

Maria and Veronica’s experiences are synonymous with other students who spoke about feeling torn between two different worlds. Participants described feelings of being alone in their world at college where they didn’t feel a sense of belonging, and also experiencing estrangement from their family who did not understand their life as a college student. Isaac described the conflict of focusing on school or being more involved in his family. He identified the difficulties of being involved in both. Isaac struggles to bridge two cultures that he perceives as mutually exclusive.

I like being away from the family because home just brings a lot of stresses. It brings a lot of things that I'm not ready to deal with yet because I just need to deal with college alone. So right now basically I'm like a stranger to my family
because they don't see me as often as they would like. But I feel that staying away is the best thing for me. In Upward Bound by staying away from home for six weeks it's just like getting you ready for what college is going to be like. You're going to be away from home. You'll come home every now and then but you're away most of the time. The fact that makes it difficult is that I keep away from them. I try to just keep my head in the books and get away from everything that has to do with family and my hometown and just worry about my academics. So on purpose I try to stay away. So it just makes it hard on them because they don't see me enough. My mother has two jobs right now so she still struggles to maintain. And me seeing that everyday makes me want to help her. So if I was living at home I would be shying away from my academics and starting to look for a full time job to provide for the house. Eventually that could lead to my dropping out of school completely, although my mom would tell me to just keep my head in the books. I don't really ask for their help. I never call them and tell them what I'm going through or I don't call home enough. My brother likes me to stay in school but I never call him. I just try to stay away.

Diego had difficulty explaining to his brother about the challenge of being part of two different worlds.

I have one brother and he always asks me, 'How are your grades?' I told him my grades one time and he got mad at me. He said, 'You should have all B's.' I said, 'Look at you, what position are you to tell me? I'm just maintaining bro. It's not that easy. It's not just study, study, study. I have a lot of other things bothering me. Like not being with you all just chilling out, not having my people and not having my food and not having my mother and my sister, you gotta understand.'

Veronica spoke about her feelings of loneliness and her inability to share her college experiences with her family.

It's just like I'm alone and I'm going to college if it kills me. So, I don't go home and go, 'Okay, I did this today.' I just keep by myself until my sister comes to college too. You just know that you are alone so you're gonna go upstairs and do your homework and do your test and that's it.

These six respondents: Veronica, Keyla, Raynor, Maria, Diego and Isaac described some of the challenges and fears that arise in low-income families where the child is the first person to go to college. Even though Upward Bound may have been perceived as the problem, the larger issue remains that this generation is embarking on
experiences never yet explored in the family. At times the fear of the unknown can create misunderstandings and conflict and the lack of college experience and the absence of economic resources often exacerbate these anxieties.

**Positive Impact on Family Relationships**

Although several families experienced increased tensions as their son or daughter participated in Upward Bound all of the participants also reported a positive impact on their family relationships. Parent’s respect and support increased, relationships grew closer, and participant’s understanding of their family improved. These changes enhanced participant’s motivation to succeed and make their family proud of their accomplishments.

While there are many struggles inherent in low-income, non-college-educated families that may conflict with college goals, participants also described receiving sustained support from their family to pursue education from childhood through high school and college. Their stories provide clear evidence that parents valued education and made many sacrifices to ensure their child’s academic success. Eleven out of twelve of the families actively supported their child’s involvement with Upward Bound and believed that the program would help them get to college. The one family that was initially opposed to Upward Bound eventually changed and encouraged their child to participate and go on to college.

Adnoloy talked about her perception that Latino families deal with a lot of challenges. She described her observations that the children often have significant responsibilities in the home that can conflict with their academics. Older siblings doing housework and childcare while parent’s work can be a common occurrence in low-
income families, especially in homes where there is one parent. Adnoloy described the benefits she observed in having a two-parent family and the academic support they were able to provide.

There's a lot of Hispanics I know that go home after school and they take care of the home. They have to clean, they have to wash clothes, they have to do this and that. There are so many priorities that are there for them. Sometimes it's because of the way their home is structured as a single parent family. I'm just happy that I have both of my parents and that my mom taught me that I do have to clean and I do have to help her out and everything, but school was first. So, I came home and she would say, 'Adnoloy, get your homework done.' And she would try not to bother me and I know sometimes I would come home and think, 'Let me wash these dishes.'

Several students spoke about the increased influence Upward Bound had upon their parent's already existing support of education. Isaac explained to his mother how Upward Bound would help him to succeed academically which she had always intended.

I told my mother that Upward Bound was something positive, that it was going to help me get into college. As long as it's helping me and not bringing me down then my mother is all for it. My mom was always expecting me to go to college.

Keyla found that her parents' support of her attending college increased as a result of her involvement with Upward Bound.

My parents were always pushing me to go to college. If anything their support became stronger because I was in Upward Bound. They saw that I was going to this program that would help me get into college and so I think their support increased a little bit. Especially my dad, he was always pushing me to go to college. Upward Bound just reinforced the fact that they knew that I could do it. I got the help from Upward Bound with the college applications and just gaining all that and they thought it would be much easier for me to do it with help.
Margarita described how her mother specifically saw Upward Bound as an important source of support and encouraged Margarita to make the most of the opportunity.

[My mom] always wanted me to go to college. During my freshman year [in high school] I used to come home crying. I told my mom, ‘This happened to me today and this is how I was treated.’ I used to come home frustrated from school and she would say, ‘Well, now that you are going to spend the summer in Upward Bound, make the most out of it. Learn as much as you can so you can relax during the next year in school. Have fun, but try to learn as much as you can.’ She took me to the college campus for Upward Bound that summer and she said, ‘It’s a beautiful campus, just sit out in the grass and just read, relax and enjoy learning.’

Alisha also reported that Upward Bound encouraged her parents’ already enduring support.

My parents were always supportive of me whatever I wanted to do. So, I guess coming [to Upward Bound] gave them a better feel that I was going to [go to college] after all, and I wasn’t going to fall and get hurt or something like that.

Briana confirmed that while her parents had always supported her educational achievements, Upward Bound strengthened her parents’ support of her college goals.

I think [Upward Bound] just made [my parents’ support] stronger. They were already supportive. My mom was more supportive. She was the one that was there saying, ‘Did you do your homework?’ So she was always on top of us. My dad was supportive in the sense that he would support my mom. So I’d say [Upward Bound] just made [their support] stronger.

Upward Bound helped parents increase their support of their child’s goals by involving parents in the college preparation process. Upward Bound educated parents about college related issues such as college entrance exams, the application process and financial aid. Sharing common information brought family members closer and increased their focus on shared goals.
Adnoloy described how her parents’ involvement in Upward Bound helped them to better understand the pressures she was feeling about preparing for college.

Upward Bound included our parents in the program. When the parents came up they got to meet the teachers, go to classes. They got to see what we do. Upward Bound would have a speaker or they invited parents to the talent show. The parents would come when we did financial aid. The parents were always invited to everything. Your parents could always visit you while you were away at the program. Just welcoming the parents is a way that Upward Bound helped them. It was a way for them to know what you’re up to, to know what you’re doing because I don't know if a lot of parents would know. It gave them hands on experience about what we were doing. I think that's one of the things that also made my parents understand more of what I was going through. They would come to Upward Bound for Parent’s Day and Upward Bound would show them that the students are going to be taking these tests and this is what they have to do. And my parents could understand where all my stress was coming from. They didn't have to go through with the college applications and everything so they could sympathize but they didn't understand where I was. They didn't understand why I would be crying because I couldn't get a stupid math problem. And I think being in the Upward Bound program helped them to understand what it was that I was going through and I think that is how it helped or changed my family a little.

Sonia agreed that Upward Bound rendered a valuable service by involving her parents and providing information that eased their concerns.

My family was very supportive of me. My parents knew what my goals were and they knew that Upward Bound was a good program. The people that worked with Upward Bound were very open to answering any questions and any concerns that parents had. They were definitely open to parents.

Carlos described how Upward Bound increased his parents’ support of his college goals by informing them that it was possible for him to succeed and providing information about college. As a result, Carlos’ parents were more encouraging, supportive and involved in his efforts to go to college.

Before, I don’t know if [my parents] even thought about my going to college at all. But, since I got in the [Upward Bound] program they thought I could do it. Now they know I want to go to college and I want to try. Upward Bound made them learn a little bit more about colleges. They never went [to college], so now they learned a little bit more about it, like all the processes for financial aid and
the time I need to study for college and stuff. They wanted me to try hard to go
to college. They said, ‘Go to college. Do your work.’ But they don’t know
what I need or how to help me at all or anything. Upward Bound also had
contacts with the parents, a lot of good contact with the parents and I think in
that way they work hand in hand with the parents and that helped as well.

Veronica reported the most surprising change in her family relationships. Her
parents initially “hated” Upward Bound. Yet, after she became involved in the program
and her parents learned more about college and what was possible for Veronica their
attitude changed. They supported her goals and encouraged her college attendance.
Additionally, college was considered for other members of the family as well.

[My parents said,] ‘Okay she’s in Upward Bound, she’s going to go to college.’
So they expected more from me because now they see the importance of
college a little bit more. [They say,] ‘It’s good to study, you get a good job.’
They see the benefits now. They even try to tell my brother to do it too. They
really talk to him about that. Now they understand more what I’m doing. [They
say], ‘Get your degree, get your career.’ That’s all they care about, jobs, jobs.
Oh my god, that’s all they talk about. My parents are like that. Now [my father]
says, ‘Oh I should have gone to college.’ [And I say], ‘You didn’t say that
before, Dad, wait a minute, are you changing there?’ He says, ‘Yeah, if I was
still young, I wish I could go back and study all this and that.’ He’s changing
now. They want me to stay in college now, they want me to graduate and
everything. If I were to quit they would really be mad, I think. They [say], ‘Oh,
don’t you have class today,’ and this and that. I can tell that’s really important to
them now. So if I were to quit it wouldn’t be like before where [they] would
[say], ‘That’s a good thing, now you can get a full time job.’ Now I think they
would be more worried about it.

The increased support that participants received from their family as a result of
their Upward Bound involvement continued after their graduation from high school
and the Upward Bound program. Several of the students talked about continuing to
receive support from their family while they were in college. Briana described how her
family encouraged her by asking questions and expressing their pleasure at her success.

People were happy, they were happy for me, they were motivated for me. My
mom, she was ecstatic when I got chosen to [this college]. My mom was really
happy. One of her dreams was always to become a teacher and here I am. I’m
the teacher. My family was really excited. Every time I would go home they would say, 'Okay Briana, what are you doing now? Where are you now?'

Alisha felt comfortable turning to her mother when she doubted her ability to succeed at the state university.

I would call my home a lot and talk to my mom saying, 'If I had to come back home and maybe go to the Community College instead, because it might be too much for me here, would that be okay?' And she would say, 'Yeah, okay, and you made it that far, you know you can still do it.'

Adnoloy spoke about the sacrifices her mother made to help her in college and how her mother supported her college success.

My parents have always wanted me to go forward regardless of what it was. Even now that we have to pay for school, my mom says, 'Even if I have to work until I'm fifty to pay for your damn college you're going to get through it.' They have always said, 'We're going to get you through, regardless of what it takes.' In terms of my family they have always tried to help me to go forward. I think my parents' have always been proud of me; I think the Upward Bound program just gave them more of a reason to be proud of me. My mother always tells me how proud she is of me. She'll call me up everyday, even though I'm only ten minutes away. She'll call me up just to see how I'm doing. And sometimes she'll call me up and say, 'I can't believe that you're almost done with college.' She starts crying, but they've always done that.

Another significant change that participants reported, as a result of their Upward Bound membership, was increased pride and respect from their families.

Carlos spoke about his parents respecting his intelligence more.

But since I did well in Upward Bound and got those medals, they know I'm a smart kid. My mother says I take after my father, since my father's pretty smart, too. Even though he never went to college, but now they see how I'm smart. I've got the brains and stuff.

Alisha felt that her parents realized how important college was to her and they came to respect the work she was doing to accomplish her goals.

I guess they feel that I am a lot more dedicated towards things. I guess they didn't realize how dedicated I was specifically to this [Upward Bound] program.
until I started coming back constantly and stuff like that. I guess they look at me now as a dedicated person.

Raynor described how his parents’ view of him changed with his involvement in Upward Bound and acceptance to his choice of colleges.

They were proud that I was in [Upward Bound]. I don’t know if they ever really understood what exactly it was, except that it was good, and it was getting me into college, and that was a good thing! The way my family saw me changed once they figured out that my talk of going to college wasn’t like some big fantasy thing or like I’m just making stuff up. Their pride increased. [Upward Bound] really did change the way that they looked at me. ‘Wow! He actually got acceptance letters from every college. And he’s looking over these packages that they’re offering to him! Not that he’s figuring out which one he has to pay, but that he actually has a choice.’ So [Upward Bound] did change the way my family looked at me.

Additionally, Raynor’s brother expressed increased pride in him and his accomplishments.

My brother, I think, is the most proud one out of everyone. I’m not really sure why. Last time I went to visit him, I spent the day where he works. He works at a hospital as a clerk. And he took me around and paraded me to everyone. It was very embarrassing. He would say, ‘This is the genius of the family.’ I was like, ‘God! You’re so far from the truth that it’s not even funny.’ My brother is extremely proud of me.

In Diego’s case Upward Bound provided an opportunity to demonstrate his potential for academic success despite poor performance in high school. This increased his mother’s respect for his abilities and hope that he may succeed in college.

I would say my mom saw that I had a higher chance to go to school now, like to actually go to college. [Upward Bound] made it more clear to her that it could be for real. I always performed pretty well in Upward Bound so she saw that. Even though I wasn't doing too well in high school, she realized, ‘He's not messing around all the time.’ And I always told her they would help me to go to school so she knew that Upward Bound would try to do their best to get me into college. If anything, Upward Bound gave me a little bit more respect, because she saw I sacrificed every summer, just for myself.
Briana found that her family’s respect increased as they observed her trying to accomplish her goals. Their respect has continued now that she is a college graduate and a professional.

When I was in Upward Bound they always had a really positive outlook for me. It didn't matter if I wanted to be a doctor and I became a secretary as long as I made the effort to try and get there. All they wanted to know is that I made the effort. So, with Upward Bound, that just gave them more help. I wouldn't say they treat me any different. They respected me more in the sense that they said, ‘She's trying to get somewhere, we need to help her out.’ I think professionally they have more respect for me. I've been through college. I have a stable job. I have a job teaching. I see a lot of them ask me for professional opinions. In that way I find that I am really helpful to them in a lot of ways.

In addition to receiving increased support and respect from their family, participants also reported that they felt closer to their family and they felt more comfortable talking with parents; their own appreciation, understanding and respect for their family grew through their experience in Upward Bound. Adnoloy spoke specifically about how her relationships with her parents changed.

I think my Upward Bound experience did help my family experience and my relationship with my father. Because in a Spanish home, in my home, it was like, ‘Ask your mother.’ And then I left home for the summer and he wanted to know what was up in my life and he wanted to know what I was doing and he wanted me to ask him for things. And we became closer because I wasn't there. He was more interested in what I was doing. It wasn't like he wasn't interested before because even I knew that when I was telling my mother she was going to tell my dad. My dad always knew what I was doing. But I felt that it made me closer to him in terms of that I was his little girl and I was off in the world and I wasn't at home. He didn't know what I was up to so that made him want to know what was going on.

Alisha and Sonia described feeling more comfortable talking with their parents about their lives. Alisha felt more confident contributing something meaningful to conversations and sharing with her mother about her career goals.

I do have a closer relationship with my family. I know I do because I'm able to talk to them more because I know more. I always felt like I didn't know a lot. I
wasn't able to go up to their standards in chatting. I was to be seen and not heard, those kinds of things. Because I didn't know, I wasn't wise enough, I was too young. But now I know a little bit more and I feel that I should have a voice in certain things because I always have a voice [in Upward Bound]. So I guess I'm able to talk to them more too. Upward Bound also led me to talk to my mom more about stuff. I know that I used to tell her what I wanted to do when I grew up and stuff like that. But I never really got into a conversation about how I was going to do these things, what I really wanted to do. So I got to talking to her more about that, about what I want to do in my life.

Sonia also found that she felt more comfortable conversing with her parents as a result of Upward Bound. She found it important to talk with them about things that were bothering her and about her career plans.

Upward Bound made me more aware of being comfortable talking to my parents. I was really quiet before and a lot of that had to do with having been raised in a pretty strict home. ‘Should I talk to my mom about this or not?’ Especially when you’re dealing with these issues of teenagers, you don’t know if you should or shouldn’t talk to Mom or Dad about this. So I think that, because I was able to talk to some of the counselors at Upward Bound and relate to them, I could talk about what was going on in my mind, and why I was feeling down, or why was I so happy. Being able to talk to even the Director, when you’re able to sit down with the Director and talk about how are things and this, that and the other, and this is an adult. You feel comfortable enough to talk to them and then you start realizing, ‘Well, maybe I could talk to my parents about this.’ So I think my relationship with my parents, in that sense, became a little bit better, because I was able to communicate with them more. In terms of being able to sit down and talk to my mother about what my goals are right now, I do want to go back to school and I want to get my Master’s. Or, you know, maybe get into some other program. But just the ability to sit down and talk to her about these things and get her feedback as to what I want to do and how do I want to go about it, I think that just being able to do that makes a big difference for me. Because if I’m the only one that’s talking about it, I’m talking about it to myself, it doesn’t help that much. But when you can sit down and say, ‘Hey, Mom, I’m thinking about doing this. What do you think?’ So, even if you already know that that’s what you want to do and it’s not going to matter what she says, you’re still going to pursue it. But it’s just a matter of being able to sit there and discuss things with your parents.

Upward Bound helped students understand their family better. They gained new perspective about their family history and the challenges that their parents have overcome. Several participants spoke of their increased appreciation for their family.
They described being motivated to succeed to represent their family and make them proud. Respondents also spoke about learning the importance of giving back to their family by being a role model to younger relatives.

Isaac discussed how his mother’s story encouraged him to pursue his own goals.

I always look at my mom and I always see all the things that she's been through. So if anything, her experience, what she went through, persuaded me to go to Upward Bound because I just see that she wasn't able to go to college and graduate and get her four year diploma. So it kind of persuaded me to better myself. If I can give it to myself and after me having a better life, I can give some back to her. So she persuaded me to pursue my dreams of going to college and Upward Bound helped me to get there.

Maria described how she came to understand that family, especially her mother, did the best they could in supporting Maria’s goals given her mother’s own life and history.

There was no one, no one at all, no dad, no mom, that was able to provide for anything. So that made it tough. My mom, she wasn't there for conferences in school. I would try to explain to teachers. I would explain to them that my mom is not really involved. I never wanted to make it sound negative. The thing is, she was just never involved. I used to tell my mom, ‘I have a conference and you need to be there.’ And we would arrange for her to go. I would go with her because my mom doesn't speak English and so I would have to translate for her. I guess a lot of people don't really realize what it's like. It's not easy. I mean you really have to be strong and think, ‘Okay I'm going to do this next and I'm going to deal with it.’ Because there wasn't really any support, nothing. I mean not that she wasn't involved. I mean she was influencing as far as making sure I went to school. But, she doesn't have a concept really of what it is to be in college. So how can she give me that concept? And she never, if I remember correctly, went beyond elementary school. And there wasn't an influence among my sisters and brothers to tell me. ‘You need to go and pursue this or I think you should apply for college’ or anything. I never heard that from anyone else besides Upward Bound. I knew myself that I wanted to go to college but it never came from the home. So when I was younger I remember having a lot of anger against her because she wasn't really involved, because she wasn't there, because she wasn't the parent that I wanted her to be. But as I grew older and matured I understood what my mom experienced and the fact that her life was different from mine and her world is different. Her life experiences are
extremely different from mine and so I was able to conceptualize everything and just put matters to rest. Because for years I used to, I couldn't stand her for that, but now I understand her and I don't blame her for not being involved.

Veronica also found a better understanding of her family. Veronica was the only participant who reported that her parent’s did not support her college goals. She explained that her parents’ unfamiliarity with college attributed to their lack of encouragement.

I just never thought that I could go to college. It wasn't like that in my house. I got into Upward Bound and started seeing that I could go to college and get a degree and how important it was. I didn't get that at home. I told them I was going to college and they didn't really agree with me. They just weren't born thinking about college. They weren't taught that so they're not going to teach that to me. They didn't go to college. My dad didn't finish high school. It was tough for him; my mom finished, but he didn't. [The idea of college] was never available to them.

Alisha valued the types of support her family could provide that didn’t include financial assistance or college experience.

My family gives me a lot of emotional support. They know that they can't give me the money and stuff like that but they try to talk to me. When I have my problems they'll talk to me. They appreciate that I can do the best that I can, and when I came home with that D on my report card they didn't bring me down. I just told them that I am going to take this course again and I'm going to get a better grade and they said, 'That's good.' They didn't try to throw me off or anything like that. They didn't say, 'You can't do it.' They know I can do it.

Isaac described that his greatest motivation to succeed is to make his mother proud. He also spoke about the responsibility he feels as a role model to his younger sister and his older brother.

Every time anyone asked me what my motivations are or who is my greatest inspirations I've always said it's my mother. I've always said it. Even in college if they ask me why I do what I do, everything I do is for my mother and for the family. My goal is basically to make it in the world just so I can give back to her, just to kind of put a smile on her face, and make her worry less. I've always said another inspiration is my younger sister. She has no positive male role models except for me. Her father died a couple of months ago. She's only seven
years old and I feel that it is up to me to be the positive role model in her life. Sooner or later even when my mom passes away it's going to be up to me to provide for her. She's going to need the help and she's going to need somebody when she gets to college to help her through all this. Hopefully it's going to be me. I'm also a positive role model to my older brother. He's proud of me because of what I've done with myself. That is my biggest inspiration for everything that I do, my family.

Briana also spoke about the importance of being a role model to younger siblings relatives and children that she knows through church. She provided a clear summary of the impact Upward Bound had on her views about her family and the ongoing relationships she hopes to maintain with them.

I now help motivate the younger children. For example my sister, my nieces, second cousins and children in church. Upward Bound has given me this outlook, ‘Hey I did it, they could do it too.’ They just need that extra push that I got. I can't just say, ‘Well you're going to have to do it by yourself.’ No. I have to remember back. ‘How is it that I got into the Upward Bound program? What is it that motivated me? Was it a person? Did I just do it because I was self-motivated?’ No. I have to go back and help the younger children along the way. Which is why I chose to come back to Massachusetts, to Springfield and Holyoke to teach. I think that Upward Bound has made me look at my family in a more respected way. Because it doesn't matter if they're poor. It doesn't matter that they don't have money. They can get to where the President of the United States is with a little support. I respect them even if they don't have a job where they're getting forty, fifty thousand dollars a year. I respect the fact that they have issues to deal with. They have barriers that I also had to deal with. In some cases they are more extensive than the ones that I had to deal with. I just have to help them out any way I can. Especially the kids, that's my real focus. My sister and my nieces, it is important that they know that I made it, that I'm still working, and that they can do it too.

In the fourth section of Question #1 each participant described the impact Upward Bound had upon their relationships with their family. While at times family relationships were strained by the tensions of increased independence, knowledge, economic pressures and isolation, participants also described significant improvements to their family relationships. Respondents spoke of improvements in the support and respect they received from their family. They also reported increased appreciation and
understanding for their family of origin and a desire to give back to members of their family. Evidence from the data gathered in part four of Question #1 indicated that Upward Bound did impact family relationships.

Question #1, Part V: Social Relationships

In addition to determining the effect of Upward Bound on students’ academic performance, preparation for college, self-perceptions and family relationships, this study also examined how the friendships and social skills of respondents changed. The fifth section of Question #1 investigated the impact of Upward Bound on participants’ social relationships. Three themes emerged in the data gathered.

Firstly, respondents described a vital sense of community within Upward Bound where they learned important social skills. Secondly, participants reported an increased awareness of social diversity and detailed their personal and social development within a multicultural environment. Thirdly, respondents described their experiences of being part of two different social groups: Upward Bound students and friends not involved in Upward Bound.

Sense of Community

Respondents overwhelmingly vocalized their experience of community in Upward Bound. They described a sense of comfort that allowed them to be themselves. They found that Upward Bound increased their social skills and taught them how to develop closer relationships with others. Participants stated that this sense of community challenged them to be more open to people and to become a better person.

Isaac described the impact Upward Bound had upon his social relationships.

[In Upward Bound] you learn how to deal with the people that you meet. You learn how to make friends with people and to get closer to them and help them
out. Upward Bound is about making yourself a better person. It taught me to always give back to the community no matter what and don't be quick to criticize anybody without knowing them. There's a lot more to everybody than what you see.

Sonia explained how the Upward Bound residential program helped her develop closer relationships with other students.

We’re doing this program and we were a very small group at that time. We were about maybe 50 or 55 [people]. So we became really, really close, because we were in a setting where we lived there. We live on campus. We eat on campus. We eat with each other. We stay in the same dorms with each other. So I think a lot of my other experiences have to do with just getting to know people and being really close with people because we were living in the same place, going to classes, and just living together. You don’t realize, especially in the beginning of the program, that first day, how close you’re going to get to someone. So, I think that was a really, really good experience, even though at the end it was sad. It was a good experience to have. And building relationships, I think, is another thing that Upward Bound is really focusing on. And building communities, and being proud of who you are. Those things are like key things that I know that came out of Upward Bound.

Diego spoke about feeling more open to express his emotions as his relationships grew with members of the program. He discussed the differences between being with Upward Bound and living in his neighborhood.

I'd say I became a little more open as far as expressing myself and not being afraid to express my emotions just because we all were like a big family. Everybody bonded together, and you know sometimes we cried and all the other stuff. Usually before [Upward Bound] I was like a typical guy, especially being Hispanic. It's all that macho stuff. You feel like you have a certain role you have to follow. But [in Upward Bound] you could just be yourself. If you were sad, you were just sad. Somebody would come up and hug you and talk to you and ask, ‘What's wrong?’ If you had to cry, you cried, no big thing. It wasn't such a big issue. I was able to just be more myself, like the real myself. At home you got to act a certain way in order to survive. If you act weak, you show weakness, people will attack that. There are a lot of predators out there. They smell that blood and they're coming after you. [In Upward Bound] I could be more chill, happy go lucky, smile, crack jokes. At home you got to have a serious face, walk a certain way, just in order to make it. You could say [Upward Bound] was more like a Utopia because realistically it's not going to be like that. But at least for that six weeks I was able to be cool and smile and whatever. Because at home you just couldn't do that, just for all the reasons out
there. I was sad to leave [Upward Bound]. The best thing is the sense of community.

Isaac described similar comparisons between the quality of life and relationships he had access to in Upward Bound versus where he lived.

In [the city] where I grew up, I spent most of my life in the projects. It was just basically seeing a lot of negative stuff such as drugs, a lot of gangs, a lot of fights. So growing up in an environment like that just kind of keeps your eyes open. You don't want to trust people. You don't want to get into anybody's business. You don't want to let other people know what kind of person you are from inside. Because they can take advantage of that and that's what you've got to look out for. You have to be strong-minded. Going through what I've been through it was just very hard to concentrate on getting my education, working, being a positive role model to my younger sister, also being a positive role model to a lot of my friends. But in Upward Bound you have these classes where you can speak your mind and you can talk about all the things you never talk about to anybody and just let it all out. At times it just made people cry just hearing other people's stories. But it was good because some people you could actually relate to whose background had absolutely nothing to do with yours, and you just kind of felt what they were going through at the same time. The unity is the thing that I really valued about Upward Bound. You could be united with everybody and you kind of depended on each other, to make it through the week. I like that. We depended on each other to make the best out of Upward Bound. I felt closer to them because of Upward Bound. It definitely changed me as a person. One thing that really stays with me, is that after just two weeks [at Upward Bound], when I would come back home, I would look at [the city I lived in] and what it was like and I just couldn't wait to get out of there again.

Alisha stated simply the difference in her social relationships between home and Upward Bound.

At home I'm not allowed to go out too much because the area is very bad and stuff like that and I had a huge curfew. So I wasn't able to hang out with my friends. So when I was in Upward Bound I could be more social. I had friends right across the hall and we could hang out and be together.

Participants also found a difference in social pressure between their high school and Upward Bound. Isaac spoke about the sense of support he received in Upward Bound versus the competition he experienced in high school.
In Upward Bound nobody brought me down. It wasn't about who got the best clothes or who knows who or who wears what or who knows what. It was always about, 'Let's help each other together'. And everything that's physical gets put aside and you get to know who they are and that's something positive.

Margarita also noticed a difference in the social atmosphere between the two environments.

In high school it was more that you had to care about the way you looked and about the way that you carried yourself. But in Upward Bound, some people would just get up, take showers, and go [to class] in shorts. They wouldn't care about ironing their pants and no one cared. It was just great. But if you go to high school and you don't even iron your jeans everyone says, 'Oh, my god.' In Upward Bound you cared about doing well and succeeding not about the other things.

**Improved Social Relationships Across Race**

One of the contributing factors to the sense of community that participants experienced in Upward Bound was the diverse composition of the group. Earlier in section one of Question #1 students described the academic importance of racially diverse classrooms. They spoke again in this section about valuing racial diversity with respect to social relationships. Participants described the impact of Upward Bound’s multicultural environment on their social awareness. They learned to value different cultures, to be more open-minded and to appreciate one another’s differences. Learning to relate to people across race and culture was discussed as vital to future success.

Adnoloy described the importance of living with people from different cultures. She appreciated being integrated with people like herself in the classroom and experiencing racial continuity in both her living and learning environment.

[In Upward Bound] we were multicultural. There were always people from different cultures in each class. And we were all together. We were living together and we were going to class together. And I thought that had a very big impact as opposed to my living in a Spanish community, going to school and being around a very large white community in my classes, going back home.
and feeling that displacement. So by going to Upward Bound I met people of
color. I had more friends who were people of color when I went to Upward
Bound than I did at school because there weren't many people of color in my
classes. So, that's definitely important, definitely. Being in a multicultural
society and having that multiculturalism in the class really helped out also.

Adnoloy went on to explain her understanding of what Upward Bound tried to
accomplish by putting people from different racial backgrounds together. She
described the social skills that were emphasized in Upward Bound and spoke of
learning to have an open mind and listen to other people's experiences.

[Upward Bound] was a lot about learning about other people. We had a lot of
group meetings. There were a lot of white students in the Upward Bound
program that I was in. These white students were from the country and they
didn't see people of color much. [Upward Bound placed] them with inner city
people who were all about color and so they put us together. [Upward Bound is]
all about learning about each other. And at Upward Bound everyone's heard.
Everyone's experience is learned. Everyone has the chance to become friends
and learn about everyone else. So at Upward Bound I met white students who
didn't know anything about multicultural anything and who might have had just
one person of color in their class. And now they're coming to this program
where they are confronted with it and I learn about them and they learn about
me. So, I think that's the way [Upward Bound] does it. They bring us together.
Regardless if we were all in the city or all in the country, regardless of anything
like that, any past or where you live or experience, we learn about each other.
And there's a lot about listening. It's all about the respect of listening to other
people. Living with other people and being open minded and respectful to what
other people think and making sure they are respectful of what you think. It's all
about having an open mind.

Diego also spoke about the importance of listening to other people and learning
about their backgrounds.

I just like the diversity. It's like a big culture shock. Coming from where I grew
up I see the same people all the time. I'm basically around a lot of Spanish
speaking people, a lot of Latinos. I went to Upward Bound and I was very
open-minded so I adapted very quickly. It was just nice to be comfortable
where people were willing to listen to you while you were listening to them. It
was the same respect. I just learned a lot about other people's backgrounds and
where they were coming from. It was very culture shocking to me because you
learn about a lot of different things that I usually wouldn't have seen around my
own community.
Isaac found that exposure to diverse cultures increased pride in his own culture and helped him to respect others. He explained how this experience enhanced his social relationships.

Because [Upward Bound] brings a lot of people from different cultures to come and speak, you learn more about yourself and you feel prouder about yourself. And at the same time you give other people respect in terms of their culture. The people they bring in to speak about their culture, and you learn more about them and it opens your mind up. It also brings you closer to your friends who are different from you.

Margarita spoke about the impact of being part of a diverse group of people with whom she also found commonality.

I met so many people and we were all so different because we all came from different backgrounds. But we were also the same because we were part of a program with some qualities and we all had those same qualities. I became friends with people that I never would have if I wouldn't have been in Upward Bound. Being preppy didn't matter, being a skater, stuff like that.

Adnoloy described Upward Bound as an important resource that provided other resources to facilitate learning within and across cultures.

I just want to reiterate that [Upward Bound is] a resource. They give you many resources as to different people, different cultures, they're your resource for your culture and everyone else's culture. Because until I went to Upward Bound I didn't know about any books from Zora Neale Hurston or Toni Morrison. I didn't know about African American writers or Hispanic writers until I went to Upward Bound. So, they give you a lot of resources and that's helped me to learn about my own culture and to want to learn about other cultures.

Diego also stated that he met people through Upward Bound that he would not have taken the opportunity or had the chance to meet otherwise.

I made friends that I wouldn't have other than going to Upward Bound. I met people who I wouldn't talk to or come across before [Upward Bound]. Previously I would have ranked on them and said, 'Oh, look at that white dude.' But by being there you actually get to know the person, not just see the outside, and see people are cool. It's just all about being open.
In addition to observing their own prejudices wane, respondents explained how white students benefited from the program as well. Diego believed that participation in a diverse group helped white students overcome stereotypes about his culture.

And it's great for people who aren't minorities because they get to see how we are, first hand. They're not exposed to people like us for the most part. So they get to see first hand and not stereotype. They see we're not all going to steal your pocketbook or rob you or sell you drugs or whatever. That's just what you see on T.V. or what you read. It's not basically what's there. So it was good for them too because they get to see there's always another side.

Adnoloy also believed that white students benefited from Upward Bound. Additionally, she described the advantages she received from participating with white students in the program.

It's important for white students to go to Upward Bound too. Because there are a lot of white students that just assume. Let's just put it this way. I have spent my whole life learning about white Americans and white Americans have not taken any time to learn about Puerto Ricans, aside from that we were acquired from Spain and are a commonwealth. So I think that white students that go to Upward Bound get that. And I think that coming to college with that, they can be more open minded to the multicultural community on this campus. But me coming from my background, I feel like I can talk to people who aren't coming from that background. So [Upward Bound] prepared me to come here and meet people who have never seen a person of color. And to understand that and to be able to talk to [white students] about that and to become friends with them. Or just help them become aware.

Respondents identified many benefits to their experiences in the multicultural community of Upward Bound. Diego believed that these social experiences helped him succeed in the real world.

[Upward Bound] helps everybody that's there to interact with different people because that's what you're gonna have to do when you get out to the real world. If you don't know how to interact with different people you're not going to succeed, regardless of what's happening.

Isaac described how Upward Bound augmented his social relationships. He learned to be more open to others and this helped him in his relationships with other
students in college. He sees himself as a better person because of his improved ability to relate to others.

But over here in college I look at other people and I can relate because of Upward Bound. I can relate to different classmates of different backgrounds and different races. I can do it now and it's like they look at you in different ways if you come to them. And what I notice is that some people if they are not taught how to interact with different people they stay away. But if you approach them and make them feel comfortable around you, you just get a whole lot more out of it, so to speak. In Upward Bound you dealt with so many cultures that once you get out of that you can deal with just about anybody. So some of my best friends are white. Everybody gets along with me. Nobody disrespects me at all. I get along with everybody else. I'm prepared for that. I'm prepared to get ready to listen to rock and roll or loud people, or the way they dress, the way they act. It's all fine. I've learned to accept it. Upward Bound has helped me to get where I am at now because I'm a better person. I see other people and I look at them for the person that they are. Not for the person that is the stereotype, that they are racist or that they just won't give you a chance or they just hate your type of people. I'm very open minded and as long as you respect them and they respect you back, then everything from there is just one step at a time.

Two Social Groups

One of the impacts of Upward Bound, according to respondents, was their membership in two different social groups. For example, according to Keyla, “It was like two separate groups, my Upward Bound friends and my friends.” Participants explained that they maintained friendships with people who were not in Upward Bound while developing new friendships with members of the program.

Their experiences were so intense in Upward Bound, and as their goals shifted, it became increasingly difficult to relate to friends who were not part of these transformations. This often resulted in participants feeling distant and separated from their friends who were not involved in Upward Bound. Additionally, students who were not in Upward Bound often misunderstood or resented participants’ involvement in the program. Finally, once again, participants spoke about their difficulties in
maintaining relationships with people from home after they left for college. The ability to bridge two cultures is required not only with family but in social relationships as well.

Margarita described the changes she experienced in Upward Bound and how these changes impacted her social relationships.

[In Upward Bound] you're whole way of thinking, of looking at the world, the way you think of others, all that changes. I came back [to high school] with a whole different mentality. And my friends that were in Upward Bound of course understood me because they were going through the same thing. But some of my friends would say, ‘Why are you doing this?’ They couldn't understand because they were still with that high school mentality. For example, one of my friends in Upward Bound, he would wear big pants and big chains and his hair was a different color all the time. And we became real good friends. And he even told me, ‘Margarita, you know what? If I never went to Upward Bound and I saw you in the street and we were just walking I could never picture you to be one of my friends because you're not like me. But it's awesome. I like you and we have a great friendship.’ When I would go back to high school I’d say ‘Hi’ to him and my friends would say, ‘Why do you talk to that weirdo?’ I would say, ‘Why is he a weirdo? That's your problem. You're not giving him a chance. You're not getting to know him.’ So yeah, I had a lot of problems like that.

Sonia described a similar experience to Margarita’s.

Having new friends, that definitely affects the group of friends that you have before you participate in Upward Bound. It’s just that you have more options and it’s because of the experience that you have with other students at Upward Bound. You have other things to talk about and other people to talk about. So it sort of makes things go in a different direction. Some of the people that I grew up with and were friends with right before Upward Bound were in that mentality of, ‘I just want to graduate from high school.’ And at that time I didn’t think I would make a difference in them by saying, ‘Well, why don’t you want to go to college?’ It was one of these things where I felt like they all just wanted to finish high school and then go to work. And so, that’s why it was difficult for me to talk to them about Upward Bound. And, at that point, a lot of my friends were just sort of satisfied with what they had. And a lot of my friends got married really young right out of high school. So, it’s not easy. It’s very difficult because they have a totally different view of what’s ahead. They want to graduate high school, get married, have kids. That happened to a couple of my friends. And I think it’s also a cultural thing. I think recently it’s become more apparent that you need to go beyond high school because it really is
difficult to find a job without a college degree. But I think even back then it was one of these things where you just finish high school and that’s it. So it was difficult to relate to them in that sense. But, when I got to know the Upward Bound students, it was easy for me to talk to them about it. So, it was sort of like having two different sets of friends.

Isaac’s relationships with Upward Bound students were more important to him than other friendships because he shared common experiences and goals.

And I felt closer to [Upward Bound students] than I had with people I had known for years in high school because I knew what they were going through. We had talked through Upward Bound and we had Upward Bound in common which is the same goal of getting to college. I saw people from Upward Bound and I felt comfortable with them no matter what. I could go talk to them and relate to them.

Adnoloy also described a separation between her friends in Upward Bound and those not in the program. One of Adnoloy’s struggles was to explain to her non-Upward Bound friends the importance of the program.

I keep in touch with more of my Upward Bound friends than I do with my high school friends, which really says something about the friendships and the bonds that you make at Upward Bound. I felt closer to them than I did with half of the people that I knew from high school because I spent that close time with them. I had friends who said, ‘Why are you going to school in the summer? Why are you taking classes in the summer?’ I had friends who didn’t understand the concept of going to school in the summer so you could do better in school during the year. And they didn’t understand that it was so much more than school. It was about learning how to live with people and making friendships and breaking friendships and just growing in a community and they didn’t understand.

At times students felt a strain on their social relationships because friends were jealous of their involvement and accomplishments in Upward Bound. Alisha relayed her struggles with friends outside of Upward Bound.

Some of my friends were jealous because they tried to get into the program too and they couldn’t get into it. And the more I got into the program, the better grades I got in school. So a lot of kids resented me for it and they got jealous because I was starting to get ahead of them and they were supposed to be labeled as the smart ones.
Adnoloy explained the difficulty of being able to be in the program while some of her friends could not participate. Although the program was free it did present some financial challenges for participants because they could not earn money from summer employment while attending Upward Bound. Therefore, some people could not afford losing the income they earned working over the summer to assist their family with expenses.

It was hard when I was in Upward Bound and my friends didn't have the means to be in it. I know a lot of people who are low-income families who have to work. They can't afford not to work for their family because their families need the money. So I have a lot of friends who said, 'I wish I could but I can't because of other circumstances.'

Respondents also spoke of their fear of losing touch with their friends who did not participate in Upward Bound and who did not go to college. Alisha vocalized, "That's my worst fear, losing contact with a lot of my friends that decided to go different directions." Not only were these fears real during high school they continued through college and beyond. Once again, the theme of trying to live between two cultures unfolded in the discussion about social relationships. Participants struggled to straddle two very different worlds. They worked hard to succeed in the privileged world of higher education while staying connected to their not-so-privileged roots. Maintaining contact with friends who shared a common history was highly valued among respondents, yet many had difficulty accomplishing this goal. Isaac talked about the difference between his life and the lives of his friends.

College itself puts a wall between you and your friends. Because some of them are out working full time and struggling just to make it. While you're making a better life for yourself and going to school and working and hanging out and trying to get your work done. You really don't have time to pick up a phone and
catch up with them because even when I do have free time I have to go to work. So I see less and less of my friends from high school everyday.

Sonia similarly described the differences between the lives of the two social groups with whom she was trying to stay connected.

I have friends that also went to college and they’re pretty much in the same situation that I’m in. They’ve just graduated two years ago. So now they’re either going to school or working. But I have these two very different groups of friends. I could be part of either one of the groups. But at this point I relate more to the students, those friends that I have that were college friends. Because we’ve gone through the whole college experience and now I’m 25. I can’t go back to being 18 and having gotten married and have kids. My other friends who didn’t go to college, I think they see me as, ‘Oh, Sonia, she just went in a different direction. She did something else.’ And I’m not exactly sure if they know the difference of how it feels to have gone to college. But, you know, they have their families and that’s good, too! They have their children but it’s just different. The difference is that we just chose to go in different directions.

Keyla and Raynor spoke of their difficulty maintaining friendships with people who did not go in the same direction as they did. Raynor missed his friendship with someone he once considered his best friend.

I’ve lost contact with some friends that I didn’t want to lose contact with. One of my best friends in high school I still talk to, but over the summer, we didn’t even see each other. And we’re not the same best friends we were. We’re more like acquaintances and that bothers me a little bit. I’m really bad at keeping in touch with people. I really am. I guess a lot of it is just my fault. I just didn’t keep in touch with him. And it bothers me sometimes to lose a friend like that.

Keyla counted one friend not lost to the casualty of contrary paths.

I’ve kept in touch with one friend from when I was really young. The other friends we just went in different directions and this friend was the only one that could understand what I was doing.

Respondents also encountered jealousy and resentment from people when they returned to their communities after college. Briana spoke of the tension she experienced on occasion.
Some times people react by saying, ‘Just because you went to college doesn't make you any better.’ And I think they take that and use it as a defense.

Isaac described similar interactions during his visits home. He reported what he believed to be the inevitable social result of going to college.

I see it in people's faces now when I go back home. We recently moved to a better area [of the city]. So I don't see or worry about the people that I once knew or that I once had to keep an eye out for. But every now and then I'll take a drive down to where I'm from and say hello to the people there and I can see it in their eyes. Some of them are happy for you, but others they kind of envy you. And one of the things that I see as a struggle is that people are just going to be jealous of what you did for yourself. And that's one of the things that depresses me. Because basically I came from the same place where a lot of other people come from and they're going to see me differently no matter what happens.

Diego had a different story regarding his friends that did not go to college. He not only maintained contact with this important social group but he explained that they were a source of inspiration for him to succeed.

I have the dudes I call my boys. They're my boys, my best friends for at least ten years now. So we're tight. There's not even too many any more. But they are people that I've known for a good amount of time. Most Puerto Ricans, like from here in the states, most don't have somebody they could say they know who went to college. I go to school and my boys tell me you're going to school for all of us. I got friends doing 60 years in jail right now. I got friends on the street still selling crack and all that other stuff. In terms of my group of friends, nobody finished high school. Nobody finished tenth grade. That's about it as far as my real friends got. The only way they got their high school diploma was their G.E.D. which most of them got in jail because when they came out they wanted to be able to get an okay job. They tell me, ‘Diego, you doing this for us.’ Because I don't go home and act like I'm better than they are. I still hang out with them. I drink with them. It's easy to distance your self away from them and come back and act like a totally different person and I act exactly the same. I'm just three, four years older now. They mess around, they say, ‘Oh you've been in Boston too long. You're acting funny. Why you talking like that?’ They're happy to see me because I'm the same person from before and they all feel like I'm representing for them. They say, ‘You're going to school for you no doubt. But you're going to school for us too. Because we can't do that, just for certain things we've done. So at least we can say, yeah, my boy works downtown at a certain place on the 15th floor.’ So I guess they live through me somewhat. They say, ‘You'll survive any where because if you survived in the
city, anywhere they'll put you, you're going to survive, because you're from here. I feel responsibility for my people because I feel bad when I go home and I see the same stuff happening. Everybody doing the same thing and people are content with nothing basically. People are content with smoking blunts and drinking forties and selling drugs. And it was fun. I did it all, no lie. But they're still content with it and that's a phase in my opinion. You should get out of it, you can't do it forever, it's not like the movies.

Section five in Question #1 detailed the impact Upward Bound had upon participant's social relationships. Respondents reported changes in their social relationships that occurred as a result of learning social skills in community with Upward Bound. They increased their ability to interact in multicultural environments and became more open to people from different backgrounds. Finally, Upward Bound had a lasting impact on the social groups to which participants belonged. New social relationships were created in Upward Bound and old friendships were often lost, changed or more appreciated. Overall, it is very evident that Upward Bound did impact participant's social relationships in a variety of ways.

Question #1, Part 6: Future Goals

The final section in Question #1 investigated the impact Upward Bound had upon each participant's future. A majority of the participants reported to have anticipated attending college prior to their Upward Bound enrollment but lacked the resources and information to successfully follow through with their aspirations. Other respondents clearly had no intention of going to college until their involvement with Upward Bound.

One of the most critical things that Upward Bound offered participants was new ideas of what their future may hold and an alternative to their present situation. Upward
Bound made it possible to envision life without poverty and beyond traditional gender roles. These promising possibilities motivated students to pursue a college education.

In addition to influencing participants' successful matriculation into college, Upward Bound renewed their commitment to community service, which became an important part of their future plans. Finally, through identifying the impact Upward Bound had upon their future goals, participants described the best future they could imagine had they not been a member of an Upward Bound Program.

**College and a Different Future**

Upward Bound helped both those students who anticipated attending college and those who never saw themselves going to college. First of all, Upward Bound changed how participants envisioned their future and then made it possible to pursue that future. Adnoloy explained that although she had every intention of going to college, she lacked information about college. Upward Bound provided the information her parents and others could not.

Yet, for Adnoloy, absence of information was a barrier that persisted throughout college. Even after her acceptance to a nationally ranked private Liberal Arts college, she battled the nagging doubts that she could overcome the obstacles that appear for first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican, college students. These struggles, she surmised, were easily surmounted if everyone had access to the same information from the beginning.

I felt like I could go to college but I didn't know anything about it. I didn't know anything about how to get in to this college. My parent's still don't know. I thought I was going to end up in a community college for two years. And it wasn't until Upward Bound that I realized, I'm going to a four year college and I'm going to a really good four year college. I knew that I wanted to go to a very prominent school. I didn't know that I was actually going to go because you still
feel like you can't do it. You still have that feeling in the back of your head. I'm not going to say I was walking around saying, 'I'm not going to do it, I can't do it, blah, blah, blah.' But you're still afraid that you're not going to be able to do it because my family is low-income, because I'm Hispanic, because of this because of that. It's hard because unless you have a mentor or a teacher that's telling you, 'Okay, you need to do this and you need to do that,' then you're not going to do it. I have friends whose parents can tell them, 'Okay this is what you need to do.' Well, my parents don't know and I'm constantly in the shadows. So, it's the fact of not knowing. That's where my struggle is going to be. Because I think that anything that comes up I can get through it regardless if I'm Latina, regardless if I'm a woman, regardless what kind of job I do, I think I can go forward, it's just not knowing that's a struggle for me.

Veronica described how her lack of information about college kept her from thinking about college as a possible future plan.

I was not going to college. I remember my freshman year [of high school], college was not even in my mind. If it wasn't for Upward Bound I would never have come to college. It was something that I would never do for some reason because I was never told about it.

Raynor had no ideas about college. He also lacked information and role models to demonstrate that college was possible. Upward Bound provided a different view for his future than he had ever imagined. By changing his ideas of what was possible Upward Bound made college a reality for Raynor.

Before Upward Bound I never had any notions of college whatsoever. Like, whether I’d get in or whether I’d even apply, or whether I could even afford it. I lived in a pretty bad neighborhood, where if anyone went to college, I didn’t know about it. Where I come from college is seriously something you see in movies. It’s something that rich people go to. And that’s about it. And you never see it. And you never go there and you hear about people going there, but it’ll never be you. I didn’t know how to go about [getting to college]. I didn’t know anything about it. The way I lived my life in terms of academics was always, ‘I have a paper due tomorrow.’ As opposed to, ‘If I get an A on [that paper], that will get me an A in the class, which will get me a whatever GPA in high school, which will get me into this college, which will, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, or to wherever I end up.’ It was more of like at the moment. So Upward Bound did kind of raise my confidence in the sense that now I knew that I could actually get into college. It was a reachable goal. It wasn’t something that you see in movies, or anything like that. [Upward Bound] showed me that [college] was an attainable goal. So, Upward Bound was very
useful in just letting me know that there was an option to go to college, if I
wanted to take it. I started looking to going to college. I saw that as a future.

Sonia also spoke about her inability to envision a college career. Through
Upward Bound, not only did she realize that college existed, she began to plan beyond
her bachelor’s degree.

Before Upward Bound I never even thought about college. Honestly. I mean, I
remember before my Upward Bound experience, being in an English classroom
and one of the teachers was talking about universities. She was talking
particularly about the Ivy leagues. So immediately I understood what that
meant and I never really saw myself getting there. I think that just in general
seeing the goal of Upward Bound and seeing the goal that I wanted for myself,
I think, as the years went on, I kind of grew more attracted to going to college
and finishing college and actually pursuing that. And it was because [Upward
Bound] focused on college. I think it made me realize that there were bigger
goals, that it wasn’t just high school, that you go on. Now I’m thinking, ‘Well, I
want to go on and get my master’s.’ Because I see that there are other things out
there that I can do. I’m not just limiting myself to doing what I’m doing now, or
what I always thought I wanted to do. So, I think I’m now even as we speak
challenging myself and saying, ‘Well, what do I want to do next?’ Because it
doesn’t stop here! There are other things out there. Which is how I felt at the
time when I applied for Upward Bound. There was no such thing as college, it
was just not there, and so now I know that there are other things out there that I
can do.

Diego and Alisha also saw college as a real option because of their Upward
Bound involvement. Diego realized that his future college plans could become a reality
through Upward Bound.

[Upward Bound] just made [college] more of a reality. I knew being [in
Upward Bound] would make it easier for me to go to college. And if I go to
college I'm going to eventually accomplish what I wanted to accomplish and be
a professional.

Upward Bound confirmed for Alisha that what she wanted to accomplish was
possible.

I always knew that I wanted to go to college, to get a degree, and to do better
than my parents. But I guess it didn't feel real to me until I started getting into
and working in Upward Bound.
By making college a reality Upward Bound opened the door to new future possibilities beyond education. Carlos described how Upward Bound challenged him to think about his current and future goals.

[Upward Bound] helped me see the future better. I could see what I wanted to do more clearly in the future. [They] helped me set goals. I didn’t think about setting goals at all. Each term we would set new goals for our grades and our career. And we’d usually talk about it. That’s the first time I actually thought about most of those things.

Adnoloy identified the influence Upward Bound had upon her future endeavors.

[Upward Bound] helped my personal goals. Because it’s stressful to be the first one in your house to go to college, you have that whole stress of your family on you and it’s like what if I don’t live up to that expectation. In terms of my future goals Upward Bound helped me to think about what I wanted to do with psychology or what I would want to go into. And my future goals now have been influenced because I’m at a liberal arts school and I think what I want to do now is very influenced by being at a liberal arts school.

Additionally, Keyla spoke about the changes she considered for her future plans.

I wanted to become a doctor all the time and then I saw other possibilities of work that I could do. For example the positions of counselor or teacher at Upward Bound, I'm interested in that.

Likewise, Upward Bound also influenced Sonia’s career considerations.

When I was at Upward Bound and I was going through the process of picking colleges, I just started narrowing down what I wanted to do. I started realizing that I wanted to work with people and that I wanted to do something like Upward Bound. Because I saw the difference that it made, not only in myself, but in others who probably wouldn’t have had the chance to go on to college, or if they did, it probably would have been a lot more difficult. I mean, the program makes it so much easier for you to get [to college]. So, in terms of the goals that I wanted to set for myself, it was just a matter of knowing that I wanted to work with people and that I wanted to pick a field, a career, and classes in college that had to do with relating to people. I think that, in terms of my goals, because of the impact that Upward Bound had, I want to keep working with Upward Bound. Whether it’s here or in another state, but I do want to keep working for Upward Bound. I definitely want to head towards
more of an education career than social service. I want to be better prepared, because I want to be able to give my children what I didn’t have. Or more than what I had.

Participants realized that a college education could help them move out of poverty and beyond traditional gender roles. They described that college provided an invaluable alternative to their current circumstances.

Isaac reported how his future possibilities changed after spending time in the Upward Bound residential program.

Upward Bound is a positive project that made me want to succeed. I was proud of where I came from, being low-income, hard working and all the struggles I went through. And I went off for six weeks and came back and I'm a new person and I look at what I've been through and it makes me want to succeed. It makes me not want to come back to this [way of life] in poverty. I'm not forgetting but that's not the lifestyle that I want. It's like you go away for six weeks and you live completely differently and it's like everything's positive in your path and that's what Upward Bound made me look at. That your conditions don't have to be negative, they can be positive. Now, I'm striving for the most positive life that I can go through. I went through the low-income life knowing that that's not what I want so now I'm preparing myself for a better life. And I'm giving it to myself because I believe that I owe this to myself and I've been through enough to know that I can give myself a better life.

Sonia also grasped the impact that acquiring a college education could have on her future standard of living.

Actually, I just realized that, because I was going to get an education, that maybe I won't be low-income anymore. I think one of the things that my parents, unfortunately, couldn't do, was go out and get any job they wanted. They had to sort of limit themselves to what they could do, and doing a lot of manual labor or things like that. And so, when I was thinking about college, I always thought, ‘Well, this means that I’m going to have better opportunities.’

Diego described his desperation when he almost lost his college opportunity.

The inability to complete college meant more than just losing his education, college provided an entirely different future for Diego.

I need a certain G.P.A. to stay [in college] and I did real bad one semester and I was in danger of not being able to come back. I knew I had done very badly and
I was anxious to get my report card just to see how I did. And that was the longest two weeks of my life. I thought, 'What the hell am I going to do at home?' It was during that month off during Christmas break and I'm [home] and after the first week I see it's the same stuff. And I think, 'I can't do this forever, this would be horrible if I get kicked out of school right now. What am I going to do work at UPS?' 'Naw,' I thought, 'Man, if I get back in I can't play around.' I did bad, but not so bad that I couldn't come back. I have to make sure that I get out of here (home).

Not only did Upward Bound offer a way out of low-income conditions by providing access to a college education, participants also described how stereotypical options available to them based upon traditional gender roles were circumvented through the promise of new future possibilities. Alisha talked about how the future possibilities she envisioned as a young woman changed through her involvement in Upward Bound.

Before I got into Upward Bound, I felt like I was going to get married, I was going to have children and a job. I guess, because I wasn't used to the fact that there were females out there not dealing with [having a family] and just doing education. I wasn't surrounded by a lot of educated women. So I kind of felt like I had to get married in order to move on in life. But, I came to realize that there are a lot of people who are doing a lot of things. So, I don't have to just get out of college. I can continue with school. That's something I didn't really realize until I became more involved in the [Upward Bound] program. Now that I'm in Upward Bound and I've started dealing more with myself and my education, I see myself more as independent, being by myself, not worrying about the family and the kids and stuff until later on in life. I plan on continuing in education, finishing college and probably going back to more schooling. I always had this painted future for myself but it is constantly changing now that [Upward Bound] has opened new doors for me. I am not exactly sure of my future any more. Though I know that I want to continue with the medical field. I see myself as being more independent, staying away from the family part for awhile. Thinking more of myself rather than the 'American Family.'

Briana, who chose to marry while she was in college, described how she was able to make the decision to get married and still accomplish her educational goals. She imagined the difference in her ability to have control over her future if she hadn't attended college. Briana’s marriage did not succeed and she explained that her
experiences provided the confidence to marry, finish college, and eventually end a marriage that didn’t work out.

[Upward Bound helped me to feel] confident enough to get married because I knew that that was not going to stop me from getting to my goal. And I think that had I graduated from high school and perhaps gotten an associates [degree] or if I had not gone to college and gotten married right after high school. I don't think that I would have felt prepared to be in a marital situation like [the one I was in]. I wouldn't know how to not lose myself, not feel like I have to stay there because I have no other choice. I may have thought, ‘Nobody else is going to want me, what am I going to do? I don't have a job. I have a high school diploma. What am I going to do?’ I knew, ‘It’s okay, I can do this.’ I have one more year of college and I've come this far and nothing is going to stop me and I just thank god that that's the way it turned out. And in a lot of ways I didn't want to be a failure and I felt that if I left college because I got married, what was I thinking? Because I was also thinking about, ‘Wow, look at all these girls.’ Whenever I would go back home, ‘Look at all these girls. They have kids. They're not even married and the father's no where to be found. I didn't want to be in that situation. So I knew that somehow I needed to control that from happening to me and I knew that I had the power to control some of that. So, I got married and I finished school.

Motivated to Give Back to Their Community in the Future

One of the things that participants spoke about consistently was the desire to give back to their community at some time in their future. They described feeling privileged to be a part of Upward Bound and felt a responsibility to share what they had been given with others. They characterized their own life and experiences as something that could be uniquely useful to others in similar situations.

Adnoloy described her wish to make her home a better place.

The only thing that I know that I want to do is that I want to go back to where I came from. Even though people think that the city is a bad place to live, but it's not. Every city has it's bad section. But I hope to live back in my community and hopefully make my community better, that's what I want to do, I don't know how I'm going to do it. But I know that I want to work with children.

Briana described ways in which she could relate to younger people like herself and how she could pass on to them what had been given to her.
I have to go back and help them along the way. Which is why I chose to come back to [my home state], to [my home city] to teach. That is where I worked last year, with children who have and come from the same background that I did. Because I understand them and I think that I know what they are going through. But, I don't know exactly because they have so many more problems then when I was in school. But I can honestly sit down and say, ‘You know what? I didn't have new sneakers everyday. I didn't have a brand new coat. I wasn't in style everyday, but I came to school and I got my work done. My focus when I got to school was to do my work. Did I chitchat? Yeah. Did I do little teenage things? Yeah. But my focus was one day this is what I want to be doing. I can't be messing around.’

Likewise, Isaac spoke passionately about his goals to pass on to his family and others the gifts he had received from the opportunity to pursue college. He also believed that he could provide assistance to younger people who were from the same background.

I see what I've been through. I see what it's like to be a young Puerto Rican kid. I want to give back. And I feel the best way to start is to teach people who are right now my age or younger and talk to them. You start young and you get them to interact with other people and you kind of adapt what I learned from Upward Bound how to interact with other people and that's a start. And I feel that right now I never thought that I would deal with younger kids but because I've got this burning sensation to give back to the community I feel that I owe it to myself from what I've been through and how I got here. I feel that it is my duty to show people that they too can make it. I don't have to be the rare person. They too can get there. It's just going to be very difficult. And as long as you can teach them that it's going to be very difficult and they understand that. You just got to help them get there. You really can't make anybody get to the level of education where I'm at now. It's really up to them. But it's how they get taught to get here that really matters. If you start giving them positive feedback, if you give them a lot of options, then they're not going to want to be anywhere around anybody who brings them down. College isn't as diverse as it should be. It's sad when you only make up 1-2 percent of the whole population and this college is just about the size of a high school. But the truth is, that is what happens in the Latino community. The majority of them are not going to make it past high school. It's sad to see that happen but it just makes me look at things differently. And right now no matter what I'm doing myself, my career is going to be helping other people because I received the help. My plans were to get to college and give back to my family and those were my goals. Upward Bound just helped me get closer to them.
A Future Without Upward Bound?

Participants described where they thought they would be if not a member of Upward Bound. All of the participants surmised that they would be worse off without Upward Bound’s support. Students who attended private colleges believed that they would either be at the state university, a community college or not in school at all. Those who matriculated at the state university guessed that they would probably be at the community college. Respondents enrolled at the community college believed that they would either be struggling academically or not be in college at all without the assistance of Upward Bound.

Private College

Lack of information was most commonly identified by participants attending private college as the single most significant factor that would have prohibited them from gaining acceptance to the college of their choice. Respondents also described how the condition of their life was markedly different because of the educational and personal changes they experienced as a result of Upward Bound. Adnoloy explained that she attended a college located ten minutes from her house that she had never heard of prior to Upward Bound.

I don't think I would be where I am without Upward Bound. I live in [a city], ten minutes away, and I didn't even know that [this college] was ten minutes away. I would never have even known about this school without Upward Bound. So, I don't think I'd be here, I don't think I would be at [this college]. I've always said that I was going to go to college. So I either would have been at [a community college] for my first two years and then transferred on from there, or I might have just gone to [the community college] and worked. Because without Upward Bound I don't think I would have known everything I know now in terms of where I could be. If I didn't go to Upward Bound I'd probably be working and going to school. I definitely think I would have gone to a community college and I definitely think I would probably be working and going to school. I don't think I'd be married or have kids or anything. But I
think I would be moving ahead. Not as fast as I am now. I wouldn't be where I am now, at 20 years old. I wouldn't be almost done with a four-year college. At 20 years old I would probably be starting a four-year college.

Isaac guessed that the lack of information about college applications, financial aid and college entrance exams would have prohibited him from pursuing an education at a four year college.

I’d probably be at a community college and working full-time. I would not be doing what I want to do with myself. Because there are so many things like the paperwork, the SAT’s, the applications, the FAFSA and all the financial aid papers, there are so many of those things I would never had known about had I not been in Upward Bound. I didn't know that applications and SAT's cost money, all these things I wouldn't have been able to do. So, I would have ended up graduating high school, probably attending a community college, taking about three courses a week, and working full time, living at home.

Much like Adnoloy, Keyla did not know of the elite private college she eventually attended.

I don't think I'd be at [this college]. I don't think there would have been any way of me to hear of [this college] without Upward Bound. I'd probably be at [the state university].

Maria believed that she would have attended college without Upward Bound but that the onus to acquire information about college would have been upon her and she wondered if she would have received assistance from other resources.

I would hope that I would still be attending college and having the same goals set for myself. But I don't know where I would seek the information if I didn't get it from Upward Bound. I definitely would have sought it from the school and from the guidance office or something. I think that I would still be a college student, I just don't know the path I would have taken to get there.

Raynor also felt that if he had been left to his own devices he probably would not be attending the nationally top ranked private college in which he was currently enrolled. He imagined that he would either be at the state university, a community college or not enrolled in college at all.
So, if it weren’t for Upward Bound, I probably wouldn’t have applied to a place like [this college], which is a pretty good school. If I had somehow managed to apply to college on my own, maybe I would have ended up at [the state university] at the most. Which is a good college, but that’s at the most! I’m not really sure what I would be doing. I might have ended up at college or maybe I would have ended up working for the rest of my life. I have no idea. But, I’d probably be going to someplace more along the lines of a community college, like my brother, something like that.

Briana not only spoke of the difference in her educational accomplishments without Upward Bound she also surmised how personal aspects of her life might be different.

If it hadn’t have been for Upward Bound maybe I would have come to the community college. Not that I’m saying that the community college is bad. But look, I ended up at [a private college]. I didn’t know what [this private college] was had it not been for Upward Bound. I would have probably gone to [a community college]. I might have an associates [degree] by now and perhaps be trying to transfer to a four year college. Probably [the state university], which is one of the closer ones, one of the cheaper ones. Perhaps I would not finish school because I don’t have the money. I’d probably have a full-time job and perhaps be going [to school] part-time. I’d be finishing my bachelor’s right around now. I might be having children, being involved in a relationship that was not going to be beneficial for myself or my children. And not knowing any better, not knowing I could do any better, not having that confidence in myself, not respecting myself as much.

Likewise, Sonia spoke specifically about the difference Upward Bound made not only to her educational accomplishments but to the quality of her life as well.

It goes back to when I was 15. It’s not difficult for me to think about what my life would have been like if I had not done Upward Bound. So, that’s really sad because I know that I probably would have just finished high school and gone to do something that I was probably not even happy with. I mean, I remember taking on summer jobs where it was like, ‘Whoa! I really don’t want to do this!’ And I had to do it because I had to pay for college. But it was just doing the kinds of things that I know were not me and were not part of who I am. Looking back to having been accepted to the program and what’s happened to my life since then, in terms of getting to know people, having a different kind of relationship with adults and teachers and administrators. Getting to college and doing things in college that included working in the development office of the school and working for a program similar to Upward Bound. I think that none of these experiences I’ve had would have happened if I had not been an
Upward Bound student. It goes from just being able to fill out the application to knowing how to dress for an interview. I learned things from Upward Bound that I never really thought about. What is the proper way to dress for an interview? Things like that. Where would I have learned that? That’s my question! Where would I have learned to do that? Probably, maybe, if I did get to college, probably somewhere in that line I probably would have learned it. But then again I don’t know if I would have gotten to college if I hadn’t been with Upward Bound. I think eventually I would have realized, ‘I do need to go to college.’ And I would have somehow found a way. But I think it was definitely easier having gone through it with Upward Bound. Having the friendships that I had and being in that mentality of ‘Okay, I just want to graduate high school.’ I think I probably would have just complied with that and just said, ‘Okay, I think I’ll just graduate from high school and get married.’ I think back to when I was in 10th grade and if I hadn’t gone to Upward Bound and done all the other things. And the way that I was thinking at that time, it was that mentality of just finish high school and then you can do whatever you want, and just try to make ends meet. And I probably would have been either sitting in an office, being either a receptionist or something where it was just kind of nothing that really challenged me. And just having the kind of job where I would go to work nine to five and that’s it. I think that things would have been very different! And probably by now, because a lot of my friends that I had at that point already have two or three kids, I think I probably would have been in that same situation.

Diego also spoke frankly about the difference in the condition of his life without the opportunity to spend summers with the Upward Bound program and to eventually enroll in the private college he was currently attending. He expressed his complete amazement at the condition of his life in comparison to his origins.

Well, since [Upward Bound] was in the summer I probably wouldn't even be right here where I'm at right now, most likely. Just because I would have had too much time to be out there. I could have been dead. I could have been in jail. I could be a mechanic. I could be a lot of things I wouldn't want to be doing. I could be selling drugs, could be doing a lot of things, just the stuff my friends are still doing. Which I don't knock'em for it just because I understand, but that's not for me anymore. So, I probably wouldn't have graduated high school most likely. Just because I would have been involved in a lot of negative stuff. I know I wouldn't have made it here to this point. I'm amazed every day, especially now when I go to work in my internship. It bugs me out. Like today, I was talking to the guy I work for. He's talking to me, ‘Yeah you go to [this] college? Yeah it's a great school.’ And we're talking, and he's like, ‘Well, if you know any MIS majors, anyone who is certified for WindowsNT and MIS certified, let me know.’ And it just bugged me out, like look what I'm talking
about to this guy. And I walked out and I don't know it just bugs me out from where I'm at now to what I used to do. And I walked out and I told the guy I work with, ‘Yo, this bugs me out. You know what I'm saying? Four or five years ago, I was on the street with a gun on my waistline and probably high as hell and now I'm here interning at [a top financing company] for a financial advisor.’ That's just, let's say, a one-eighty. It's just from where I was headed to where I'm at now, where I'm headed now, it's just totally different. It bugs me out all the time, bugs me out, because you should see where I came from, you know? To see where I come from to where I'm at now it just bugs me out. Because in my family, there's a lot of drugs in my family. It's been rough growing up and you see how it is now to where I've made it. It's like, I told myself, when I graduate, if I don't do anything with my life I've graduated college. I could care less what anybody says. I could be a bum. I could never find a job, but I'd be at least satisfied with myself, nobody can say a damn thing to me. That's it.

State University

Both of the students that attended the state university described how Upward Bound assisted them in their college enrollment. Margarita believed that she would still be in college without Upward Bound but hazard to think how she would have been able to accomplish the many tasks involved in the college application process.

I don't know I guess I would have still been stuck trying to fill out my FAFSA forms. I would be in college because that was my dream but I think it would have been a lot harder, the whole process. I'm just so thankful that I was in [Upward Bound], that I didn't have to do it without it.

Alisha speculated that she would be enrolled in the community college or that she may not be in college at all.

I'd probably stick to a smaller community college because that was my original plan when I was in junior high school. I'm going to go to [the community college] then I'm going to [the state university]. But, instead I just went straight at it. I most likely would be at [the community college] and if not I would have strayed away from the whole thing. I wanted to get more in life, but I probably would have to hold back and take a year off to work and help out with my family more.
Community College

Participants at the community college spoke about how Upward Bound helped them to succeed. Carlos believed that he preformed better in school and had a more successful career path because of Upward Bound.

I might be still in college, I think. But, I'd probably have a little more difficult time doing it. And I'd probably be going I don't know where. I probably never would have [enrolled in] engineering. Probably just basic Liberal Arts, something like that.

Veronica on the other hand adamantly stated that she would not be in college and she specifically described how her life would be if she had not been involved with Upward Bound.

If not for Upward Bound I would never have come to college. I probably wouldn't be in college and I'd be pregnant and I'd be working in a factory forty hours a week, stressing, with no intention whatsoever of going college. I would never reach what I wanted to do. Because if I wasn't in Upward Bound who else would have encouraged me? I was just thinking, I mean who would have encouraged me? Nobody. Without Upward Bound I would never have gone to college.

The sixth and final section of Question #1 investigated Upward Bound's impact on participant's future goals. All twelve of the respondents reported that their future would be very different and that their educational achievements would have been minimized without Upward Bound. The impact of Upward Bound on participant’s future goals was clearly indicated.

Conclusion to Question #1

Question #1 explored how Upward Bound impacted six areas of participant’s lives: academic performance in high school; preparation for college; self-perceptions; family relationships; social relationships; and future goals. The data collected through
personal recollections overwhelmingly indicated that Upward Bound positively impacted each participant in each of the six areas investigated.

Respondents recalled academic improvement in high school through both increased grade point averages and skill development. Upward Bound assisted participants in their college preparation in a variety of ways including the college application process and enhanced preparatory curriculum. Increased self-confidence and awareness of self as first-generation, low-income and Puerto Rican were some of the ways that Upward Bound impacted self-perceptions. Family relationships were improved despite some reports of increased tensions as students pursued the unexplored environment of post-secondary education. Participants described the impact of Upward Bound on new and old social relationships. Future goals were enhanced and achieved because of the impact Upward Bound had on participants lives in each of the above areas. Reflections of respondents attested to the impact Upward Bound had upon first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican, high school students.

The next question explores how students evaluate the impact of Upward Bound on their ability to complete a post-secondary education.

**Question #2: How Do Participants Evaluate the Impact of the Upward Bound Program on Their Ability to Complete a Post-secondary Education?**

Results of Question #1 indicate that Upward Bound impacted participants in a number of ways related to their future academic success. Question #2 explored how participants described the impact of Upward Bound on their ability to complete a college education. In other words, beyond preparing them for college, how did Upward Bound effectively impress upon students that they had the ability to obtain a college degree? Participants spoke specifically about the level of support, encouragement and
resources that they received from Upward Bound and reported how these three elements enhanced their ability to complete their college education.

Support

Several students commented upon the level of support they received from Upward Bound as instrumental in their ability to persist towards their college degree.

Adnoloy, who was a senior year in college at the time of the interview, described Upward Bound as a support system that provided the tools that she needed to help her complete her college education.

It's all about support. I think Upward Bound is just a large support system. And I think Upward Bound was a support system that was efficient for me and so it's helped me to come to where I am with giving me tools. I think of Upward Bound as my toolbox. It was my toolbox of memories to get me by, it's my toolbox for tools that I need for school, tools that I need for writing, tools for cognitively just thinking about problems, finding answers, being open minded, being able to speak up in class. I feel that Upward Bound instilled in people that they can make a change. I feel that it makes a person feel and it made me feel as though every little thing I did counted. And that even our little Upward Bound community could change the world, regardless of what we did, even if it was just to go to college, by going to college we are changing the world because we're going ahead. So I feel that they've instilled that in everyone with everything we do.

Maria, also a senior in college at the time of the interview, agreed with Adnoloy that Upward Bound’s support was propitious in helping her to achieve her educational goals.

It really isn't easy when you don't really have the support, when it's just lacking. And so when you have a group of people like the Upward Bound program, the staff themselves, there to reinforce and reiterate, ‘Okay, you're going to be able to do this. You're going to be able to go and pursue something. You're going to be able to go and go to college.’ And it's nice and it does reinforce that okay it can be done. I think that considering it is a college preparatory program it has definitely helped me with goal setting for myself. And also providing that nice influence over me of saying things are possible, ‘You can pursue something, you can go out there and do something, there's resources, there's help available.’
Sonia, who successfully graduated from college and is now contemplating a master's degree, described how her past accomplishments provided confidence to succeed in the future.

There's always going to be struggles! I mean, there's no way to just avoid those. But I think that I have become strong enough and I've gotten so much support from my family and my husband and his family and even the staff at Upward Bound. I know that I've got the support that I need. So that if a struggle did come, it's just a matter of knowing how to plug those people into my life and just try to get through those struggles. But I think that because I've got this experience behind me, I know that I can get through it, because there have been things in the past that I've seen as a struggle at that time, and now when you go beyond that, it's like, 'Wow! I got through it and I'm okay. I'm not worried about it!'

Veronica, a second year college student at the time of the study, underscored the importance of support from Upward Bound and she explained that she knew that she could always turn to Upward Bound for assistance. The existence of this support helped Veronica to confidently report that she would definitely graduate from college.

I know that I can always get that help. I know that I have lots of help whenever I need it. I know that I can get it. And [Upward Bound does] emphasize that. I know that I will have the help there for me if I can't do it or I'm having problems or something. I know that I can do it. [Upward Bound has] helped me reach what I wanted to do. It was this program that told me that I could do it, in a big way. I feel more positive about myself, I know that I can [graduate from college]. I mean it's not like I might not make it. I know that I'm going to do this. I'm going to do this. It's like a definite thing in my life. And I just feel more positive about that. And I'm going to get a job and do what I want to do because I know that I will have the help there for me if I can't do it or I'm having problems or something, I know that I can do it.

Encouragement

In addition to a system of support, Upward Bound also offered an important voice of encouragement to participants that consistently reminded them that they could be successful academically. This encouragement, participants reported, was a rare and essential commodity in their life nourishing their tenacity towards their educational
goals. Like Veronica, Briana found Upward Bound’s encouragement enhanced her conviction to complete her college education. Briana graduated from college with her bachelors and at the time of the interview was earning her master’s degree.

Yes, [Upward Bound] said I could do it. They motivated me to think that, ‘Yes, you can do this. You might struggle, but everybody struggles, but you can do this. We’re going to be here, we’re going to help you through the process, through the application process through the school. If you’re in school, you need help, you call us, we’ll find a way to help you.’ So, my ability to go to college was never questioned, it was never questioned by Upward Bound, never. I think that I always thought that I could go to college, I wasn't sure what type of college. I didn’t know about the really smart colleges, the ones we were taught were at the top. For example, [the] college which I attended, being one of the top 20 liberal arts colleges. Upward Bound never questioned me, I had questions of course, everybody has doubts. I wondered if I could do this, but Upward Bound helped me turn that negative answer into a positive answer, and say, ‘I’m going to do this, I can do this.’ Maybe I won't get A pluses, but I can do it, and maybe I will get A pluses, whose to say?

Margarita, beginning her second year in college, also spoke of the encouragement she received from Upward Bound and how her determination to complete college is sustained by this encouragement.

[Upward Bound] gave me encouragement. I received cards from the Upward Bound office that said, ‘We know you can do it.’ You know just like encouragement and I put it in my desk and I was like, ‘I'm part of Upward Bound and I know that I have to do this.’ So, I know that college is not made for everyone and everyone's different but, if you want something you have to put your heart into it. You know? And it gets me upset when I listen to kids who withdraw from school because they can't take it or they can't pay for it, there's always loans, there's always some way. If you want to go to college you can. You just have to want to, you just have to be willing to work at it. So, I know that I'm going do well in college and I know I'm going to be successful because I have this mentality and I'm willing to work. I've always been willing to work. I know I'm not, I know that schoolwork comes hard for me but I don't give up. I work hard and I know that I can do it. I might have to try a math problem out four times but I know I'm going to get it and I know if I read a novel I might not get it the first time but the second time I will and I'm willing to read it a second time.
Several students cited Upward Bound as an important ongoing resource as they pursued their college goals. They described how they felt comfortable calling Upward Bound anytime and asking for help. Knowing that Upward Bound would always be there provided comfort and support for participants as they aspired towards their future plans.

Adnoloy: If I don't get the information I can always call back or talk to someone from Upward Bound because the staff always say, 'Call us collect, if you have a problem give us a call.' And they're always there. So that's one thing I do know, I know that, definitely. I can always go back and talk to them, but like I said, if I have a problem I know that I can always call people and get help.

Alisha: I know that I am able to go there [Upward Bound] anytime and they can help me

Briana: I would call the Upward Bound office if I had any doubts or if I had any questions about anything. I knew that I could call them, I knew that I could count on them,

Sonia: I probably will still get help from Upward Bound staff to try to get to my next level. So, I think that’s really interesting and it’s very comforting to know that, for the last ten years, they’re still part of my life. Not just because I work for them but, even if I had been working somewhere else, I know that I could have called and said, ‘Look, I need a letter of recommendation, or, can you send me in the right direction?’ They’re always there to just try to help you in the best way they can. I mean, even if they’re not particularly experienced in handling master’s or doctoral programs, they’ll find a way to try to get the sources that you need. I think, in that sense, they’re still a big part of my life and the direction my life takes on even still.

Upward Bound provided support, encouragement, and ongoing resources to participants during and after their involvement in the program. Respondents identified these three elements as important in helping them to complete their post-secondary education. Data gathered in response to Question #2 suggested that Upward Bound did have an impact upon participant’s ability to complete a college degree.
Question #3: What Recommendations do Participants have for Upward Bound to Better Prepare Future Students to Complete a Post-secondary Education?

Many respondents when asked what Upward Bound could do to better serve students could not identify any specific areas of improvement. Some of the participants described a few specific things they thought might be helpful in assisting students towards their educational goals. These suggestions covered three areas: increased academic preparation; increased college preparation; and increased alumni contact.

Increased Academic Preparation

Respondents spoke about academic improvements that might better serve students. Alisha suggested that academic work for seniors include college level courses.

I guess maybe the senior kids could concentrate a little bit more on college work. I know that we did the seminar and maybe a class or two on the college level. I know that the English class helped a lot, but I feel that maybe we should have a little bit more. I know that the math course helped a little, but it wasn’t really necessary because most of the kids can just exempt out of it if they are strong in the math, but if not, I don’t know I didn’t get too much out of the math course.

Sonia also suggested increasing college level work to challenge participants.

But the length of writing that you do for college is so much bigger than the length of writing you do in high school. So I think maybe if we have, well now they have a senior project which includes that, but I think just having us do a little more of that, especially in the senior year. A little more of that preparation for the challenges of writing a longer essay or doing a research paper and not only just doing the research and the paper, but having it be closer to the actual level that you’re going to be working on in college. I think, if we had done that, I probably would have been a little more prepared.

Briana recommended technological skill development courses to improve student academic performance.

Make the kids aware of the technology, the internet, how to work different computer programs in terms of academics.
Carlos discussed his experience with Upward Bound courses and suggested students experience more academically challenging courses.

Some of the classes were sometimes too easy, I guess. The Physics I had [in Upward Bound] was completely different from the one I had in college. Well, completely different. [Also Upward Bound could better prepare us for] how difficult the teachers could be, I guess. Because I remember in [the] English [course] I had, the way she graded the papers was completely [different], from English 102. [The English 102 teacher] was way more strict. I was like, ‘Oh, my God!’ It was like, if I had more difficulty in Upward Bound, I probably wouldn’t have as much at [the community college]. Somehow they could teach you that you need to do it as best and quickly as possible, or there’ll be consequences later.

Increased College Preparation

As Carlos described above, participants also had suggestions for improving the preparation for college provided by Upward Bound. Alisha recommended that more time be spent attending a group discussion about ways to prepare to go away from home to college.

I know like we did have that little get together about going away to college, about what to bring and stuff like that. I feel that maybe a bit more about that. More getting prepared to leave and stuff like that.

Briana described the importance of reminding students about the difference between Upward Bound and college especially regarding the differences in access to money and other resources.

Continuing to talk about the fact that Upward Bound is not like the colleges that they will attend. They need to know that, because if not, they are going to have a real shock, reality is going to hit them in a way that could go either positive or negative. Making them aware that it’s okay not to be rich and it’s okay if you have to work a little more than the next guy or if you feel like you’re struggling a little more. The outcome of your efforts and your work is going to be to your advantage in the end.
In the same vein, Isaac also underscored the importance of preparing students for the college environment as it differs from Upward Bound. Isaac emphasized his experience of being alone in college and considered this factor to be valuable for students to anticipate.

[Upward Bound] could look more into the fact that a lot of times you are going to be by yourself, get ready to do it by yourself. Right now I'm in this college and I can't relate Upward Bound to anybody because nobody from my high school or anybody from Upward Bound goes here. So basically a lot of the times I'm stuck to myself and you just get ready for that, a lot of times in life you're going to be by yourself.

Increased Alumni Contact

One of the clearest recommendations for improvement included increased contact with Upward Bound alumni. Participants suggested a variety of ways in which alumni could spend time together, receive more contact from Upward Bound after leaving the program, and also be more connected with current program participants.

Adnoloy suggested that alumni spend more time together.

I think there needs to be more alumni stuff, throughout the year, regardless if it's just going to see a play or having dinner, or something like that. And I want it to be year round, even if it's just being with your alumni in your section of the state, but keep the bonds together because I feel like that's not done enough.

Briana recommended that Upward Bound continue to stay more actively involved in student's lives after they leave for college.

Perhaps keeping a closer track of [students] during the college years for retention purposes. Because even though I would call them, they didn't necessarily call me to see how things were going. But their focus was never really to keep track of you as an individual once you were in college. You could call them, but they weren't really going out of their way the way that they were at the high school level, and perhaps that's what they needed was someone to work on that aspect, because that's a lot of work to track those people down.
Sonia proposed increasing contact with outside agencies and alumni to better help Upward Bound students.

I think, right now, we need to be a little more connected with other agencies or places where we could provide more help for the students, not just limit them to doing things with Upward Bound. Getting them involved with other people who have done Upward Bound and talk to them about what life is like after high school and after college. So, I think, we can try to get alumni to come and talk to our students.

The recommendations for improvement that former participants of Upward Bound offered included increasing academic challenges, college preparation, and alumni contact. Six out of twelve respondents offered these suggestions. The other six participants in the study did not have any recommendations for change. There were no suggestions offered outside of the scope of services already provided by Upward Bound. All of the recommendations were for an increase in an existing component of the program.

The detailed results of Questions #1-3 have been reviewed in this section. The findings are informative and compelling regarding the experiences of first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college students reflecting upon the role of Upward Bound in their college endeavors. The next section serves as a summary of the above findings. The predominant themes in the data are identified for each question and summarized in table form. A conclusion about the results of the study closes the chapter.

**Summary of Results**

This section summarizes the themes that developed from participant's responses as detailed above to each of the research questions. As discussed at length in the previous sections of this chapter, several themes unfolded from each part of Questions #1-3. These themes are summarized below. A specific summary of the in-
depth responses to Question #1 is provided in tables 5-16. The tables synopsize each participant’s response to each theme within the six parts of research Question #1.

Research Question #1:

1. How do first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college students who participated in an Upward Bound program during high school evaluate the impact of the Upward Bound program on their lives, specifically with respect to their academic performance in high school and preparation for college, self-perceptions, family and social relationships, and their future educational goals?

This question is comprised of six parts. The first part of Question #1 explored the impact Upward Bound had upon high school academic performance. Participant responses fell into four categories.

a) Upward Bound improved their attitude and motivation towards academics in high school.

b) The Upward Bound summer program improved academic skills and confidence in high school.

c) Upward Bound provided racial diversity and decreased isolation felt as a Puerto Rican, college bound, high school student.

d) Overall, involvement in Upward Bound improved high school grades.

The second part of Question #1 inquired about the impact Upward Bound had upon students’ preparation for post-secondary education. Four themes were identified from respondent’s answers.

a) Upward Bound provided guidance and support to explore and select their career path and college major.

b) Upward Bound assisted with all aspects of college selection, application, acceptance and financial aid.

c) Upward Bound provided life skills development, exposure to diversity and the summer residential program to prepare students for college.
d) Upward Bound encouraged high school college preparatory curriculum
and provided academic skill development for college success.

Part three of Question #1 surveyed the impact of Upward Bound upon students’
self-perceptions. Participant responses reflected three themes.

a) Overall, Upward Bound improved self esteem and self-confidence.

b) Upward Bound increased awareness of self as Puerto Rican, first-
generation and low-income.

c) Upward Bound provided opportunities that increased learning about
self, which improved self perceptions.

The fourth part of Question #1 considered the impact of Upward Bound upon
family relationships. Participants reported four areas of impact.

a) Some students reported increased tensions with family relating to
Upward Bound participation.

b) Increased parental support of college goals.

c) Increased parental respect due to Upward Bound involvement and
accomplishments.

d) Increased understanding and appreciation of family and increased
motivation to succeed on behalf of the family.

The fifth part of Question #1 examined the impact of Upward Bound upon
participants’ social relationships. Three themes developed from participant’s responses.

a) Upward Bound provided a sense of community and safety within which
participants learned to take risks and develop important social skills.

b) Participants reported increased social diversity awareness and social
development within a multicultural environment.

c) Students reported being part of two social groups: those in Upward
Bound and those not in Upward Bound.

The sixth and final part of Question #1 queried the impact of Upward Bound on
participant’s goals. Responses from participants fell into three areas.
a) Upward Bound changed how participants envisioned their future and then made it possible to pursue that future.

b) Participants reported increased motivation to give back to their community as a part of their future goals.

c) Participants described where they would be without Upward Bound.

Tables are provided below detailing each participant’s response to each part of Question #1.
Table 5: Themes for Question #1, Part 1, Respondents 1-6.

Question #1 Part 1: How did Upward Bound Impact High School Academic Performance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Participant</th>
<th>Adnoloy 1</th>
<th>Alisha 2</th>
<th>Briana 3</th>
<th>Carlos 4</th>
<th>Diego 5</th>
<th>Isaac 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UB improved attitude and motivation towards academics in high school</td>
<td>Improved attitude towards school</td>
<td>Improved attitude towards school</td>
<td>Increased motivation to improve academics</td>
<td>UB reinforced connection between good grades and going to college</td>
<td>Focus shifted from negative outside influences to staying in school and improving grades to stay in UB</td>
<td>Always had a positive attitude about school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB summer program improved academic skills and confidence in high school</td>
<td>UB summer program increased confidence especially in math and science, improved vocab and writing skills which transferred to HS experience</td>
<td>UB summer program provided advanced preparation for HS courses</td>
<td>UB summer program provided smaller classes and individual attention from teachers. Improved performance in math and writing.</td>
<td>UB summer program increased interest in English and writing</td>
<td>UB summer program provided comfortable atmosphere where students spoke their minds and were more involved in the learning process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB provided racial diversity and decreased isolation felt as a Puerto Rican college bound student</td>
<td>Racial diversity in UB brought much needed support that did not exist in predominantly white HS classes</td>
<td>Racial diversity in UB increased feelings of comfort and support and decreased isolation</td>
<td>Racial diversity in UB</td>
<td>Racial diversity in UB decreased isolation as a Puerto Rican student</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall involvement in UB improved high school grades</td>
<td>Advanced prep in UB summer program improved grades in HS and strength in subject matters</td>
<td>Advanced preparation in UB summer program improved HS grades from B’s to A’s</td>
<td>Math grades and academic skills improved</td>
<td>Grades improved from C’s and D’s to A’s and B’s and learning skills improved</td>
<td>Grades improved</td>
<td>Improved grades</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Themes for Question #1, Part 1, Respondents 7-12.

Question #1 Part 1: How did Upward Bound Impact High School Academic Performance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Participant</th>
<th>Keyla 7</th>
<th>Margarita 8</th>
<th>Maria 9</th>
<th>Raynor 10</th>
<th>Sonia 11</th>
<th>Veronica 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UB improved attitude and motivation towards academics in high school</td>
<td>Always had a positive attitude about school</td>
<td>Always had a positive attitude about school</td>
<td>Always had a positive attitude about school</td>
<td>UB improved focus on grades as important to go to college and college became the goal</td>
<td>Improved attitude towards school</td>
<td>Improved attitude towards school. UB helped see that college was possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB summer program improved academic skills and confidence</td>
<td>UB summer program provided advance prep for HS courses</td>
<td>UB summer program improved writing skills</td>
<td>UB summer program provided advance prep for HS courses</td>
<td>UB teachers made subject material interesting and courses were taught well</td>
<td>Individual attention from teachers and increased skills built confidence. English and reading skills improved</td>
<td>UB summer program provided advance prep for HS courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB provided more racial diversity and decreased isolation felt as a Puerto Rican college bound student</td>
<td>Racial diversity in UB brought much needed support that did not exist in pred. white HS classes</td>
<td>Racial diversity in UB brought much needed support that did not exist in pred. white HS classes</td>
<td>Racial diversity in UB brought much needed support that did not exist in pred. white HS classes</td>
<td>Racial diversity in UB brought much needed support that did not exist in pred. white HS classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, involvement in UB improved high school grades</td>
<td>UB tutoring during the academic year improved grades. Advanced prep in UB summer program improved HS grades.</td>
<td>UB study groups during the academic year improved grades. All grades improved from B’s and C’s to A’s and B’s</td>
<td>UB tutoring during academic year helped grades improve. Advanced prep in UB summer program improved HS grades.</td>
<td>Grades improved almost an entire grade point</td>
<td>UB summer program built skills and confidence which improved HS performance. Grades definitely improved</td>
<td>UB tutoring during the academic year provided academic support and improved HS grades</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7: Themes for Question #1, Part 2, Respondents 1-6.

Question #1 Part 2: How did Upward Bound Prepare Students for Post-Secondary Education?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Participant</th>
<th>Adnoloy 1</th>
<th>Alisha 2</th>
<th>Briana 3</th>
<th>Carlos 4</th>
<th>Diego 5</th>
<th>Isaac 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UB provided guidance and support to explore and select career path and college major</td>
<td>UB provided opportunity to meet and interview professional in field of interest</td>
<td>UB taught that college was possible despite barriers</td>
<td>Absence of support from HS guidance counselors to pursue career choice was filled by UB</td>
<td>Provided coursework and opportunity to meet professional in field of interest</td>
<td>UB summer program senior project impacted career choice</td>
<td>UB provided guidance and support to pursue careers of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB assisted with all aspects of college selection, application, acceptance, and financial aid</td>
<td>UB provided access to college fairs, mock college interviews, college visits and taught that college was possible</td>
<td>UB provided info about colleges that family and friends who did not attend college could not provide</td>
<td>UB helped sort through financial aid packages and make final decision about which college to attend</td>
<td>Chose college where UB program was based to continue receiving help</td>
<td>Entire UB experience provided much needed preparation for college and made him a competitive applicant</td>
<td>UB provided help for entire application process from the college interview to understanding the financial aid package</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB provided life skills development, exposure to diversity and the summer residential program to prepare students for college</td>
<td>UB taught open minded acceptance of others</td>
<td>Experience of living on campus away from home built confidence in ability to succeed in college</td>
<td>Budgeting time was essential skill learned in UB to improve success at college</td>
<td>UB taught time management skills and personal responsibility</td>
<td>Time management skills was the most important gain from UB</td>
<td>Setting priorities and managing time are essential skills to succeed in college learned in UB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB encouraged HS college preparatory curriculum, provided academic skill development for college success</td>
<td>Compensated for limited educational resources at poorly funded public HS and absence of AP and honors courses</td>
<td>Compensated for absence of college preparatory coursework in high school</td>
<td>UB motivated enrollment in college prep courses and provided vital support to succeed in these courses</td>
<td>Skills learned in UB improved access to honors and AP courses in HS</td>
<td>UB summer program curriculum provided preparation for college</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8: Themes for Question #1, Part 2, Respondents 7-12.

Question #1 Part 2: How did Upward Bound Prepare Students for Post-Secondary Education?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Participants</th>
<th>Keyla 7</th>
<th>Margarita 8</th>
<th>Maria 9</th>
<th>Raynor 10</th>
<th>Sonia 11</th>
<th>Veronica 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UB provided guidance and support to explore and select career path and college major</td>
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<tr>
<td>UB helped acquire financial aid to attend elite private college over public state university</td>
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<tr>
<td>UB helped with college applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>UB provided financial aid to attend private college</td>
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<tr>
<td>UB helped prepare for meeting different people in college</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience in UB provided overall preparation for college, living away from home taught independence</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB helped with college applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>UB provided information about a wider selection of colleges</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB was only source of college preparation and living on campus provided real college experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB provided life skills development, exposure to diversity and the summer residential program to prepare for college</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in more honors college preparation courses in HS because of UB. UB curriculum in summer program provided college preparation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>UB staff influenced enrollment in college prep courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>UB teachers and counselors provided information and experience to prepare for college</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed additional lab science and math courses in HS due to influence of UB. Earned college credit in UB summer program.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9: Themes for Question #1, Part 3, Respondents 1-6

Question #1 Part 3: How did Upward Bound Impact Students’ Self-perceptions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/ Participants</th>
<th>Adnoloy 1</th>
<th>Alisha 2</th>
<th>Briana 3</th>
<th>Carlos 4</th>
<th>Diego 5</th>
<th>Isaac 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ub improved self esteem and self-confidence</td>
<td>UB support improved self confidence</td>
<td>UB improved confidence and decision making skills and increased participation in classes</td>
<td>UB increased self respect and confidence to speak up and share opinions</td>
<td>Perceived self as smarter, more capable, and increased confidence to succeed academically</td>
<td>Asks more questions and is more active participant in class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ub increased awareness of self as Puerto Rican, first-generation and low income</td>
<td>UB provided key learning about PR history and improved confidence about race, and being low income</td>
<td>UB taught that college was possible regardless of income, parents’ education, etc.</td>
<td>UB increased awareness and reduced shame and negative stereotypes about self as PR and low income</td>
<td>UB increased pride in being PR through exposure to PR guest speakers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ub provided opportunities that increased learning about self</td>
<td>Multicultural residential experiences in UB increased self awareness and reflection</td>
<td>UB helped to realize limitations and accept mistakes as learning opportunities</td>
<td>UB provided motivation to utilize opportunities such as, travel, to expand horizons</td>
<td>UB improved social skills, sense of responsibility, and overall attributes as a person</td>
<td>UB increased openness to others and revealed limitations of trying to do things alone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10: Themes for Question #1, Part 3, Respondents 7-12

Question #1 Part 3: How did Upward Bound Impact Students' Self-perceptions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Participants</th>
<th>Keyla 7</th>
<th>Margarita 8</th>
<th>Maria 9</th>
<th>Raynor 10</th>
<th>Sonia 11</th>
<th>Veronica 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UB improved self esteem and self-confidence</strong></td>
<td>UB reduced shyness, improved self confidence</td>
<td>UB increased leadership skills and improved self confidence</td>
<td>UB increased confidence socially and academically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UB increased awareness of self as Puerto Rican, first-generation and low income</strong></td>
<td>UB increased search to learn more about heritage and history</td>
<td>UB supported attendance at one of the most expensive colleges despite low income</td>
<td>UB increased exposure to writing and work by PR authors and professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UB provided opportunities that increased learning about self</strong></td>
<td>Exposure to cultural activities through UB changed outlook on life</td>
<td>Feedback from other UB students raised self awareness</td>
<td>UB increased awareness of self as first-generation to college which improved self confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11: Themes for Question #1, Part 4, Respondents 1-6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Participant</th>
<th>Adnoloy 1</th>
<th>Alisha 2</th>
<th>Briana 3</th>
<th>Carlos 4</th>
<th>Diego 5</th>
<th>Isaac 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased tensions with family as a result of UB participation</td>
<td>Included parents in child’s preparation for college by educating them in all parts of the college prep process</td>
<td>UB gave parents strong indication that college was a real priority and possibility</td>
<td>UB strengthened parent’s support of college goals</td>
<td>Helped parents see college as possible, provided info about college which increased support</td>
<td>Maintaining both family involvement and college attendance required difficult bridge of two cultures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased parental support of college goals</td>
<td>UB gave parents strong indication that college was a real priority and possibility</td>
<td>UB gave parents strong indication that college was a real priority and possibility</td>
<td>UB strengthened parent’s support of college goals</td>
<td>Helped parents see college as possible, provided info about college which increased support</td>
<td>Maintaining both family involvement and college attendance required difficult bridge of two cultures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UB involvement and accomplishments increased respect from parents</td>
<td>Parents respected efforts made in UB and resulting accomplishments</td>
<td>Parents respected efforts made in UB and resulting accomplishments</td>
<td>Involve-ment improved parents’ respect for student’s intelligence and ability</td>
<td>Performance in UB increased mother’s respect and proved college was possible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased understanding and appreciation of family and motivation to succeed on behalf of the family</td>
<td>UB involvement brought father and daughter closer</td>
<td>Sought help and support from mother about college and felt closer to family</td>
<td>Taught to give back and pass on what has been given and value importance of being a role model</td>
<td>UB increased appreciation for the difficulties mother experienced when unable to attend college and increased motivation to succeed to make mother proud and be role model to sister</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question #1 Part 4: How did Upward Bound Impact Family Relationships?
Table 12: Themes for Question #1, Part 4, Respondents 7-12

**Question #1 Part 4: How did Upward Bound Impact Family Relationships?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Participant</th>
<th>Keyla 7</th>
<th>Margarita 8</th>
<th>Maria 9</th>
<th>Raynor 10</th>
<th>Sonia 11</th>
<th>Veronica 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increased tensions with family as a result of UB participation</strong></td>
<td>Child being away from home was new experience for the family and presented anxiety for parents</td>
<td>Older siblings expressed resentment of college goals, accused student of trying to “act white” and forgetting her roots</td>
<td>Mother’s concern about cost of college increased tensions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increased parental support of college goals</strong></td>
<td>Parent’s support of college strengthened as a result of UB</td>
<td>Mother saw UB as important source of support to accomplish college goals and supported involvement</td>
<td>UB answered parent’s questions and included them in the program which increased parent’s support of child’s goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UB involvement and accomplishments increased respect from parents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increased understanding and appreciation of family and increased motivation to succeed on behalf of the family</strong></td>
<td>Came to understand that mother’s absence of support was due to her limited experience with education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family opposed UB involvement, perceived college as too expensive, expressed resentment at increased knowledge

Although parents initially hated UB, their attitude changed as they learned that college was possible

Parents and siblings were proud of UB involvement and perceptions of and pride in student improved

Through UB, became more comfortable talking with parents about goals and personal struggles

Understood parent’s discomfort with college resulted from an absence of college opportunities for themselves
Table 13: Themes for Question #1, Part 5, Respondents 1-6

Question #1 Part 5: How did Upward Bound Impact Social Relationships?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Participant(s)</th>
<th>Adnoloy 1</th>
<th>Alisha 2</th>
<th>Briana 3</th>
<th>Carlo 4</th>
<th>Diego 5</th>
<th>Isaac 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UB provided a sense of community and safety within which participants learned to take risks and develop important social skills</td>
<td>Unlike the dangerous neighborhood where she lived, UB provided a safe environment in which to socialize and develop friendships</td>
<td>Felt open to express emotions as closeness grew with others, felt safe to express vulnerability that couldn’t be shown in home environment</td>
<td>UB provided a safe, unified community, encouraged the development of closer relationships with others, giving back to community, and to trust, not criticize others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants reported increased social diversity awareness and social development within a multicultural environment</td>
<td>Racial diversity and continuity in both living and learning environments was unique in UB. Learned to be respectful, open-minded, and live with members of other racial groups and to listen to others and learn about self</td>
<td>Appreciated the diversity and importance of listening to others, learned about background and experiences of others which increased opportunities for success in the future</td>
<td>Exposure to other people and cultures increased pride in own culture and helped increase respect of others. UB made him a better person by improving his ability to relate to others, to be open minded and not stereotype people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students reported being part of two social groups: those in UB and those not in UB</td>
<td>Descibed a separation between friends in UB and those not in the program who did not understand importance of UB and preparing for college</td>
<td>Friends not in UB were jealous of involvement and accomplishments in UB. Feared losing contact with friends who decided to go in different directions.</td>
<td>Found his non-UB-college-bound friends an important source of inspiration for him to succeed and he values the contact he maintains with them</td>
<td>Felt closer to UB students than people he had known for years because of shared experiences and goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14: Themes for Question #1, Part 5, Respondents 7-12

Question #1 Part 5: How did Upward Bound Impact Social Relationships?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Participant</th>
<th>Keyla 7</th>
<th>Margarita 8</th>
<th>Maria 9</th>
<th>Raynor 10</th>
<th>Sonia 11</th>
<th>Veronica 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UB provided a sense of community and safety within which participants learned to take risks and develop important social skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UB focused on learning how to build close relationships and community with others and to be proud of who you are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants reported increased social diversity awareness and social development within a multicultural environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students reported being part of two social groups: those in UB and those not in UB</td>
<td>Had to bridge two separate groups, UB friends and friends not in UB who went in different directions and did not understand the importance of college goals</td>
<td>UB changes whole way of thinking, of looking at the world, and the way one thinks of others. Friends who didn’t share the UB experience have difficulty understanding these changes</td>
<td>Misses friends who went in different directions and finds it difficult to keep in touch when not pursuing the same goals</td>
<td>Experienced difficulty being part of two different sets of friends: those in UB who were planning to go to college and friends not in UB who did not have college as a goal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UB = Upward Bound
Table 15: Themes for Question #1, Part 6, Respondents 1-6

**Question #1 Part 6: How did Upward Bound Impact Participant’s Future Goals?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Participant</th>
<th>Adnoloy 1</th>
<th>Alisha 2</th>
<th>Briana 3</th>
<th>Carlos 4</th>
<th>Diego 5</th>
<th>Isaac 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UB changed how participants envisioned their future and then made it possible to pursue that future</td>
<td>UB helped to realize that attending a private, elite, 4 year college was possible and filled in the gaps of missing information needed to acquire this goal</td>
<td>Prior to UB, getting married, having children and working at a job was the only option. Lacked examples of educated females and information about college. UB opened new doors and education is now the future plan.</td>
<td>UB and access to a college education allowed the option to leave a failed marriage instead of feeling stuck without options.</td>
<td>UB helped to see the future more clearly. UB was the first time he thought about future goals.</td>
<td>UB made college more of a reality and professional goals a possibility</td>
<td>UB is a positive project that made me want to succeed. UB helped me to see that conditions don’t have to be negative, they can be positive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants reported increased motivation to give back to their community as a part of their future goals</td>
<td>Wants to work with children and work in the community and make the city a better place to live.</td>
<td>Returned to home city to work in school system with children who come from the same background and to help them as she was helped.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feel that it is his duty to show people that they can make it, future plans are to help others and give back to his family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants described where they thought they would be without UB</td>
<td>Would be working and going to the community college instead of the elite private college she is currently attending</td>
<td>Would be at the community college or not in college at all instead of attending the state university on full scholarship for four years</td>
<td>Would have attended community college, not private college, possibly not finished college, may have stayed in unhealthy relationship, not enough respect and confidence in self to leave</td>
<td>Would still be in college but would be having more difficulty academically without the help from UB</td>
<td>Could have been dead or in jail, maybe a mechanic, selling drugs, probably would not have graduated HS</td>
<td>Probably be at a community college instead of a private college completing his four year degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 16: Themes for Question #1, Part 6, Respondents 7-12

**Question #1 Part 6: How did Upward Bound Impact Participant’s Future Goals?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/Participants</th>
<th>Keyla 7</th>
<th>Margarita 8</th>
<th>Maria 9</th>
<th>Raynor 10</th>
<th>Sonia 11</th>
<th>Veronica 12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UB changed how participants envisioned their future and then made it possible to pursue that future</td>
<td>UB provided information for additional career options</td>
<td>Before UB, never had any notion of college, didn’t know anyone who had gone to college, thought only rich people went to college. UB raised confidence and awareness that college was possible</td>
<td>Before UB, never thought about college. UB helped focus on college and better standard of living than her parents had, now the goal is a master’s degree. UB’s impact changed her career goal towards a career helping others in the same way that UB helped her.</td>
<td>Prior to UB had no plans or information to go to college, would never have gone to college if it wasn’t for UB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants reported increased motivation to give back to their community as a part of their future goals</td>
<td>Would be at the state university instead of the elite private college</td>
<td>Would be in college but could not have completed the application process without UB</td>
<td>Unsure where information about college would have come from without UB.</td>
<td>Would either be at the state university, community college or possibly not in college at all instead of attending one of the top ranked universities in the nation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants described where they thought they would be without UB</td>
<td>Would not be in college, would probably be pregnant and working in a factory. Would never have gone to college without UB.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Research Question #2:

2. How do first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college students evaluate the impact of the Upward Bound program on their ability to complete a post-secondary education?

Question #2 assessed participants’ evaluation of Upward Bound’s impact upon their ability to complete a post-secondary education. Participants spoke specifically about the level of support, encouragement and resources that they received from Upward Bound and reported how these three elements enhanced their ability to complete their college education.

Research Question #3:

3. What are the recommendations of first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican, college students for the Upward Bound Program to better prepare future students to complete a post-secondary education?

The final question of the study surveyed participant feedback about improvements to Upward Bound. Respondents recommended increased academic preparation, increased college preparation, and increased alumni contact.

Conclusion

Review of the data in this chapter indicated that low-income, first-generation, Puerto Rican students who participated in an Upward Bound program in high school evaluated Upward Bound as having an impact on their lives specifically with respect to their: academic performance in high school; college preparation; self-perceptions; family relationships; social relationships; and future goals. Additionally, participants evaluated Upward Bound as impacting their ability to complete a college education. Finally, half of the participants in the study provided recommendations to better prepare future students to complete a post-secondary education.
The results of the data were organized and presented in this chapter according to the three research questions. Following the presentation of the overall data for each research question an additional summary of the themes analyzed from the data was provided in this chapter. The themes for Question #1 were presented in table format detailing each participant’s response to each theme sited in order to better represent this particularly dense part of the data.

The next chapter will provide a discussion about the research results specifically in regard to the literature on first generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college bound high school students and their experiences in Upward Bound. Implications for further research will also be reviewed. The chapter will close with an overall conclusion about the study.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter provides a discussion of the results reported in the previous chapter as they relate to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 about first generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students and Upward Bound. Themes from the data were identified and summarized in the previous chapter and in Tables 5-16. The research questions and resulting themes serve to organize the discussion in this chapter. Implications for future research will also be considered and a conclusion of the overall study closes the chapter.

The following section, using the research design questions, will discuss the findings and their relationship to the current literature.

Discussion of Results

Research Question #1: How do first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college students who participated in an Upward Bound program during high school evaluate the impact of the Upward Bound program on their lives, specifically with respect to their academic performance in high school and preparation for college, self-perceptions, family and social relationships, and their future educational goals?

Question #1 is comprised of six parts and originated in part from Bemak’s (1975) qualitative study of former Upward Bound students. Bemak (1975) studied the influence of Upward Bound on the personal, social, and political development of students. Bemak’s interview protocol in which he explored student’s feelings about themselves, their family, friends, academics and their future, guided the development of the protocol for this question in the study.
Many similarities exist between this study and Bemak's investigation. Bemak also interviewed twelve subjects who were low-income, although the gender and racial group membership of the subjects is undisclosed in his research. Bemak's study is one of the few qualitative explorations intentionally focused upon the voices of Upward Bound participants as they discuss the impact of Upward Bound on their lives. The present research attempts to resemble this intention as well. Coincidentally, Bemak's investigation also shares some commonalties with this study. Although approximately twenty-five years apart in time, both authors worked in different Upward Bound programs that each served residents of Massachusetts and each study involves some of these students. Thus, an added bonus of this research includes what could be considered a follow-up investigation of sorts to Bemak's original research, although the studies are not exact in their duplication. Thus, reference to Bemak's results will highlight this discussion section.

Question #1, Part 1: High School Academic Performance

The first part of Question #1 explored the impact Upward Bound had upon high school academic performance. Four themes emerged from the results. 1) Upward Bound improved student's attitude and motivation towards academics in high school. 2) The Upward Bound summer program improved academic skills and confidence in high school. 3) Upward Bound provided racial diversity and decreased isolation felt as a Puerto Rican college bound student. 4) Overall, involvement in Upward Bound improved high school grades.

Attitude and motivation towards academics in high school were improved through Upward Bound involvement. Overwhelmingly participants described
themselves as becoming more aware through Upward Bound about the importance of college and the necessity of good grades in high school to gain admission to college. In this manner, in addition to the academic assistance received through Upward Bound, students reported an increase in their academic skills and confidence in high school and found that their grades improved as a result of Upward Bound.

Few studies have measured the specific impact of Upward Bound on high school attendance, attitude and academic performance. Two studies measured changes in grades and attendance and found no improvement as a result of Upward Bound involvement. Myers (1997) did not find that Upward Bound impacted participant's grade point averages. Faulcon (1994) found no significant difference in rates of high school attendance between Upward Bound participants and non-Upward Bound participants.

However, Johnson (1995) in a study that focused upon Hispanic students enrolled in Upward Bound programs found that student grades were improved through program involvement. Likewise, Tanara (1989) and Young & Exum (1982) found a significant difference in pre and post student grade point averages of Upward Bound participants. Additionally, Zulli (2000) found that participants reported improved motivation due to their involvement in the Upward Bound program.

Only one of these studies attempted to account for the reason grades, attendance or motivation improved or did not improve through Upward Bound. Most of these studies utilized quantitative measures that limited their ability to account for the specific change or absence of change reflected in the data. However, the qualitative findings of the present study, utilizing the words of Upward Bound
participants, do suggest a source for the change in academic performance. In other words, not only is it possible in this study to assess that a change in academic performance has occurred through Upward Bound, but data is also provided to lend insight into how this change was brought about by Upward Bound.

These results are compounded when compared with Bemak (1975) who also inquired about changes in academic performance as a result of Upward Bound involvement. Because each study asked the same qualitative questions it is possible to compare the responses of participants in both studies and to hear what they describe as the source of their improvements in academics. Below, in Table 17, is a sampling of quotes from both studies that resemble one another as participants are responding to several questions, as detailed in Appendix B, about Upward Bound’s impact on their academic attitude, attendance, and performance in high school.
Table 17: Similarities between Bemak (1975) and Present Study (2001) on Participant Response about Impact of Upward Bound on High School Academic Performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bemak (1975)</th>
<th>Present Study (2001)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It [school] meant something, I could work for something. It [Upward Bound] gave me a chance to go to college....I didn’t have to work hard, I just had to have a goal and be serious about it (p. 163)</td>
<td>Upward Bound gave me goals. I have college as my goal now, and so it was a lot easier to focus on classes. Just the fact that they [Upward Bound] helped me focus more on getting into college and having that as my goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well, the only reason why I kept going to school, well after I started to go to Upward Bound, I said, “Wow! There is a way for me to go to school!” And that gave me hope and determination and strength. But I still was very bored...After Upward Bound I had a sense of purpose. I wanted to go. There was something for me to look forward to. There was a hope that I could go on further. OK, I went. I had to get a diploma because I knew that Upward Bound would help me get into college (p. 168-169).</td>
<td>Where I come from college is seriously something you see in movies. It’s something that rich people go to...The way I lived my life in terms of academics was always, “I have a paper due tomorrow.” As opposed to, “If I get an A on [this paper], that will get me an A in the class, which will get me a whatever GPA in high school, which will get me into this college which will...” So Upward Bound did kind of raise my confidence in the sense that now I know that I could actually get into college. It was a reachable goal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data provides some indications as to how Upward Bound may impact high school academic performance. It seems that the power of providing a clear vision of what is possible and to offer that possibility as a realistic option is clearly what students today and twenty-five years ago found so compelling and motivating about the Upward Bound program. Through the provision of a goal and a concrete means to that goal, students reported changes in their attitude and performance in school.

One critical finding in the data that was absent in the literature was the widespread experience of feeling isolated in high school as a Puerto Rican student. These feelings of isolation and separation were themes that pervaded the data appearing in many different ways. Pertaining to this section, participants described
their isolation as one of a few Puerto Rican students in high school college preparatory courses. College bound high school students enrolled in college preparatory coursework often found themselves in classes that were composed predominately of white students and segregated from the rest of the Puerto Rican students. They described feeling pressure to perform and be “the smart Puerto Rican” while at the same time feared appearing stupid and doubted their ability to measure equally with their white peers academically. Consequently they also experienced derision from their Puerto Rican peers who were excluded from the higher level courses.

Upward Bound made a difference in this regard by maintaining a diverse population of students in the program and academic courses. Participants repeatedly made reference to their increased level of comfort in the academic courses they attended during the Upward Bound summer program due to the presence of more people like themselves. They described this experience as singularly improving their confidence in their academic performance and in their ability to speak up in class during the following academic year.

Throughout the study the positive influence of being part of a racially diverse group of students actively pursuing a post-secondary degree became increasingly evident. Although studies of Upward Bound report that minorities and low-income students often experience the greatest positive impact (Burkheimer et al., 1976; Levine & Nidiffer, 1996; Moore, 1997) little has been said to account for this difference. Yet, the results of this study confirm the findings by Guzman (1997) and others (Ballesteros, 1986; and Carasquillo, 1985; Education Trust, 1996; Romo & Falbo, 1996; Secada et al., 1998; Velencia, 1991) who discuss the struggles of Latino
students in high school and the role of the school system in promoting student failure. The clear articulation of loneliness and isolation as a Puerto Rican, college bound, student and the profound impact of a program such as Upward Bound to intervene in this experience is not found elsewhere in the literature.

Question #1, Part 2: Preparation for College

The second part of Question #1 inquired about the impact Upward Bound had upon students’ preparation for post-secondary education. Again, four themes were identified from respondent’s answers. 1) Upward Bound provided guidance and support to explore and select their career path and college major. 2) Upward Bound assisted with all aspects of college selection, application, acceptance and financial aid. 3) Upward Bound provided life skills development, exposure to diversity and the summer residential program to prepare students for college. 4) Upward Bound encouraged high school college preparatory curriculum and provided academic skill development for college success.

The critical need for effective career counseling and assistance with the college application process was established in the literature review. Numerous studies cited research in which first generation (Richardson & Skinner, 1992) and minority students (Arbona, 1990; Bowman, 1993; Lee & Ekstrom, 1987), especially Latino students (Koa & Tienda, 1998), reported a lack of career counseling and access to information and assistance with college application procedures. Participants in the study related several difficulties with their high school guidance counselors and an absence of critical college information. The literature underscores the importance of the data from
this section as participants clearly articulated the value and necessity of the services received from Upward Bound regarding career and college assistance.

One of the most significant findings in the recent longitudinal study of Upward Bound (Moore, 1997) found that Hispanics gained more credits in all core college preparatory curriculum in high school. They gained more than two credits compared to African American and white students who gained less than a half a credit. This factor contributed to the overall conclusion by Moore (1997) that Hispanics and students with low academic expectations benefited most from Upward Bound. Data from the current study supported Moore’s findings.

Participants consistently reported that Upward Bound challenged them to take college preparatory courses in high school when independently they would not have enrolled in these courses. Ten out of twelve respondents reported that they enrolled in college preparatory courses as a result of Upward Bound encouragement or that Upward Bound compensated for the absence of college preparatory courses available in their high school. This academic support was a strong theme in the data.

Moore (1997) also found that college enrollment rates were much higher for Upward Bound participants compared to their peers who were not in Upward Bound. Additionally, Moore (1997) found that more Upward Bound students went to four-year colleges than two-year colleges. The participants in this study reflected these findings.

Participants also detailed specific limitations in their college preparation during high school which supported the findings reported in Kozol (1991) specifically regarding the impact of poorly funded schools. Carlos described how the tracking he
experienced in his high school math courses kept him from completing the math courses required for acceptance into engineering schools for his selected career path. Likewise, Keyla described the impact of not receiving the necessary preparation for her college level math and science courses which she entered in her first year as a pre-med student.

Overall, the data confirmed much of the literature regarding poor academic preparation and the impact of Upward Bound on attempts to compensate for the schooling students do not receive.

Question #1, Part 3: Self-perceptions

Part three of Question #1 surveyed the impact of Upward Bound upon students’ self-perceptions. Participant responses reflected three themes. 1) Overall, Upward Bound improved self esteem and self-confidence. 2) Upward Bound increased awareness of self as Puerto Rican, first-generation and low-income. 3) Upward Bound provided opportunities that increased learning about self, which improved self perceptions.

While some research on Upward Bound has surveyed the impact upon student’s self-concept (Geisler, 1968) or self-esteem (Merchant, 1986; Young, 1973). There have not been any qualitative studies conducted on Upward Bound’s impact on self-perceptions, with the exception of Bemak (1975). In Table 18, the comparison of the present study to Bemak’s (1975) findings about the impact of Upward Bound on self-perceptions are strikingly exemplified.
Table 18: Similarities between Bemak (1975) and Present Study (2001) on Participant Response about Impact of Upward Bound on Self-perceptions in General.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bemak (1975)</th>
<th>Present Study (2001)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I learned to think out some things instead of just jumping the gun. I used to always jump the gun no matter what (p. 145).</td>
<td>I guess I am a bit more confident when I make decisions. Basically, I know how to go about making the decisions instead of jumping right into the things. I know that I can sit back and think and go through the different pros and cons about the decision and then make my decision from there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It [self-perception] changed because I was a very stiff type of person... I just felt down and out and Upward Bound just gave me the feeling that I was somebody, made me feel that I’m unique, like I’m an individual, and it made me feel as though that what I have to say, it may not be equal to what somebody else has said but I said it and I’m the only person that has said it. It’s important.</td>
<td>Upward Bound made me more comfortable as a person in getting my views across. It helped me know that I could do it, that I could do anything that I set my mind to do...I felt like I had a voice. I began to be more outspoken. I would express my feelings, and I would say, “Look, this is who I am.” I think in that way Upward Bound made me have a voice of my own. Teaching me and encouraging me to voice my opinion, to see myself as the same if not better than the person next to me, to know that I have power.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Equally compelling are a few examples from the present study mirrored with excerpts from Bemak’s data in Table 19 illustrating the impact of Upward Bound upon student’s self-perceptions, especially in terms of race, gender and class. It is amazing how similar the participant’s responses are despite the twenty-five year difference in time between their experiences in the program.
Table 19: Similarities between Bemak (1975) and Present Study (2001) on Participant Response about Impact of Upward Bound on Self-perceptions regarding Gender, Class and Race.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bemak (1975)</th>
<th>Present Study (2001)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Through the Bound I became aware of myself as a woman, and more</td>
<td>I had never really read a lot of literature written by Puerto Rican women. And now, I know that they’re out there. Not only Puerto Rican, but other Latinas. And so, just the fact that I started reading up on the literature that was written by Latinas...If I really wanted to, I could do this!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aware of the situation of poor people. . . I grew. My interests</td>
<td>I quit drugs... I didn’t think I was anything but a street person and that’s where my heart belonged... and then when I realized being around people that were as poor as I was and they were in the same position I was, a lot of them, you know, just getting away, just looking at something else, I just realized that there was another way...(p. 141).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>were awakened. I read on subjects...I became aware of my whole</td>
<td></td>
<td>I knew everybody in Upward Bound was pretty much low income. Everybody was from the same boat. When I was younger I was ashamed... But when you’re in Upward Bound everybody’s in the same boat...Basically Upward Bound just helped me realize my potential. To see that I could do anything that I wanted to do, regardless of where I come from.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thinking process (p. 140).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I quit drugs... I didn’t think I was anything but a street</td>
<td>Yes, a whole lot better. New things opened up to me. Classes that they had in the program were good. There was one dealing with black issues which helped open up and evolve a whole new part of me. I really like that part of me, too (p. 143).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person and that’s where my heart belonged... and then when</td>
<td>I think it was because when I was in Upward Bound I took my first Puerto Rican History class. After that class I would go back to school and I could not stand to the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. It was all about my culture. I didn’t even care about what the white people were doing. It was just all about learning my music, learning my culture, learning about myself and immersing myself into what I had to do... Now I feel like I am confident enough about my race and my culture to speak to someone about it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I realized being around people that were as poor as I was and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>they were in the same position I was, a lot of them, you know,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>just getting away, just looking at something else, I just</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>realized that there was another way...(p. 141).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, a whole lot better. New things opened up to me. Classes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>that they had in the program were good. There was one dealing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with black issues which helped open up and evolve a whole new</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part of me. I really like that part of me, too (p. 143).</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Question #1, Part 4: Family Relationships

The fourth part of Question #1 considered the impact of Upward Bound upon family relationships. Participants reported four areas of impact. 1) Increased tensions with family relating to Upward Bound participation. 2) Increased parental support of
college goals. 3) Increased parental respect due to Upward Bound involvement and accomplishments. 4) Increased understanding and appreciation of family and increased motivation to succeed on behalf of the family.

Some of the literature on first generation students reports that families can be perceived as unsupportive regarding a student’s college endeavors (Billson & Terry, 1982; Terenzini, et al., 1996; York-Anderson & Bowman, 1991). A few examples in this study reflected this experience. Veronica’s parents were clearly not supportive of her pursuing a college degree and her involvement in Upward Bound raised these issues and resulting tensions between she and her family. Likewise, Maria experienced tension in her relationships with her mother and siblings. However, in both cases, these tensions were resolved over the course of the years of involvement in Upward Bound.

A majority of the students in the study reported ongoing and increasing support from their parent’s regarding their educational goals and stated that their Upward Bound involvement actually increased their parent’s support. Bemak’s (1975) results reflected much the same impact on family relationships with some family tension increasing while most participants reported heightened support and respect from family members. Bemak (1975) similarly found that participant’s understanding and appreciation towards their family improved. Additionally, studies of first generation Latino students and Mexican-American women attribute their college success to their supportive families (Arellano & Padilla, 1996; Ybarra, 1988). Other studies echo the educational support of Latino families (Romo & Falbo, 1996; Secada et al., 1998).
Results of the data indicate that the way in which a student perceives their family’s support of their educational endeavors may be impacted by several factors. As time goes by a family’s support of post-secondary educational goals may change especially during the high school years. Additionally, the level of support a student receives outside of the family from other agencies supporting their post-secondary endeavors may influence the level of support they receive from their family and the way in which the student perceives familial support. Finally, a student’s perceptions of familial support may change over time as a function of personal growth, confidence and the ability to understand the experiences of their parents and elders.

Another area in which participant responses were reflective of the literature occurred regarding the difficulties students reported in their struggle to bridge two cultures, which they often perceived as mutually exclusive. Participants reported feelings of loneliness and an absence of belonging in their life as a college student while also feeling isolated and estranged from their family who did not understand their college experiences. This data is well supported by the literature on first-generation, Latino students who also describe this dual cultural experience (Rendon, 1992; Rodriguez, 1975).

For first generation, low-income, Puerto Rican college bound students the action towards obtaining a higher level of education than one’s parents through predominately white institutes of learning present multiple experiences of being partly in one culture while partly in another. Once again this research uncovered yet another dimension in which Puerto Rican, low-income, first generation students struggle with
feeling isolated and alone in their educational pursuits. Reducing these feelings appears to be one of the critical ways in which Upward Bound serves these students.

Question #1, Part 5: Social Relationships

The fifth part of Question #1 examined the impact of Upward Bound upon participants’ social relationships. Three themes developed from participant’s responses. 1) Upward Bound provided a sense of community and safety within which participants learned to take risks and develop important social skills. 2) Participants reported increased social diversity awareness and social development within a multicultural environment. 3) Students reported being part of two social groups: those in Upward Bound and those not in Upward Bound.

Inquiring about the impact of Upward Bound upon participants’ social relationships elicited both in this study and Bemak (1975) details about the difficulties of balancing between friends who are not involved in a college preparatory program and those that are not. Additionally, students spoke about the importance of being involved in a diverse group of people with similar interests and goals. In both studies participants discussed the difference between their social relationships in Upward Bound and those outside of Upward Bound. These differences were particularly apparent in relationships with others across race. Excerpts from both Bemak and the present study communicate these struggles.
Table 20: Similarities between Bemak (1975) and Present Study (2001) on Participant Response about Impact of Upward Bound on Social Relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bemak (1975)</th>
<th>Present Study (2001)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>… the people I met up there [in Upward Bound] were all different mixtures and everything. Usually I just hang around with white Anglo-Americans and so when I hear them say something like, “What about that nigger?” or something like that, I say, “You know, what do you want to be like that for?” I really got to be like that. But they won’t change just because I say that…</td>
<td>I made friends that I wouldn’t have other than going to Upward Bound. I met people who I wouldn’t talk to or come across before [Upward Bound]. Previously I would have ranked on them and said, ‘Oh, look at that white dude.’ But by being there you actually get to know the person, not just see the outside, and see people are cool. It’s just all about being open.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I came back [from Upward Bound] I was really down on the kids because everyone had little cliques and things like that. I couldn’t stand that anymore, besides I couldn’t stand everybody not being as close as some of the kids were in Upward Bound. Between Blacks and Whites and everything. I couldn’t stand that because everyone was separated. But part of the growing up process was that back home it was a different situation than Upward Bound was because Upward Bound was small and you could afford to get along in Upward Bound and when I came home people had to be different (p. 157-158).</td>
<td>[In Upward Bound] we were multicultural. There were always people from different cultures in each class. And we were all together. We were living together and we were going to class together. And I thought that had a very big impact as opposed to my living in a Spanish community, going to school and being around a very large white community in my classes, going back home and feeling that displacement. So by going to Upward Bound I met people of color. I had more friends who were people of color when I went to Upward Bound than I did at school because there weren't many people of color in my classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upward Bound appeared in the summer with blacks and Puerto Ricans. Like back at home you look at PR’s [Puerto Ricans] like they’re different because it’s mostly a white community and we started going places where there would be black kids and Puerto Rican kids, I had to convince my friends though. They were shocked at first. Before I think there was fear not knowing what they were like or knowing them, Now we like going into integrated places (p. 160-161).</td>
<td>It's important for white students to go to Upward Bound too...I have spent my whole life learning about white Americans and white Americans have not taken any time to learn about Puerto Ricans, aside from that we were acquired from Spain and are a commonwealth. So I think that white students that go to Upward Bound get that. And I think that coming to college with that, they can be more open minded to the multicultural community on this campus. But me coming from my background, I feel like I can talk to people who aren't coming from that background. So [Upward Bound] prepared me to come here and meet people who have never seen a person of color. And to understand that and to be able to talk to [white students] about that and to become friends with them. Or just help them become aware.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is really no literature detailing the impact of Upward Bound on the social relationships of the participants with the exception of Bemak (1975). Bemak's findings parallel the results of this study in terms of the improved social skills and closer relationships that participant's developed as a result of Upward Bound. Again, the most compelling results in this area of the study continue to reveal the multiple ways in which first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students struggle for continuity across relationships either in school, family or in this case, socially.

**Question #1, Part 6: Future Goals**

The sixth and final part of Question #1 queried the impact of Upward Bound on participant's goals. Responses from participants fell into three areas. 1) Upward Bound changed how participants envisioned their future and then made it possible to pursue that future. 2) Participants reported increased motivation to give back to their community as a part of their future goals. 3) Participants described where they would be without Upward Bound.

The literature on first generation college students indicates they possess low educational aspirations (Sariagiani et al., 1990; McWhirter et al., 1996) and that Hispanics have the lowest degree aspirations of all racial groups (Kao and Tienda, 1998). While the majority of participants in this study envisioned going to college prior to their Upward Bound involvement, all of the students admitted that although they may have planned to attend college they had difficulty imagining it as a realistic possibility. This information suggests that low educational aspirations may be more a function of what is a realistic possibility in the minds of students as opposed to
whether they truly aspire to higher educational goals. This research seemed to indicate that students wanted to accomplish a post-secondary degree but reported that they didn’t believe it was possible without Upward Bound.

Results of studies on low educational aspirations among low-income, Puerto Ricans (Donato et al., 1991; Levine & N differ, 1996; Romo & Falbo, 1996; Verdugo, 1986) point to the increasing isolation of Hispanics and low-income people and their lack of exposure to people who have attended college. Studies indicate that rising patterns of residential segregation decrease students’ exposure to college educated people. Raynor, Diego and Adnoloy both spoke in detail about the absence in their lives of people who had attended college and the impact on their own personal ideas about the possibility of college for themselves.

The most valuable data to come forth from the study, in my opinion, emerged when students discussed where they thought they would be without their involvement in Upward Bound. It is hard to find a clearer assessment of the impact of Upward Bound than the findings surmised from former student’s describing their perceptions of the condition of their life without the experience of Upward Bound. The responses from participants to the question, “Where do you think you would be and what do you think you would be doing if you had not participated in the Upward Bound Program?” provided incontrovertible evidence of the impact of Upward Bound.

Additionally, Bemak’s (1975) results were equally compelling and resembled the data in this study. The similarities between the two studies in participant responses about the overall impact of Upward Bound are highlighted below in Table 21.
Table 21: Similarities between Bemak (1975) and Present Study (2001) on Participant Responses about Overall Impact of Upward Bound.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bemak (1975)</th>
<th>Present Study (2001)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’d probably be married, have a couple of kids, be out on the street, very religious (p. 176).</td>
<td>If not for Upward Bound I would never have come to college. I probably wouldn’t be in college and I’d be pregnant and I’d be working in a factory forty hours a week, stressing, with no intention whatsoever of going to college. I would never reach what I wanted to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything goes back to then, to those days [in Upward Bound]. I’m more open, my motivation is much greater, and I learned from the program about determination. Upward Bound made me determined! I don’t know where I’d be without the Bound. I don’t like to think about it. Probably on skid row in Northampton (p. 176).</td>
<td>Well, since [Upward Bound] was in the summer I probably wouldn’t even be right here where I’m right now, most likely. Just because I would have had too much time to be out there. I could have been dead. I could have been in jail. I could be a mechanic. I could be a lot of things I wouldn’t want to be doing. I could be selling drugs, could be doing a lot of things, just the stuff my friends are still doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeah, [Upward Bound] made me a little more independent, and I probably would have ended up dropping out of school and getting married and getting pregnant (p. 142).</td>
<td>Before I got into Upward Bound, I felt like I was going to get married, I was going to have children and a job. I guess, because I wasn’t used to the fact that there were females out there not dealing with [having a family] and just doing education. I wasn’t surrounded by a lot of educated women. So I kind of felt like I had to get married in order to move on in life. But, I came to realize that there are a lot of people doing a lot of things.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This data provides the clearest representation of what participants perceive as the overall effects of their involvement in a program whose ultimate design is to alter their future. What better way to determine if such an alteration occurred and if the program successfully completed its mission? In this case, no other data can rival the qualitative responses from those who directly experienced the program under
evaluation. The deeply personal impact of Upward Bound shared in this study cannot be communicated nor is it accessible through surveys and statistics.

Research Question #2: How do first-generation, low-income, Latino college students evaluate the impact of the Upward Bound program on their ability to complete a post-secondary education?

Much of the literature evaluating Upward Bound uses such concrete measures as college enrollment rates of participants (Faulcon, 1994; Okuwa, 1994) as one of many factors to determine the effectiveness of a program. No literature has asked former Upward Bound students to reflect back upon the program and evaluate the program’s impact on their ability to complete their undergraduate degree. There is a clear articulation about how Upward Bound supports students in their college endeavors in these qualitative results that can not be found in surveys and statistics.

Question #2 assessed participants’ evaluation of Upward Bound’s impact upon their ability to complete a post-secondary education. Participants spoke specifically about the level of support, encouragement and resources that they received from Upward Bound and reported how these three elements enhanced their ability to complete their college education. While support, encouragement and resources are clearly important in helping students succeed in college it is difficult to measure and correlate these elements with college success, yet these are the factors students cite as instrumental to their successful graduation.

One of the overriding themes throughout this study exists in this section as well. Once again, participants underscored the importance of the support, encouragement and resources Upward Bound provided and cited the absence of these essential pieces in other areas of their lives where they often exist for students who are
not first generation, low income and Latino. Upward Bound appears to fill many voids in these students' lives either in reducing isolation as college bound Puerto Rican students, or through helping to bridge the divide between family, friends and college or as a source of support and encouragement to accomplish their educational goals.

Research Question #3: What are the recommendations of first-generation, low-income, Latino, college students for the Upward Bound Program to better prepare future students to complete a post-secondary education?

The final question of the study surveyed participant feedback about improvements to Upward Bound. Respondents recommended increased academic preparation, increased college preparation, and increased alumni contact. There are many evaluations of Upward Bound in the literature. Most studies investigate the performance of individual programs (Brown, 1993; Farrow, 1976; Franklin, 1984; Johnson, 1995; Okuwa, 1994; Tanara, 1989). The recommendations for improvement usually include the need to serve more students (Johnson, 1995), increase parental involvement (Moore, 1997), and transition services for participants entering college (Moore, 1997). The recommendations from this study seem to echo many of these suggestions. The call for increased alumni contact can be considered a transition service as participants enter college and seek to remain in contact with one another. Again, respondents communicated a need to increase connections and reduce isolation with this recommendation.

Implications for Administrators, Practitioners and Educators

Based upon the findings throughout the study it is clear that first-generation, low income, Puerto Rican students feel isolated and alone in their educational endeavors even prior to attending college. These feelings are compounded when the
first-generation student begins to take actions toward preparing for college that can create the experience of bridging two cultures in multiple ways across race, class and academic opportunity. Such experiences and resulting feelings of isolation and confusion do not simply emerge when a student begins college but occur much earlier. These observations are critical to administrators, practitioners and educators at the secondary level if they hope to effectively meet the needs of this population.

The ability of Upward Bound to reduce feelings of isolation, counteract the experience of being torn between multiple cultures and significantly increase a student’s academic access to post-secondary education is noteworthy. In many ways the successful interventions that Upward Bound provides to students at high academic risk seem obvious. Participants in the study cited very simple and realistic conditions as sources for their improved academic performance, college preparation and self-perceptions.

Simply the presence of more students of color in a college preparatory classroom was reported to significantly reduce isolation, increase confidence and improve motivation to perform well academically. Creating a diverse student body in the classroom also challenged student’s ideas about themselves in terms of race, class and gender. Seeing other first generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students striving to succeed academically and gain admittance to college reportedly improved participants’ self-worth. Curriculum highlighting experiences and people that reflected their own life experiences was also mentioned as a contributing factor to improved self-perceptions. Encouragement to increase enrollment in college preparatory courses to improve chances of college acceptance and improve preparation to succeed
academically in college was cited as critical. Smaller classes and increased individual support through tutoring improved academic performance. Information about higher education and the support to prepare college application and financial aid materials were vital to these students yet are services already provided to other students by trained guidance counselors who presently exist in the public school system.

In fact, much of the support and services that Upward Bound provides are duplicable or already exist in schools. A more conscientious approach to the needs of students at greatest academic risk in the school system may simply involve listening to them and more intentionally supporting their endeavors. It is critical to recognize that their needs are real and unique and most importantly, addressable.

There are, however, some conditions that do appear more insurmountable and systematically dangerous to these students which necessitate larger scaled interventions. It is clear that these students require improved academic preparation. They desperately need schools that offer more advanced placement college preparatory courses. Early educational tracking systems based upon misleading standardized test results greatly limit the potential of these students. These factors create circumstances in which students are ill prepared to succeed academically in college. While Upward Bound makes a valiant effort, it cannot realistically compensate for years of poor educational access.

Participants also described how Upward Bound bridged the cultural divide in families where the child is the first person in the family to pursue a college education. Upward Bound both introduced and reinforced college as an attainable and realistic
option. It is very important that educators recognize that support for families who have not encountered the world of post-secondary education is critical.

Finally, the most important implication from this study for educators is the clear evidence that these students can succeed. It is very apparent that the services that Upward Bound provided made the difference between going to college and not going to college. Much of the efforts that these students require are within the grasp of secondary administrators, educators and practitioners to utilize. With more intentional and targeted services, first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students can succeed in college, the accomplishment of which is nothing short of a legacy for future generations.

Suggestions for Future Research

In this study first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students expressed feeling alone and isolated in their preparation for a college education. It may be possible that due to their parent’s lack of a college education these feelings become more pronounced once in college which may explain why so much of the literature focuses upon the college years of first generation students. However, there is clearly a need for further exploration into the experiences of high school age first-generation students in general, and more specifically Puerto Rican, low-income students who are the first in their family to pursue college.

Exploring the experiences of Puerto Rican students in advanced courses in high school comprised predominately of white students is an interesting area of study. Additionally, on this theme it would be interesting to gather more information about how low-income, Puerto Rican students bridge the many different cultures they
experience in their lives including living in predominately Puerto Rican communities while attending predominately white college preparatory courses and schools. What might the impact be upon individual ideas of themselves with regard to race, class, etc.? How do they deal with the absence of continuity between their family and community and their future goals and plans? How do they manage the transition back and forth between cultures?

Another area of study could include a specific look at the impact Upward Bound has upon participants with respect to identity development around issues of race, class and gender. What is the impact on ideas about self when a person is exposed to other students and role models who not only resemble their background, accent, native language and culture but also their goals and potential? To what degree are reports of low self-worth and aspirations to succeed connected to the isolation the Puerto Rican students described in this study?

Considering the responses of students regarding the impact of Upward Bound on their familial relationships there certainly calls for a broader understanding of what it means to be a first generation college student and the potential for impact upon one’s family. Areas of future research might include investigations about the impact upon parents when a student becomes involved in Upward Bound. Additionally, studies to identify effective measures to manage the potential difficulties and stressors on a family when a child pursues higher education may be useful.

Overall, due to the absence of qualitative data on Puerto Rican students in general and Upward Bound participants overall there remains a wide variety of research directions available. Upward Bound students are a wonderful source of data.
Research on Puerto Ricans, low-income students, and first generation students is so sparse and so greatly needed that any area of study that involves the voices of these populations is vital.

Concluding Remarks

Although Upward Bound Programs have been in existence for over thirty years and numerous federally and privately funded studies have been conducted there has been relatively few investigations involving qualitative research approaches. Additionally, despite the fact that first generation college students, the primary target population for Upward Bound Programs, are most likely low-income and Latino, few studies have sought data directly from these target groups about their experience in Upward Bound. In this regard, the data gathered and reported in this study is unique.

The findings of this study shed extraordinary light on the impact Upward Bound has upon first-generation, low-income, Puerto Rican students who have succeeded in post-secondary education. Incontrovertible evidence in the words of former Upward Bound students declare that these students can succeed and the services and support provided by Upward Bound can make the difference between factory work and an elite college education.

Likert scales and correlation coefficients can not communicate as clearly as the words of these young people about the significance of intentional efforts made on their behalf. The results of this study which illustrate what is possible are truly compelling. It is the hope of this researcher that the words and experiences of the participants will be read in earnest and that they will inspire future researchers to enhance the findings in this study. There are many more stories and experiences yet to be heard.
APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Consent for Voluntary Participation

Title of the Research Study:
Reflections of First-generation, Low Income, Puerto Rican, College Students on the Impact of a High School Upward Bound Program on Their Ability to Succeed in Post-secondary Education

Who I am and the purpose of my research:
I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I am conducting interviews for my dissertation research. I have designed a study to gather information from college students who participated in Upward Bound Programs while they were in high school. I am specifically trying to learn what students think about their Upward Bound experience and whether they think that Upward Bound had any impact on their ability to go to college. The focus of my research is on students who meet the following criteria: they are the first in their family to go to college (first-generation college students), they are low-income, they are Latino, and they have completed at least one year of college. According to past research studies, first-generation, low-income, Latino students who have gone to college have overcome significant obstacles and are considered very successful in their academic pursuits. Their perspectives are very valuable and unfortunately rare in the educational literature. I believe that this research will make an important contribution to the field of education and will provide valuable information about the perspectives and experiences of Upward Bound students.

Interview:
I will be conducting one interview with each participant that will last approximately 1 1/2 to 2 hours. This interview will be conducted face to face at a time and location that is mutually agreed upon by the researcher and the participant. Additional conversations may be needed following the first interview for the purpose of clarification or follow-up and will be conducted over the phone at a mutually agreed upon date and time. During the interview I will be asking participants about their Upward Bound experience and they will be asked to reflect upon the impact that Upward Bound may or may not have had on various areas of their life. The interview will be audio-tape recorded. The tape will be transcribed at a later date either by the researcher or a professional transcriber. Information from the interviews may be used in addition to the dissertation by way of publication in journals, books, professional workshops or conference presentations.

Confidentiality:
Every effort will be made to maintain the anonymity of participants before, during and after the study. The names, identities, and specific personal information of participants will be kept confidential at all times. Certain characteristics such as
gender, ethnic background, economic background and year in college will be compiled and published in the research for purposes of the study. Pseudonyms will be used in place of participant’s names. If a professional transcriber is used to transcribe the interview tape, the identity of the participant will be kept hidden from the transcriber.

Participant’s Rights:

Participants may withdraw from part or all of the study at any time. Participants have the right to end the interview at any time. Participants are free to participate or not participate without prejudice. Participants have the right to review the transcript of their interview prior to the dissertation oral exam defense.

Participant’s Agreement:

I am aware of the purpose of this study and how the information from my interview will be used. I am agreeing to allow the researcher to use this information. In signing this consent form, I am agreeing to all of the information in this consent form.

Date:_______

Participant name:__________________________________________

Participant signature:________________________________________

Address:____________________________________________________

Phone:____________________

Researcher signature:________________________________________
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

I. General Introductory Questions:

1. Where are you presently attending college?
2. What year are you in school?
3. What is your major?
4. What was the name of the Upward Bound Program that you were involved in?
5. What high school did you attend during your involvement in Upward Bound?
6. How old were you and what grade were you in when you first became a member of the Upward Bound Program?
7. Do you remember when you were interviewed to become a member of the Upward Bound Program? Can you tell me what you remember about that experience?
8. Do you have any favorite memories of your Upward Bound experiences?
9. Can you tell me about a few of these memories?
10. Do you keep in touch with any students or staff from your Upward Bound experience?

II. Academics

1. As a result of the Upward Bound program did your schoolwork improve, stay the same, or get worse?
2. As a result of your Upward Bound experience did your attitude towards school change at all? If so, how?
3. As a result of your experience in Upward Bound, did your grades change at all?
4. As a result of your Upward Bound experience, did your attendance in school change at all?
5. As a result of your Upward Bound experience did your curriculum change at all, in other words, did the courses you took in high school change? If so, how?
6. Looking back, how do you feel about the quality of education you received from your high school? Do you feel that you were adequately prepared to succeed in college academically?
7. What impact did Upward Bound have on your academic preparation for college?
8. What struggles, challenges or difficulties did you encountered in regard to academics in high school?
9. How did you overcome these struggles?
10. In what ways, if at all, did Upward Bound help you deal with these struggles?

III. Self

1. As a result of your Upward Bound experience did your feelings about yourself change at all?
2. As a result of your Upward Bound experience do you feel that you got to know yourself better? If so, in what ways?

3. As a result of your Upward Bound experience did your ability and confidence to make decisions change at all? If so, how? Can you give me any examples?

4. As a result of your Upward Bound experience have you become either more or less responsible as a person? If so, how? Can you give me any examples?

5. Did your Upward Bound experience change your feelings about your ability to get a college degree? If so, how?

6. What personal struggles, challenges or difficulties have you encountered in your pursuit of a college degree?

7. How have you overcome these struggles?

8. In what ways, if at all, has your experience in Upward Bound helped you deal with these struggles?

IV. Family and Friends

1. Did your Upward Bound experience effect your relationship with your family? If so, in what ways? Can you give me some examples?

2. Did your involvement with Upward Bound change your parent’s/guardians support of your pursuit of a college education?

3. Has your Upward Bound experience changed your attitude and understanding of your family at all? If so, how?

4. Has your Upward Bound experience changed how your family sees, feels and acts towards you? If so, how?

5. What support are you currently receiving from your family regarding your pursuit of a college degree?

6. What was the response from your friends when you became involved in Upward Bound?

7. Did your involvement with the Upward Bound program change your friendship group in any way? Did you lose any friends or stop hanging out with any friends as a result of your Upward Bound involvement? Did you make any new friends or begin to hang out with new people as a result of Upward Bound?

8. What personal struggles, challenges or difficulties have you encountered in your relationships with your family and friends as you have pursued your college degree?

9. How have you overcome these struggles?

10. In what ways, if at all, has your experience in Upward Bound helped you deal with these struggles?

V. Future

1. Did your future plans change as a result of your Upward Bound experience? If so, how?
2. What are your current goals? Did your experience in Upward Bound influence these goals in anyway?
3. Has Upward Bound had any influence on where you are now?
4. Where do you think you would be and what do you think you would be doing if you had not participated in the Upward Bound Program?
5. When you think about your future, where do you see yourself in five years? What impact has Upward Bound had on this vision of your future?
6. Do you anticipate any struggles, challenges or difficulties in the future as you pursue your degree?
7. How do you see yourself dealing with these struggles?
8. In what ways, if at all, has Upward Bound helped you to deal with these struggles?

VI. Overall

1. Looking back from where you are now, what do you think are some of the most important ways that the Upward Bound Program impacted you?
2. Would you say that this impact was positive or negative? Could you please explain?
3. Overall, how has the Upward Bound Program impacted your ability to complete a college education?
4. Do you have any suggestions about how Upward Bound programs can improve the support they give to high school students in the future?
5. Looking back, are there any other things that Upward Bound could have done to help you be better prepared for college?
6. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your Upward Bound experience?

* Many of these questions are adapted from Bemak (1975).
REFERENCES


