Copyright

by

Jennifer Lee Smith

2014

The Dissertation Committee for Jennifer Lee Smith
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:

Undergraduate Peer Mentors Serving Underrepresented Students at a Predominantly White Institution

Committee:

Richard Reddick, Supervisor

Richard Cherwitz,

Soncia Reagins-Lilly

Victor Saenz

Sherri Sanders

Undergraduate Peer Mentors Serving Underrepresented Students at a Predominantly White Institution

by

Jennifer Lee Smith, B.A., M.Ed.

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May, 2014

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Roman and my two daughters, Ava Lane and Peyton Aubrey. Throughout my graduate school journey they have supported my efforts and served as my primary motivation to see this effort through to completion. Roman, you are the ultimate partner. I could not have achieved this milestone without your constant love, support, and faith. Together we have shared joy, laughter, sorrow, tears, and witnessed God's great faithfulness and provision. I thank you for being my partner and my greatest love.

Ava, the only Mom you have known has always been in school. I began my Master's degree program when you were just three months old. Truth be told, I thought re-taking my graduate school entrance exam would be scarier than beginning graduate school as a new Mom. You were so tiny then. You spent hours with your Dad, Grannies, Aunts, and Uncles while I attended classes and wrote papers. As I entered the doctoral program, I remember you asking, "Mom…why are you still in school?" Or, "What kind of doctor are you going to be?" I loved hearing and answering all of your questions. Our discussions while driving in the car were my favorite. I would hear about your day at school and you would hear about mine. Or you would say, "Guess what Mom?" and I would say, "What?" to which you would always whisper or shout "I LOVE YOU!" As I finish my degree, you will understand and remember the sacrifices we all made as a family to reach this great goal. For Peyton, she will not know what it is like to have a Mom who goes to school. Those memories are something we will always share. I want you to know that I love you dearly and that I am proud of you. You are a light to the

world and show God’s love through kindness. You inspire me to work hard and make time to be with those I love most.

Peyton, I will always think of you when I think about earning my doctorate. When I proposed you were right there in my tummy. When I conducted my research you were a newborn. When you were sick and we spent months at the hospital I wrote while you slept. And when I defended, we celebrated two-fold because we finally got to bring you home after you received the gift of your transplant. Even at your young age, during your first year you have taught me to believe in God’s promises, to love people, and to find a smile and hope in the darkest of hours. Your positive and persistent spirit is contagious and you are quick to forgive. You have unfathomable strength. You are an Over-Comer and your example pushed me to complete this work. I love you and I am proud of you. I cannot imagine all of the amazing things you and your sister are going to do.

Acknowledgements

Throughout my graduate career my parents, Joe and Cathy Bourn have served as my most vocal supporters. The love and time they have dedicated to make it possible for me to achieve this goal was limitless. Thank you Dad for always telling me “The worst they could say is no.” This piece of advice has consistently pushed me to ask more questions and to pursue new and challenging opportunities. Mom, I don’t think I will ever be able to express my thanks for spending week after week caring for Peyton and I in Houston during her transplant and for caring for Ava so I could write during the weeks we were home. Your love has no bounds. Thank you will never be quite enough. God blessed me with amazing parents who taught me the importance of hard work and the value of family.

My mother-in-law, Barbara Brown and my father-in-law, Mike Brown, you both have provided unconditional support throughout my graduate career. Barbara, I cannot thank you enough for caring so deeply for my children. The countless hours of staying with Peyton and Ava made it possible for me to accomplish this goal. Mike, thank you for bringing smiles to my girl’s faces and showing them how much you love them.

My father-in-law, Wayne Smith and Aunt B., Belinda Ambrose, you both have always been strong supporters of both Roman and I. Thank you for your unconditional love and support over the years and for loving Ava and Peyton.

Richard Reddick, thank you for serving as my committee chair. Additionally, I want to thank you for teaching me what it means to be a mentor. Over the last seven years you not only shared my research interests, you taught me how to be confident as a professional and scholar. You to taught me not to apologize for my approach to writing and introduced new questions for me to explore in regards to my research and my career. Thank you to my committee members, Richard Reddick, Rick Cherwitz, Soncia Reagins-

Lilly, Sherri Sanders, and Victor Saenz. You all have been incredible to work with and to learn from. I deeply respect your work and thank you for taking this educational journey with me. Additionally, I would like to thank the following faculty for teaching me and investing in my graduate education: Sharon Justice, LaToya Hill, Pat Somers, Juan Gonzalez, Edwin Sharpe, Pedro Reyes, Gregory Vincent, Rene Dailey, and Jennifer Holme. Lastly, I would like to thank my colleague, Miguel Wasielewski for his friendship and care, which kept me motivated to complete this work. As a fellow full time employee and parent, your friendship sustained me throughout various stages of this journey.

Thank you to all of my extended family who supported our family and me during my graduate education. My sister and her husband, Becky and Nick Blackhall, my brother and his wife, Alden & Nicole Wilkins, brother and sister-in-law Bren and Ada McCloud, my Aunt, Carol Arrington, my cousins Tracy and Katie Arrington, my Uncle and Aunt, Curt & Debbie Arrington, my Aunt, Kathy Bodie, and my Uncle, Steve Bourn. I would especially thank my sister-in-law Ada McCloud for ensuring that all of our children were cared for during Peyton's transplant and recovery in the midst of writing my dissertation. I would also like to thank my closest friends who have provided continuous support over the years. Kathy Thatcher, Sarah Rodriguez, Katie Pritchett, Peter Guzman, Tiffany Tillis, Taryn Ozuna, Rian Carkhum, Stella Smith, Tepera Holman, Mindy Sutton, Laura Cortez, John Mckenna, Angelica Rodriguez, and Charles Lu.

My colleagues within the Texas Interdisciplinary Plan (TIP) office, the College of Natural Sciences and the Provost's office have also offered incredible support throughout my graduate education. I thank my supervisor and mentor, Susan Harkins for pushing me to pursue my master's and doctoral degrees. She has taught me the value of the phrase,

“How fascinating” and to never fear failure. More importantly she has modeled the type of educational leader I aspire to become. My colleagues, Cassandra Delgado-Reyes, Cathy Stacey, Denise Furman, John Newton, Amira Pollock, John Theofanis, Tepera Holman, Ben Burnett, Becky Kester, Diane Larson, Alissa Wu, and David Romero have all served as great sources of strength and support as I pursued my degree. They all inspired me to continue to learn as much as I could in regards to higher education. I would also like to thank David Laude and Sacha Kopp for providing me with support and opportunity to use my education to serve students.

Lastly, I would also thank many classmates for offering their support throughout my graduate education. Smita Ruzicka, Patty Micks, Manny Gonzalez, Beth Bukoski, Michael Nava, Amy Heitzman, Deryl Hatch, Enrique Romo, Carmen De Las Mercedez, Amory Baril, Tracy Arambula Ballysingh, and Deanna Johnson. Lastly, thank you to the amazing educational administration faculty and staff members, Martha Ovando, Hortensia Palomares, and Linda Overton for your countless hours of advice and support.

Undergraduate Peer Mentors Serving Underrepresented Students at a Predominantly White Institution

Jennifer Lee Smith, Ph.D.
The University of Texas at Austin, 2014

Supervisor: Richard J. Reddick

Higher education is facing national calls for increased graduation and retention rates (Good, Halpin, & Halpin, 2000; Obama, 2009). In an effort to answer these calls, administrators are using peer mentoring programs to provide social, personal, and academic support to first-year students (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991). This study drew on the disciplines of business, medicine, and higher education to demonstrate the prevalence of mentoring (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Buddeberg-Fischer & Herta, 2006; Scandura, 1992). Focusing on the area of higher education, the existing literature supports the positive effects of peer mentoring for mentees, but there is a dearth of information regarding the lived experiences of undergraduate peer mentors.

As institutions continue to seek ways to support students from underrepresented populations through the use of peer mentor programs, it is critical for administrators to clearly understand both sides of the mentoring relationship in order to use it as an effective educational tool. Moreover, peer mentor programs also utilize the unique influence peers possess in order to create supportive environments for underrepresented students. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the lived experiences of

undergraduate peer mentors who served underrepresented students at a predominantly white institution.

Utilizing a phenomenological approach, this study adapted the psychosocial and vocational functions of mentoring in relation to the development of the mentor in order to understand how peer mentors experienced their role, interactions with mentees, and feelings of connectedness to the institution (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Additionally, Schlossberg's transition theory, specifically the coping resources of the 4S's (situation, self, support, and strategies) were utilized to understand how peer mentors experienced their transition from mentee to mentor (Goodman, Schlossberg, & Anderson, 2006, Seidman, 2006).

Table of Contents

List of Tables xv

List of Figures xvi

Table of Contents x

Chapter One: Introduction 1

Statement of the Problem 4

Purpose 6

Research Questions 7

Brief Overview of Methodology 8

Definition of Terms 10

Delimitations 12

Limitations 15

Assumptions 17

Significance of the Study 17

Summary 18

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature 20

Mentoring 21

General Mentoring across Disciplines 23

Management 23

Medicine 26

Education 29

Peer Mentoring in Higher Education 34

Role of Peer Mentoring 34

Functions of Peer Mentoring 36

Research on the Peer Mentor Experience 39

Challenges Faced by Underrepresented College Students 42

Latinos 42

African Americans 45

Theoretical Frameworks 47

Transition Theory 48
Summary 51
Chapter Three: Methodology and Procedures 54
Purpose of the Study 54
Research Questions 55
Research Design 56
Limitations 58
Delimitations 59
Trustworthiness and Validity 63
Position of the Researcher 64
Description of the Research Site 67
Description of the Sample 73
Procedures for Data Collection 74
Data Analysis 78
Summary 82
Chapter Four: Mentor Profiles 84
Chapter Five: Findings 123
Mentor Definition and Role 125
Position as Near-Peers 126
Research Question 1 127
Psychosocial Growth 128
Group and Individual Meetings 128
Mentoring Environment 131
Interaction with Staff and Fellow Peer Mentors 134
Program Staff 135
Fellow Peer Mentor Relationships 135
Vocational Growth 137

Training 137
Transferable Skills 142
Reciprocal Nature of Mentoring 145
Connection to the Institution 145
Motivation 146
Social Exchange 147
Working with Underrepresented Students 149
Mentoring Underrepresented Students 150
Conflict 151
Mentoring as an Underrepresented Student 153
Research Question 2 156
Student Interaction 157
Mechanisms for Introduction 157
Written correspondence 158
Orientation Event 160
University Scholars First-Year Course 161
Modes of Communication 165
Face-to-Face 166
Challenges of Electronic Communication 168
Reflection on Communicating with Mentees 172
Research Question 3 173
Schlossberg's Transition Theory 174
Situation 175

Self. The coping resource of self is separated into two types: personal and demographic characteristics and psychological resources, which influence the way in which a mentor interprets their life. The sections below provide a thorough exploration of both areas as well as introducing experiences of those areas through excerpts of the interview transcripts. 180
Pre-college experience 182
College experience 187
Support 188
Strategies 191
Summary and introduction to Chapter 6 197
Chapter Six: Discussion: Overview of the Study 198
Method and Analysis 199
Discussion of Findings 200
Finding One: Mentor role and interactions provided opportunity for psychosocial and vocational development 201
Social Exchange 202
Psychosocial and Vocational Development 202
Finding Two: The mentor experience was transformative 204
Finding Three: The role of mentoring increased their connection to the university 205
Finding Four: Transition theory was an effective analytical framework for examining the mentor transition 207
Definition of Undergraduate Peer Mentor: specially mentoring underrepresented students 208
Implications for Research, Practice, and Policy 210
Research 210
Practice 211
Policy 215

Limitations of the Study 216

Mentor experience levels 216

Disruption in data collection process 218

Review of Significance and Contributions of the Study 218

Concluding Thoughts 220

Next steps 220

Development of Mentoring Theory 221

Examining New Terminology 221

Broadening the Audience 222

Appendix A: Letter to Potential Participants 225

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form 227

Appendix C: Pre-Interview Survey 231

Appendix D: First Interview Protocol 233

Appendix E: Second Interview Protocol 235

Appendix F: University Mentor Experience Concept Map 239

Appendix G: Conceptually-Clustered Matrix: University Mentor Role (RQ1) 240

Appendix H: Conceptually-Clustered Matrix: University Mentor Interactions w/Mentees (RQ2) 241

Appendix I: Conceptually-Clustered Matrix: University Mentor Experience Progressing from Mentee to Mentor (RQ3) 242

References 243

List of Tables

Table 4.1: Participant Demographics…………………………………………………..…85

Table 5.1: Hierarchy of University Scholars Program………………………………..132

Table 4.1: Participant Demographics…………………………………………….....181

List of Figures

Figure 5.2: Coping Resources……………………………………………………………175

Chapter One: Introduction

Institutional type in relation to student racial classifications can substantially influence undergraduate student performance and overall educational experience (Allen, 1992; Astin, 1993; Dayton, et al., 2004; Pascarella, Smart, Ethington, & Nettles, 1987). Exploring student outcomes of underrepresented minority (UMR) groups (African American and Latino) and first generation students and how they perform at predominantly white institutions (PWIs) in comparison to UMR students that attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) has been explored in the literature (Allen, 1992; Cokely, 2000; Flowers, 2002; Harris, 2012). Depressed levels of African American and Latino student success in college is often attributed to pre-college factors of having lower levels of academic preparedness, of socio-economic status, of parental education, and of internalizing stereotypes perpetuated in the media (Allen, 1985; Fry, 2010; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2010).

Both African American and Latino students have reported experiencing the climates of PWIs as “chilly” and “restrictive” (Dahlvig, 2010; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2010). Harris (2012) goes on to suggest college environmental factors are a key area for improving the academic and social experiences of URM students in college. fIn particular, researchers indicate that African American males face college environments embracing racial primes (socialization process that reinforces race-specific stereotypes) and Black misandry, or an “exaggerated pathological aversion toward Black men created and reinforced in societal, institutional, and individual ideologies” (Smith, Yosso, and

Solórzano, 2007, p. 559). In addition, Hispanic and African American males share this misconceived identity and have been described as "threatening, unfriendly, and less intelligent than any other distinguishable segment of the American population" (Cuyjet, 1997, p. 8).

Both HSIs and HBCUs seek to support underrepresented youth who are overcoming these perceived identities. For example, Santiago (2011) states that as of 2007, "just over half of Latino undergraduates were enrolled in about 260 institutions of higher education identified as HSIs" (p. 9). Laden (2004) goes on to suggest HSIs provide services tailored to meet the needs of Latino students, which can lead to increased educational aspirations, retention, and graduation rates.

Research has consistently shown the unique supportive environment of HBCUs fosters academic achievement, increased satisfaction, and leadership development opportunities (Allen, 1992; Fleming, 1984; Flowers & Pascarella, 1999). Reddick (2006) notes over 85% of African American students are attending PWIs, and educational trends indicate that Hispanic students will eventually surpass African Americans as the largest ethnic group in higher education (Fry, 2010). As PWIs seek to increase and better serve URM students, it is essential that administrators identify strategies that will actively improve the campus environment and support students with a variety of pre-college experiences.

One strategy to address the issues of campus and pre-college environmental factors experienced by underrepresented students is peer mentoring. The concept of mentoring is not novel; it can be traced to Homer's *Odyssey*. In the ancient text,

Odysseus, the main character, entrusts Mentor with the task of raising and guiding his son, Telemachus, while he leaves to fight in the Trojan War (Homer, n.d.). This classic text introduces both the title of mentor and the initial definition of mentoring, which indicates that a mentor serves as a guide to the young mentee.

In the United States, mentoring in higher education has gained considerable attention. For example, national initiatives, including the introduction of mentoring program grants, awards recognizing mentors and programs, and the designation of January as National Mentoring month, indicate a rise in the recognition of mentoring as a valuable practice (Girves, Zepeda, & Gwathmey, 2007). Thus, mentoring is developing into a national priority, and higher education is moving forward in utilizing it to increase retention and graduation rates.

Mentoring also serves as an effective strategy to promote academic progress and vocational advancement (Bird, Didion, Niewohner, & Filmore, 1993; Boyle & Boice, 1998; Deneef, 2002; O'Neill, Sylvia, & Crosby, 1999; Terrell & Hassel, 1994). Given the changing American demographics, increased academic achievement and job preparation are critical. According to Census projections, within 20 years, over one-third of the U.S. population will be comprised of people from minority groups, and by 2050, minority groups are projected to become the majority population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). Therefore, if higher education aspires to meet the educational and vocational needs of this burgeoning student population, peer mentoring is an effective strategy to employ. Accordingly, higher education is utilizing mentoring programs to target historically underrepresented populations like African American, Latino, and first-

generation students (Girves et al., 2005; Gloria, 1993; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007; Zalaquett & Lopez, 2006).

Given the complexity of mentoring, the first section of this chapter will introduce the statement of the problem and point to a research initiative designed to reveal the experiences of peer mentors who serve underrepresented students at the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin), a PWI. Within this study, a PWI is an institution that excluded Black and or other students from enrolling in its institution before the Civil Rights Acts of 1965 (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2010). The subsequent section will impart the purpose of this research study. The third section will introduce the research questions that guided the study. Then, the fourth section will present a brief overview of the methodological approach, followed by a fifth section that will delineate key terms that support the understanding of the study. Following that, the sixth section will outline the delimitations and limitations. In addition, a seventh section will identify assumptions guiding the research. The eighth section of this chapter will, furthermore, establish the significance of the study and indicate what contributions this research study will add to the discipline of mentoring. Finally, this chapter will conclude with a brief summary, introduction of theoretical frameworks, and lead to a review of relevant literature.

Statement of the Problem

College students face challenges both academically and personally during their transition from high school to college life (Astin, 1993). Failing to address those challenges proactively may result in increased student attrition and decreased graduation

rates, particularly for URM and first generation students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1975, 1987). Research studies have further shown that URM and first generation students experience lower levels of academic success at PWIs in comparison to those attending HBCUs and HSIs (Allen, 1992; Cokely, 2002 Laden, 2004). As undergraduate enrollment of URM groups continues to increase at PWIs, it is essential to identify supportive strategies to increase academic performance and degree attainment for URM students (Hoffman, Snyder, & Sonnenberg, 1996; Fry, 2010; Provasnik & Shafer, 2004).

Because of growing negative student outcomes, national calls for increased retention and graduation rates within higher education are being voiced (Obama, 2009). Thus, given a difficult economic environment, one cost-conscious approach administrators are progressively employing is undergraduate peer mentor programs to address these issues (Girves et al., 2005; Good, Halpin, & Halpin, 2000; Husband & Jacobs, 2009; Jacobi, 1991). In addition, peer mentors are in a position to engage and guide students based on their closeness in age and shared undergraduate experiences. According to Astin (1993), “the student’s peer group is the single most potent source of influence on growth and development during the undergraduate years” (p. 398). Utilizing this unique level of influence can reward universities with reaching national and institutional goals, such as increasing retention and graduation rates.

Mentoring programs geared to support underrepresented students in higher education span the nation and range from focusing on particular disciplines, promoting academic inquiry, and research, to supporting particular student populations. Clark, Howard, Lazare, and Weinberger (2000) introduce a study on peer mentoring for

underrepresented students in the sciences at Smith College. Funded initially by a grant from the New England Consortium for Undergraduate Science Education and some college support, the program sought to increase participation of students of color in math and science courses and ultimately for them to major in those disciplines. Similarly, the Freshmen Research Initiative (FRI) at UT Austin, an initiative created to place first-year students (of which a significant portion of students are underrepresented) into research labs within their freshman year, is the first program of its kind in the nation, which also contains a peer mentoring component (Simmons, 2012).

Additionally, there are mentor programs created to support particular underrepresented populations like Native Americans. For example, Shotton, Oosahwe, & Cintrón (2007) present a study featuring the American Indian Retention Program (AIRP). This student driven initiative was created to promote academic success and persistence. Therefore, mentoring programs designed to support the unique needs of underrepresented college students can serve as one strategy for mitigating the challenging environments of PWIs.

Purpose

The overarching purpose of this study is to understand the experience of undergraduate peer mentors who serve underrepresented first-year students at the UT Austin, a PWI. For the purpose of this study, underrepresented students include students who are members of one or more of the following populations: African American, Latino, and first-generation. Throughout the study, I examined how undergraduate peer mentors make meaning of their peer mentor role, their interactions with their mentees,

and their transition from a student role to a mentoring role. This research may also describe how peer mentors are able to transfer knowledge they have gained from their experiences into other areas of their academic, vocational, and personal lives. Finally, this study utilized Kram and Isabella's (1985) psychosocial and vocational functions of mentoring and the four S's (support, self, situation, and strategies) from Schlossberg's (1984) transition theory to frame and guide the research questions and analysis.

Research Questions

As the use of peer mentoring programs expands, particularly for those serving underrepresented students (Campos, et al., 2008; Clark et al., 2000; Good et al., 2010; Ishiyama, 2007; Zamani, 2000), it is important to gain a more complete understanding of the peer mentoring experience. The undergraduate peer mentors who participated in this study are previous University Scholars (who are from underrepresented populations: African American, Latino, and or first generation college students) working with students in the University Scholars program who may face unique challenges as they transition from high school to university life. The University Scholars program is a multi-year academic support program at UT Austin, which supports traditionally URM students. In order to increase the knowledge pertaining to the experiences of peer mentors who serve underrepresented students at a PWI this study addresses the following three research questions:

1. How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor Program at UT Austin (a PWI) describe their lived experience in their mentor role (psychosocially, vocationally, and in their relationship to the institution)?

2. How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor program describe their lived experience through their interactions with their mentees (psychosocially and vocationally)?

3. How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor program describe their lived experience in their transition from mentee to mentor role using Schlossberg's transition theory, specifically the 4 S's (situation, support, self, and strategies)?

Brief Overview of Methodology

This study utilized qualitative methodology using an interpretivist approach. This approach proposes that human experience and behavior cannot be thoroughly analyzed by using strict empirical methods and that human experience or activity is viewed as "text – as a collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 8). In addition, this study employed a single-site study with a multiple participant design, which uses the participants as the unit of analysis. This design allowed for a thorough assessment of examining the experiences of undergraduate peer mentors (Bloor & Wood, 2006).

The study site was the University of Texas at Austin, a four-year, full-time, more selective, public institution with very high research activity that is also categorized as a PWI (Carnegie Foundation, n.d.). Study participants will include eight to 10 undergraduate peer mentors from the University Scholars program. These mentors act in a voluntary capacity and do not receive monetary or course credit as compensation for mentoring. Participants were selected with the help of the program's director who sent

out an email invitation regarding the study. Participants contacted me directly to schedule their first appointment, which included time to review the informed consent form, complete a pre-interview questionnaire, and to participate in their first audio-recorded interview. The participants engaged in two semi-structured phenomenological interviews adapted from Seidman's (2006) approach. Further sources of data came from relevant documents from the mentor program director, mentor program events, and the program's website. I also conducted observations at a few scheduled mentor program events such as the "Meet your Mentor" event and mentor training.

In order to increase the study's validity, the data sources included individual interviews, program documents, and observations on selected mentor program events, which were utilized in triangulation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Furthermore, the interview transcriptions were coded using a combination of open and axial coding, and conceptually-clustered matrices were utilized during data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A portion of the analysis was guided by Schlossberg's (1984) transition theory for coding participant responses by the types of transitions they may experience. Moreover, content analysis was used to examine field notes from observed mentor events and any documents gathered from mentoring events, the program website, or provided by the mentor program director. Content analysis consisted of "counting occurrences of themes, words or phrases [across the] documents. The approach is objective, systematic, and concerned with the surface meaning of the document" (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 58).

Definition of Terms

The following section provides definitions of terms that were used throughout this dissertation proposal:

- *African American* - *"R*efers to a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa" (Rastogi, Johnson, Hoeffel, Drewery, 2010, p. 2).
- *First Generation College Student* - Students designated the first in their families to pursue higher education (McElroy & Armesto, 2011).
- *Historically Black Universities and Colleges (HBCU)* - Historically Black colleges and universities that were established before 1964 and whose primary mission is the education of Black Americans (Commission on Civil Rights, 2010).
- *Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)* - An institution having at least 25% of its undergraduate populations identify as Hispanic (NCEDS, 2012).
- *Latino* - "Persons of Spanish-speaking origin or descent who designate themselves as Mexican American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or of some other Hispanic Origin" (Campos et al., 2009, p. 158).
- *Mentoring* - A form of professional socialization whereby a more experienced (usually older) individual acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and patron of a less experiences (often younger) [mentee]. The aim of the relationship is the further development and refinement of the [mentee's] skills, abilities, and understanding (Moore & Amey, 1988, p. 45).

- *Persistence* – “Refers to the rate at which students who begin higher education at a given point in time continue in higher education and complete their degree, regardless of where they do so” (Tinto, 2012, p. 137).
- *Predominantly White Institution (PWI)* - An institution which excluded Black and or other students from enrolling in its institution before the Civil Rights Acts of 1965 (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2010).
- *Psychosocial function* – “The mentor offers role modeling, counseling, confirmation, and friendship, which help the young adult to develop a sense of professional identity and competence” (Kram & Isabella, 1985, p. 111).
- *Retention* – “Refers to the rate at which an institution retains and graduates students who first enter the institution as freshmen at a given point in time” (Tinto, 2012, p.137).
- *Transferable Skills* – **“**skills used in one job or career that can also be used in another” (Cambridge Business English Dictionary, 2011).
- *Undergraduate Peer Mentoring* - A relationship between a more experienced undergraduate student (typically older) acting as a guide, role model, and advocate of a less experienced undergraduate student (typically younger). The aim of the mentoring relationship is to further the mutual development and refinement of both the mentee and mentor’s skills, abilities, and understanding, introducing the theme of reciprocity (Smith, 2011).

- *Underrepresented Students* – Populations of students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education based on race, ethnicity, and class (e.g. African American, Latino, and first-generation college students) (Smith, 2011).
- *Vocational or Career-enhancing function* – Mentors offer "sponsorship, coaching, facilitating exposure and visibility, and offering challenging work or protection, all of which help the younger person establish a role in the organization, learn the ropes, and prepare for advancement" (Kram & Isabella, 1985, p. 111).

Delimitations

This research study was delimited by using qualitative methodology, selecting a specific type of institution, focusing on a particular type of mentor population, presenting the mentor perspective, and examining mentors who act in a voluntary capacity. The choice to use qualitative methodology was purposeful and intended to achieve an in-depth examination of what undergraduate peer mentors experience. In addition, this method supplied an exploratory style that is free of limiting assumptions and that will identify major components of the mentoring experience.

Although this method promoted exploration, this study restricted the examination to a particular type institution. The scope of this study was purposefully narrowed to UT Austin, a four-year, full-time, more selective, public institution with very high research activity that is also a PWI (Carnegie Foundation, n.d.). UT Austin is a flagship institution in the state of Texas. Flagship institutions, often the first institutions initiated after the Morrill Act of 1863, are often propped up as leaders in an educational system within a state (Berdahl, 1998). Hence, as a flagship institution, many administrators may

look to UT Austin to set the example of how to reach institutional goals such as increasing graduation and retention rates. Given that peer mentor programs are being used to address these goals, it is valid to investigate a program at an institution of this caliber.

The extant literature on mentoring often involves a dyadic relationship or constellation of mentors, which typically focuses on the experiences and outcomes of the mentee (Jacobi, 1991; van Emmerik, 2004). However, inspired by President Obama's words: "The mentor usually gets as much, or more out of [mentorship] than the mentee", Reddick, Griffin, and Cherwitz (2011) introduced a unique article revealing the benefits graduate student mentors accrue by participating in developmental relationships with undergraduate students (Obama, Saldana, and Obama, 2010, paragraph 32). This article further highlights the mentoring approach developed within the Intellectual Entrepreneurship (IE) Pre-Graduate School Internship program at UT Austin. Designed to "facilitate partnerships between individual graduate students and undergraduates who aspire to attend graduate school (many of whom are from underrepresented populations) in order to affect institutional change for the benefit of both students and society" (Reddick et al., 2011, p. 60). Their study indicates that mentors gain a deeper perspective on self and discipline, develop necessary advising skills for future careers, receive an opportunity to contribute to diversity in academia through mentorship, and gain awareness of the reciprocal nature of mentoring.

It is compelling that these three scholars with such distinct areas of research have come together to reveal an unexamined area of the mentoring perspective. In addition

Griffin's work emphasizes issues of access and equity for underrepresented student populations in higher education and focuses on the importance and nature of relationships in academic contexts (Allen, Kimura-Walsh, & Griffin, 2009; Griffin & Fries-Britt, 2007). Cherwitz, a communication studies, and rhetoric and writing professor and director of the IE Consortium, has educational publications centering on public scholarship and academic engagement (Cherwitz, 2010; Cherwitz, Sullivan, & Stewart, 2002). In addition, Reddick's work uncovers the experiences of faculty who mentor undergraduate students and the mentoring of graduate students of color (Reddick, 2006; Reddick & Young, 2012).

My research study continues the mentor's perspective by examining the experiences of undergraduate peer mentors who serve underrepresented students at a PWI. This may include insight into the roles mentors play, the duties they are responsible for, the challenges and benefits they experience, the meaning making of their experience, the perceptions of what their underrepresented mentees experience, and the mentors' perceptions of the program.

Furthermore, this study did not examine the experiences of all types of undergraduate peer mentors. The use of peer mentoring has increased in higher education over the past 20 years; in particular, peer mentoring programs have focused on underrepresented students as prime candidates for benefiting from the programs (Crisp & Nora, 2009; Jacobi, 1991). Therefore, this study examined underrepresented students. Specifically, this study concentrated on a single peer mentoring program within the University Scholars program. This program offers academic and social support for first-

year students who are historically underrepresented, first-generation or from low-socioeconomic backgrounds.

Finally, this study concentrated on mentors who serve in a voluntary capacity and do not receive monetary or academic compensation in exchange for performing their role; however, mentors in this study receive complimentary meals, attend special events, and receive support and recognition from program staff. Mentor programs are often driven by budgetary restraints or shaped by service-oriented missions that influence administrators to create mentor positions for volunteering purposes. As a supervisor of paid mentors, I was particularly interested in learning more about how unpaid mentors perceive their experience, identify what motivates them to be mentors.

Limitations

The scope of the literature on mentoring is expansive and full of areas ready for exploration. As a result, this research study is limited in that it will not identify major trends that apply to all undergraduate peer mentors or mentoring programs by using quantitative methodology, by examining the importance of mentor training, or by providing an evaluation of the University Scholars mentoring program. Unlike quantitative methods that are useful for producing results that are generalizable to larger populations, the chief limitation of a single-site study with multiple participants is that it will only afford insight for a particular subset of peer mentors or those with similar program designs (Bloor & Wood, 2006).

However, qualitative studies have increased internal generalizability, which "refers to the generalizability of a conclusion within the setting or group studied", and

can be generalizable to the conceptual and theoretical understanding of phenomena (Maxwell, 1996, p. 97). This study provided insight practitioners with a clearer understanding of the concept of being an undergraduate peer mentor and lent support for the use of transition theory as an appropriate lens for examining the experiences of peer mentors. Furthermore, in exploring experience in practical terms, qualitative methodology is a mechanism for understanding meaning and is central to the interpretive approach of this study (Maxwell, 1996).

As a practitioner and researcher, I am particularly interested in how formal training affects the experiences of undergraduate peer mentors and the outcomes of students served by the program. Initially this was the focus of my dissertation research; however, after exploring the literature, it became clear that the mentoring experience needed further study before understanding how formal training affects mentors' experiences could be accomplished. Through this exploratory research study, I was interested in observing what major components of mentoring, such as training, could emerge as relevant to the mentoring experience. These components shaped the direction of my future research agenda.

Although this study painted a detailed picture of what mentors in the University Scholars program experience, the goal of this research study was not to formally evaluate the University Scholars program or University Scholars Mentoring program. Nonetheless, data collected through individual interviews, documentation analysis, and observing programmatic events could be used to complete a thorough evaluation of a

program through structural, political, symbolic, or human resource oriented frames (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Assumptions

For the purposes of this study, I acknowledged the following assumptions. First, undergraduate peer mentors who serve underrepresented students have specific experiences as they perform a mentoring role. Second, some of these experiences stem from transitions that take place as the peer mentor moves from an undergraduate student role into a peer-mentoring role. Finally, the researcher assumes that peer mentors are able to reflect on those experiences and make meaning of those experiences that may apply to their academic, personal, and vocational lives.

Significance of the Study

This study expanded the existing literature surrounding the topic of undergraduate peer mentors who are from underrepresented backgrounds who serve underrepresented students. This research introduced an in-depth account of the lived experience of the mentor from within the mentoring relationship. Further, the study examined the textural and structural descriptions of the mentor experience. Specifically, this occurred by using the psychosocial and vocation functions of mentoring to analyze the mentor role and interactions with their students. Lastly, this study utilized the 4S's of Schlossberg's transition theory to explore the transition from mentee (University Scholar) to mentor (University Mentor). Finally, the introduction of a collective and tailored operational definition of undergraduate peer mentoring for students who work with underrepresented

students is introduced. This collective definition may provide researchers with a more consistent definition to use in future research studies.

Summary

This chapter provides a general overview of the prevalence of mentoring and an understanding of the national move towards utilizing peer mentoring programs to achieve goals of increased retention and graduate rates. The chapter presents the general mentoring literature and highlights the absence of insight into the experience of the mentor. The opening section of this chapter introduces the desire to initiate a research agenda to uncover the experiences of undergraduate peer mentors, particularly those serving underrepresented students. The subsequent sections present the delimitations, limitations, and assumptions guiding the study and close with the contributions this research hopes to add to both the existing literature and to current practices in the field.

After careful review of a variety of the mentoring literature and student development theories and models, Schlossberg's transition theory (1984) and Kram and Isabella's (1985) mentor functions were chosen to frame the study. These frameworks provide a foundation to explore the mentor experience in relation to transition and are not bound by sequential stages. In addition, this theory is designed with the assumption that both positive and negative experiences are possible. By using a phenomenological approach involving semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observations, this study explores the experiences of undergraduate peer mentors who serve underrepresented first-year students at a PWI (Moustakas, 1994; Seidman, 2006).

Peer mentoring programs are effective in addressing the rising concerns about retention and graduation rates within higher education in the United States. Mentoring literature has historically held a focus on the experiences and outcomes of mentees. As administrators continue to implement peer-mentoring programs, it is also critical to understand the perspective of the peer mentor. The following chapter will provide an extensive review of the relevant literature surrounding the topic of undergraduate peer mentors who serve underrepresented students at a PWI in addition to describing transition theory and the functions of mentoring in detail.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Underrepresented students face distinct challenges as they transition from high school to university life, particularly those who are attending a PWI. Within the literature, underrepresented students are consistently described as achieving lower levels of academic success and rates of graduation (Allen, 1992; Cokely, 2002; Laden, 2004). While campus environment and peer relationships have been shown to be instrumental in increasing academic performance, satisfaction, and acclimation to college life, peer-mentoring programs are being implemented across the nation to support the needs of underrepresented students, specifically at PWIs (Girves et al., 2005; Good et al., 2000; Husband & Jacobs, 2009; Jacobi, 1991). As administrators continue to introduce new programs and maintain existing ones, it is important they understand the nature of what peer mentors experience. Unfortunately, the primary focus of the mentoring literature centers on the student outcomes of the mentees and their perspective (Atkins, & Williams, 1995; Carlson & Single, 2000; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Freeman, 1999; Jacobi, 1991; Rodger & Tremblay, 2003; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007).

Peer mentoring programs are being used to benefit the retention rates of diverse student populations (Campos et al., 2009; Good et al., 2000). For instance, students from historically underrepresented backgrounds, (i.e., African American, Latino, low socio-economic status, and or first-generation), are often targeted to receive support from such programs, particularly those who attend PWIs (Clark et al., 2000; 1993; Zalaquett & Lopez, 2006). The context for this study was shaped by the mentees' identity as

historically underrepresented first-year college students. Walters (1997) extends Blackwell's (1981) concept of underrepresentation that results in:

> Compelling urgency to train a sufficient number of Black students at every level of education and to eliminate all social, economic, political, and institutional barriers to access so that Black students can be admitted with the same regularity and expectations of accomplishment as other students who are admitted to graduate and professional schools. Blackwell was referring to Black students only, [Walters]… extends this definition of underrepresentation to include, Black, Latino, and Native American students. (p. 6)

As such, this study utilized Walters, (1997) extended definition of underrepresentation.

This chapter will focus on the prevalence of peer mentoring and feature a variety of themes central to undergraduate peer mentors serving underrepresented first-year college students at PWIs. Moreover, the chapter will include sections on general mentoring, on mentoring across the disciplines of business, medicine, and education, on peer mentoring in higher education, on the limited research on peer mentoring in higher education, on the challenges faced by underrepresented students, and on the theoretical framework utilized in the study. Finally, the chapter will close with a brief summary.

Mentoring

Before examining undergraduate peer mentoring, it is important to understand the general concept and definition of mentoring. Mentoring holds many definitions across several disciplines, which can be problematic for researchers and practitioners. Jacobi (1991) and Crisp and Cruz (2009) point to the absence of a commonly acknowledged,

operational definition of mentoring as a major challenge facing scholars who examine the area of mentoring. Combined, their studies present an overwhelming list of 50 definitions of mentoring across the disciplines of education, management, and psychology (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991).

Initially, I had selected the definition of mentoring introduced by Moore and Amey (1988) to depict the concept broadly:

> A form of professional socialization whereby a more experienced (usually older) individual acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and patron of a less experiences (often younger) mentee. The aim of the relationship is the further development and refinement of the mentee's skills, abilities, and understanding. (p. 45)

This research study, however, narrowed the scope of mentoring to the category of peer mentoring in higher education, specifically undergraduate peer mentoring. As a result, I adapted Moore and Amey's (1988) definition to limit the scope of the relationship to an undergraduate peer mentor and mentee. Thus, mentoring is a relationship between a more experienced undergraduate student (typically older) acting as a guide, role model, and advocate of a less experienced undergraduate student (typically younger). The aim of the mentoring relationship is to further the mutual development and refinement of both the mentee and mentor's skills, abilities, and understanding in order to aid in the student's successful transition to college life. Within this study, a successful transition is operationally defined as the student being retained at the institution, experiencing positive psychosocial and vocational development, and developing a secure student identity who feels connected to the university.

General Mentoring across Disciplines

Due to thorough meta-analysis, Jacobi (1991) and Crisp and Cruz (2009) demonstrate the increased prevalence of mentoring in academic research. Although their reviews are not exhaustive, both highlight the occurrences of mentoring by examining mentoring literature from 1977 through 2007. Jacobi's review of the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) database using *mentor* as a keyword rose from 111 references in 1976 to 492 by 1989. In 2012, the number of references found for all peer reviewed articles in the ERIC database using the key word *mentor* totals 1,464, and 3,838 when no filter is applied. In addition, references illustrating the increased use of mentoring can be found across the disciplines of management, medicine, and education and through grants support for the adoption of mentoring programs in higher education settings.

Management

There is much research done in the field of management regarding the effects of mentoring. As a result, formal mentoring programs indicate that employees who have a mentor report higher job satisfaction, compensation, and number of promotions (Allen, Russell, & Maetzke, 1997; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Fagenson, 1989; Higgins, 2000; Nielson, Carlson, & Lankau, 2001; Scandura & Viator, 1994; Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gliner, 2001). Moreover, Kram and Isabella (1985) introduce the most comprehensive theoretical framework regarding mentoring in business. Their framework identifies two major functions of mentoring: vocational, the career function, and psychosocial, the social support. Kram (1985) suggests that the "career functions were found to be

dependent on the mentor's position and political power within the organization while the psychosocial functions relied more on the quality of the relationship between the mentor and [mentee]" (as cited in Crisp & Cruz, 2009, p. 535).

Scandura's (1992) study further extends previous studies done in this field. She examines Kram's use of the vocational and psychosocial functions and how they relate to mentee career outcomes. Specifically, Scandura (1992) explores the connection between the vocational and psychosocial mentor functions and their influence on career mobility outcomes of mentees. Her work also builds on Roche's (1979) research, which indicates that almost two-thirds of the executives participating in the study had mentors, and those who received mentoring obtained higher salaries and bonuses to those executives without mentors. As a result, Scandura (1992) brings together the works of Kram and Roche to empirically study the possible link between these functions and the career outcomes of mentees as described by managerial performance ratings, salary attainment, and promotions. Scandura (1992) also advises that early mentor research promotes managerial mobility, which connects to Kram's (1985) work that suggests mentoring enhances work role effectiveness. As Scandura (1992) summarizes: "hence, the degree to which managers' experience mentoring functions should result in higher career mobility outcomes" (p. 170). She hypothesizes that both vocational and psychosocial mentoring will be positively linked to performance ratings, salary level, and promotions (Scandura, 1992).

Scandura's study (1992) surveyed 244 managers, using an 18-item mentorship-scale, and then employed a 16-item unit-weighted scale of performance rated by

managers. The salary and promotion information for each manager was also obtained from the organization's compensation department (Scandura, 1992). The results from this hierarchical regression analyses demonstrate that "after controlling for the managers' personal and position characteristics, vocational mentoring was significantly and positively related to the managers' promotion rate. In addition, [psycho-social mentoring] was significantly and positively related to the managers' salary level" (Scandura, 1992, p. 172). Thus, the study indicates a relationship between vocational and psychosocial mentoring functions; however, no causal inferences can be made from the research. Due to the time in which the study was conducted, females were not typically employed in management positions thus limiting the results to reflect the male perspective.

Based on the literature, administrators seeking ways to increase productivity and improve workplace environment could implement a mentoring program. From an organizational perspective, the effects of mentoring in the workplace include acculturating new members into the organization, fostering positive attitudes, and increasing overall commitment to the organization (Aryee, Chay, & Chew, 1994; Fagenson, 1989). Additionally, the idea of mentoring as a dyadic-limited experience is evolving into the notion of mentoring networks (Kram & Ragins, 2007). Rather than a one-to-one relationship, Kram and Ragins (2007) describe mentoring as developing a network of mentors across time, environments, and influential individuals in their text, *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work*. This text also promotes the interdisciplinary nature of mentoring across the areas of psychology, management, and communications.

Overall, the field of business understands and applies the influence of both psychosocial and vocational functions of mentoring to meet a variety of organizational and individual goals. These functions can also be translated to develop successful mentor programs in higher education.

Medicine

Mentoring programs can also be found within the discipline of medicine. This section includes descriptions of mentoring in both academic medicine and the medical field. Groups supported by mentoring include medical students, nurses, physicians, and medical school faculty. They participate in mentoring programs to increase knowledge and skill levels, to encourage specialization in a specific medical area, and to promote the creation of helpful career-advancing relationships or networks (Barondess, 1997; Buddeberg-Fischer & Herta, 2006; Schapira, Kalet, Schwartz, & Gerrity, 1992).

The work of Buddeberg-Fischer and Herta (2006) focuses on identifying what types of formal mentoring programs are noted in academic medical literature and what the short- and long-term goals these programs pursue. Specifically, they seek to determine whether those goals were achieved and whether inferences and conclusions regarding their effectiveness and fiscal efficiency of mentoring programs could be made. The scope of their work is limited to specific criteria and one search engine, *Medline*, a well-known medical bibliography database. Buddeberg-Fischer and Herta's initial search began by using the term *mentor*, which returned 3,052 sources. After attempting a few other combinations, *mentor* was paired with the term *program*, which resulted in 162 sources. The date range of the sources was from 1966 to 2003. To narrow the number of

sources, only programs supporting medical students (9) and doctors (7) were selected. The goals of the programs included: career advancement for the mentee; advancing academic/professional in addition to nonacademic/non-professional competencies; minimum length of the program was 6 months; and an evaluation of the mentoring program (Buddeberg-Fischer & Herta, 2006). The short-term goals of some of the programs for students included the intent to pique student interest in a specific medical specialty or to play a supportive role in helping students to earn their specialist degree. The researchers conclude that mentoring results in the "expansion and consolidation of the mentees' professional and social skills [including] increased self-confidence, improved communication skills and more know-how in dealing with computers and specialist literature" (Buddeberg-Fischer & Herta, 2006, p. 256).

Buddeberg-Fischer and Herta (2006), however, found limitations to their study. Their critique about measuring the effectiveness of medical mentoring programs arises in the lack of a standardized and measurable definition of success. They also note that models of mentoring for doctors is typically one-on-one while most medical student models involve a group to single mentor model. Although the mentor-mentee ratio differs, both models have stage specific and goal-oriented approaches, which was a positive feature. Finally, in measuring long-term success, participating in a mentoring program is viewed only as a part of an overall career-development concept.

The underrepresentation of women and minorities is also an issue in the field of medicine and academic medicine (Levinson, Kaufman, Clark, & Tolle, 1991; Lewellen-Williams, et al., 2006; Palepu, Carr, Friedman, Ash, & Moskowitz, 2000; Tekians,

Jalovecky, & Hruska, 2001). Lewellen et al. (2006) note that "compared to white faculty, underrepresented minority (URM) medical school faculty are promoted at lower rates [,] report lower career satisfaction," and are typically more involved in patient care than research (p. 275). Moreover, Lewellen et al. (2006) created the Peer-Onsite-Distance (POD) model as a targeted, multilevel mentoring model that has five components to meet the needs of URM medical school faculty. They include the mentee, a junior URM faculty member, content and interaction skills, peer mentors, onsite mentors, and distance mentors (Lewellen et al., 2006).

URM medical students often list physicians, teachers, advisors, medical students, family, and clergy as mentors (Tekian et al., 2001). As a result, Tekian et al.'s (2001) study suggests that URM medical students with physicians as mentors experienced less academic challenges and that official advisors working for the medical school often appeared to negatively affect the advising and mentoring experience. Thus, this study proposed that a review of the goals of formal advising may need to adapt their practices to become supportive of the mentoring process.

Within the field of general internal medicine (GIM), Schapira, et al. (1992) state that having a mentor can aid in major issues associated with career development such as "job selection, negotiation of support, time management, understanding requirements for promotion, and selecting a research focus and maintaining productivity" (p. 249). The authors of this study also point out new physicians in GIM experience a number of difficulties in establishing mentoring relationships. First, physicians that are more senior lack available time to devote to mentoring new physicians. Second, the research areas

within GIM are so vast, that available senior physicians may not share the same research interest as the mentee. Schapira et al. (1992) also indicate the lack of a universal definition of mentoring in the research literature is a key issue echoing previous critiques (Jacobi, 1991).

While the mentoring literature within the field of medicine is not abundant, Barondess (1997) suggests, “mentoring relationships in early years are critical for launching productive careers and for learning the informal networks that support productivity” (p. 347). This article also supports the idea that the mentoring process is beneficial for the mentor as well, involving the perpetuation of their value systems and additional opportunity to continuing learning about the mentee’s field of interest.

The medical mentoring research advocates the use of mentoring as a tool to increase knowledge, gain technical skills, and further professional development of medical faculty, students, and physicians. Components and structures of medical mentoring could easily provide inspiration for pre-medical student mentoring programs in higher education for underrepresented student populations into a peer-mentoring program in higher education.

Education

Instances of mentoring are found within the field of education, specifically the public primary and secondary educational systems (K-12) (Ingersoll, 2002; Gold, 1996; Jones & Pauley, 2003). Within K-12 education, the issue of teacher quality and retention has become central to the educational policy reform discussion (Jones & Pauley, 2003). Consequently, new teachers entering the public education system are of particular interest

since one study reveals that one-third of new teachers leave the profession within the first three years of teaching (Ingersoll, 2002). Although a variety of reasons could cause a new teacher to leave the field, 43% of those exiting teaching cite inadequate support as their chief reason for leaving (Ingersoll, 2002).

Jones and Pauley's (2003) research presents mentoring as "a medium of reform to current policy and practice in American public education" (p. 23). Within their report, they outline the increased frequency of mentoring being noted and even legislatively supported within federal and local politics. They also present the essential elements of a mentoring program for new teachers and introduce a general phase oriented mentoring model for use in improving the American public education system. In their research, the definition of mentoring from the Education Commission of the States (ECS) (2003) is used:

> A formalized relationship between a beginning teacher and a master teacher (mentor) that provides support and assesses teaching skills. Duties of the mentor may include advising about instructional content and strategies, demonstrating classroom instruction, observing the beginning teacher's instruction, consulting about lesson plans and objectives, advising about school/district resources, student, and parent relations, and informing the new teacher about the expectations of the school, the district, and the state. (p. 1)

Jones and Pauley (2003) indicate, "Congress found that teachers without a mentoring program [left] the profession at a rate nearly 70% higher than those who participated in mentoring programs" (p. 24). Their study suggests that a structured mentoring program

will only achieve success if administrators, new teachers, and selected mentors all actively participate in the training. Additionally, avoiding artificial relationships or poor mentor-mentee matches should be prevented and the administration should give noticeable and vocal support for the mentoring program to achieve success.

Mentoring or peer education is also implemented at the student level in primary and secondary education (Dearden, 1998). Mentoring programs are being used to address issues of bullying (Sharpe, 1996) and to introduce peer education practices (Topping, 1996) and interactive tutoring approaches (Gartner & Reissman, 1993). Dearden's (1998) research introduces mentoring schemes between sophomore students in a large city comprehensive school and sixth-grade students from its feeder schools. The goals of the program included developing friendships to ease transition from primary to secondary school, self-confidence and interpersonal skills, awareness and responsibility in older students, and extending learning opportunities for both student groups. Dearden's study is unique in that it presents an outline of mentor training in addition to reporting that the study goals were attained. She also notes that unexpected gains of the mentoring schemes include parent enthusiasm and students with learning disabilities benefitting from the program both socially and academically (Dearden, 1998).

In terms of higher education, faculty also benefit from mentoring programs. Traditionally, the gains faculty receives from mentoring include increased career success, a smoother transition into academic culture, and additional socio-emotional support within their discipline (Sornicelli & Yun, 2007). A review of faculty mentoring studies also indicates that having multiple mentors or constellations of mentors is even more

beneficial than having a single mentor (Bower, 2007; van Emmerick, 2004; Peluchette & Jeanquart, 2000). The use of multiple mentors also increases accessibility to mentoring at any given time (Scornicelli & Yun, 2007).

Faculty members in higher education also serve as mentors to both graduate and undergraduate students (Griffin & Reddick, 2011; Reddick, 2006; Reddick & Young, 2012; Tenenbaum et al., 2001; Waldeck, Orrego, Plax, & Kearney, 2009). Graduate study can be a stressful and unfamiliar territory to a new graduate student. Having a faculty mentor can provide a graduate student mentee with access to information on "department politics, regulations, unspoken rules and other faculty [and] …aid in increasing student publication productivity, developing specific professional skills, securing future placement in quality research universities and making contacts and gaining visibility" (Waldeck et al., 1997, p. 94). In addition, faculty members often begin relationships with undergraduate mentees who are enrolled in their courses or with students who seek them out with discipline specific interests. Campbell and Campbell (1997) suggest that students who participate in a formal mentoring program with faculty complete more units per semester and achiever higher grades. Their study also proposes that matching faculty mentors and mentees based on gender did not affect units completed per semester, GPA, or dropout rate (Campbell & Campbell, 1997).

More formal mentoring programs often target specific student populations who may be susceptible to higher rates of attrition including underrepresented students. A recent study examined the mentoring relationships of African American students at a PWI through the lens of four African American professors of which three were graduates

of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU) (Reddick, 2006). This study points out that the "HBCU-educated professors expressed a clear sense of responsibility to African American students because of the importance of African American college graduates in that specific community, and beyond" (Reddick, 2006, p. 75). Recruiting faculty members who have a distinct relationship or tie to underrepresented communities may be more effective in their ability to seek out and support underrepresented undergraduate mentees.

Although underrepresented faculty mentors may feel a strong connection to mentoring underrepresented students, they may also face a variety of challenges in that role. Johnson (2007) in his text *On Being a Mentor: A Guide for Higher Education Faculty* presents a unique section on mentoring students across race. He indicates that as faculty of color are often sparse on PWI campuses; they may feel institutional pressure to mentor students of color. This pressure can lead to guilt about not being able to serve all students of color who request mentoring in addition to increasing stress and the possibility of mentor burnout (Johnson, 2007).

Johnson's (2007) text also promotes the need for intentional mentoring and taking deliberate action in a mentoring role. In addition, purposefully integrating mentoring into the campus culture is the responsibility of both faculty and the institution. Intentionality can arise in the form of faculty training on mentoring or through more institutional policy such as making mentoring, a significant part of faculty service in regards to promotion and tenure. Deliberate action on the part of the mentor involves actions that support and maintain established mentoring relationships (Johnson, 2007). Actions like scheduling

regular mentoring sessions or events are examples of how faculty and institutions can go about promoting mentoring on their campuses.

Peer Mentoring in Higher Education

After reviewing the prevalent role mentoring plays across the fields of management, medicine, and education, I narrowed the research of mentoring to undergraduate peer mentoring in higher education. The following sections will introduce the roles and functions of peer mentors, followed by a summary of the limited research with a focus on the perspective of undergraduate peer mentors.

Role of Peer Mentoring

Peer mentors are typically utilized in recruitment and retention efforts where programmatic goals encourage academic success, seek a smooth transition from high school to college or university life, help increase graduation and retention rates, and introduce new students to campus resources (Sanft, Jensen, & McMurray, 2008). Here, retention refers to the "rate at which an institution retains and graduates students who first enter the institution as freshmen at a given point in time" (Tinto, 2012, p.137). For the purposes of this study, academic success is defined as meeting the demands of college level work, increased study time, difficulty of content, etc.

As noted previously, the role of peer influence on the college experience is significant. Colvin and Ashman (2010) suggest that this documented peer influence leads to the creation of learning communities, of enhanced learning in distance learning classrooms, of support to first-year students in their transition to college, and of encouragement towards student academic success. It is also noted "that academic

involvement and interaction with faculty and fellow students increases the time and physical and psychological energy that students devote to the academic experience" (Colvin & Ashman, 2010, p. 122). Peers are also able to use their unique influence to help students acclimate to the college environment and increase their sense of belonging to a community (Astin, 1993).

The role of peer mentoring is also relevant in influencing student persistence within higher education. Student persistence can be described as "the rate at which students who begin higher education at a given point in time continue in higher education and complete their degree, regardless of where they do so" (Tinto, 2012, p. 137). Student persistence has a foundation within Tinto's (1988) work that extends the theory of student departure by explaining that the reasons for student departure vary over time (initial enrollment to termination, which can entail graduation or withdrawal. In Tinto's work, the stages of college student development, separation, transition, and incorporation are examined. Within the stage of transition, Tinto (1988) suggests that not all students are able to successfully progress through the transition stage on their own, and "without assistance, many are unable to establish competent intellectual and social membership in the communities of the college. Many will eventually leave" (p. 447).

Examining why students leave also prompts the question of why they persist. To gain a greater understanding of what influences student persistence, Somers and Cofer (2001) explore factors of background, aspirations, achievement, college experiences, and cost at the community college level. They conclude that aspirations play an important role in student persistence and found students who aspired towards an advanced college

degree were more likely to persist (Somers & Cofer, 2001). Accordingly, peer-mentoring programs are often created to help students in special populations who face challenges involving these factors and to bridge those gaps and encouraging them to engage in persistent behaviors.

Functions of Peer Mentoring

Transitioning from the roles peer mentors, this section introduces two main functions peer mentoring fulfill. Kram and Isabella (1985) put forward two distinct categories: psychosocial and career-related functions. As described in Terrion and Leonard, (2007), Kram (1983) defines peer mentoring as:

> A helping relationship in which two individuals of similar age and/or experience come together, either informally or through formal mentoring schemes, in the pursuit of fulfilling some combination of functions that are career-related (e.g. information sharing, career strategizing) and psychosocial (e.g. confirmation, emotional support, personal feedback, friendship). (p. 150)

Although Kram and Isabella's (1985) works are specific to management, Terrion and Leonard (2007) posit that the psychosocial aspects of peer mentoring in either the educational or management setting share many similarities such as confirmation, emotional support, personal feedback, and friendship. In regards to the career-related function, this can be translated into academic achievement and successful transitions from high school to college. Therefore, this research indicates that peer mentoring leads to greater productivity and accomplishment of mentee goals.

Terrion and Leonard (2007) expand the knowledge concerning undergraduate peer mentoring through an extensive literature review, which creates a taxonomy of peer mentor characteristics by investigating characteristics most often associated with positive outcomes of mentoring relationships. In all, the literature review created a taxonomy of five general prerequisite characteristics of peer mentors, two career-related characteristics, and eight psychosocial-related characteristics (Terrion & Leonard, 2007).

Peer mentor prerequisites that are "fundamental in that mentor candidates must possess them in order to be considered as suitable to fulfill the mentoring role" are defined (Terrion & Leonard, 2007, p. 151). These qualifications include ability and willingness to commit time (Pitney & Ehlers, 2004; Sipe, 1996), gender and race (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004; Mee-Lee & Bush, 2003), university experience (Johnson, 2002; McLean, 2004), academic achievement (Johnson, 2002; McLean, 2004; Mee-Lee & Bush, 2003), and prior mentoring experience (Allen et al., 1997). These characteristics were present across the literature reviewed by Terrion and Leonard and were found to have significant overlap in both the career and psychosocial functions of mentoring.

Characteristics identified within the career-related function include program of study and self-enhancement motivation (Terrion & Leonard, 2007). The mentor's program of study can be linked with mentee satisfaction, as mentees often pursue mentoring relationships with experienced students in their same field of study (Allen & Poteet, 1999; McLean, 2004; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Mee-Lee & Bush (2003) support this finding and indicate that content-specific knowledge increases the perception of

mentor credibility in the eyes of the mentee. Self-enhancement motivation can be defined as sources of motivation associated with "personal learning and gratification (Allen, 2003, p. 139). Allen (2003) also notes that mentors demonstrating higher levels of self-enhancement motivation are typically better prepared to offer career-related support to their mentees. Awayaa, McEwana, Heylerb, Linskye, and Wakukawac (2003) caution mentor supervisors on the level of self-enhancement motivation, as it can be an indicator of immaturity and focus of demonstrating authority, rather than supporting and guiding the mentee.

Furthermore, the characteristics associated with the psychosocial function include communication skills (McLean, 2004; Pitney & Ehlers, 2004), supportiveness (Mee-Lee & Bush, 2003; Johnson, 2002), trustworthiness (Beebe, Redmond, & Geerinck, 2004; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2004), interdependent attitude to mentoring, mentee, and program staff (Johnson, 2002), empathy (Awayaa et al., 2003; McLean, 2004); personality match with mentee (Beebe et al., 2004), enthusiasm (Mee-Lee & Bush, 2003; Rose, 2003), and flexibility (Johnson, 2002; Sipe, 1996). This list of psychosocial characteristics joins together to ultimately create a positive mentoring environment and serve as mechanisms for reducing mentee stress (Tinto, 1993). Terrion & Leonard (2007) suggest that "if the university's objective in implementing a peer mentoring program is to decrease student attrition, partially reducing stress by providing support via peer mentoring relationships may help to achieve this objective" (p. 156).

Now that a clear understanding of the roles and functions peer mentors fulfill has been delineated, the following sections will continue to narrow the higher education

mentoring literature to examine the sources that present the experience of the peer mentor.

Research on the Peer Mentor Experience

Earlier, this chapter presented Jacobi (1991) and Crisp and Nora's (2009) meta-analyses, which highlighted the increased use of mentoring in higher education. When I used the EBSCO search engine with the search terms *peer mentor* and *college*, the search returned a set of 113 peer reviewed studies as of 2012. Within this set of sources, peer mentoring spans the research populations of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. Furthermore, when examining the subtopic of undergraduate peer mentoring, the list narrows down to 11 by using the search terms *peer mentors*, *college*, and *undergraduate* as of 2012.

As specified above, peer mentoring is becoming more prevalent in higher education literature. This research highlights peer mentoring as a unique relationship that consists of two parties: the mentor and mentee. Until now, the majority of research conducted on the topic of peer mentoring centers on the benefits and academic experiences of the mentee (Atkins & Williams, 1995; Carlson & Single, 2000; Freeman, 1999). In response to this perspective, this chapter will demonstrate the dearth of research regarding the experience of the mentor. Therefore, an examination of existing research focused on the peer mentoring experience will be presented to emphasize the need to extend this area of research in higher education.

Research focusing specifically on the experiences of undergraduate peer mentors is quite limited (Amaral & Vala, 2009; Heirdsfield, Walker, Walsh, and Wilss, 2008;

Knoche & Zamboanga, 2006; Terrion & Leonard, 2007). Heirdsfield et al.'s (2008) study evaluates a peer mentoring program from the perspective of a peer mentor; however, this study also focuses on the experience of the mentees using a qualitative approach in which the participants document their experiences through reflective writing. From the mentor perspective, training or mentor preparation is crucial to success and benefits to the mentor include social opportunities, personally rewarding experiences, and the importance of reciprocity of learning between the mentor and mentee (Hierdsfield et al., 2008). Even though this study provides a general understanding of the peer mentoring experience, a closer examination into the lives of individual peer mentors might better illuminate the experience of peer mentors working with underrepresented students.

Exploring the experiences of peer mentors can lead to discovering what characteristics create the ideal undergraduate peer mentor. Terrion and Leonard (2007) sought to create a taxonomy of characteristics and utilized Kram's (1983) work for framing the characteristics of the career-related or psychosocial functions, as previously discussed. As a result, Terrion and Leonard's (2007) study lends support for the undergraduate peer mentoring experience and for the identified characteristics, such as program of study, advancement aspirations, and supportiveness, which could be useful in identifying themes during the coding analysis process of this study. My research follows their recommendation to explore what mentoring characteristics look like in practice and to offer more information in regards to those characteristics being innate or learned.

Taking a quantitative approach, Amaral and Vala (2009) note the academic gains that undergraduate peer mentors achieve. In this study, the authors examine a population of 104 chemistry mentors who received academic course credit for an undergraduate chemistry teaching course in exchange for participating in the program. Results report that mentors had higher average grades in first-semester general chemistry than the mentees. The mentors also completed introductory chemistry courses in fewer attempts than their non-mentor peers and showed a higher rate of future enrollment in additional upper-level chemistry courses. This study proposes, therefore, that peer mentors linked to an academic experience may gain a greater mastery of the content and persist in higher level coursework within a given content area. Although this study establishes clear benefits to the mentor, this research does not address the complex nature of what peer mentors experience or how they make meaning of their experiences.

For a more intensive understanding of the mentor experience, Knoche and Zamboanga's (2006) research is a unique example of qualitative research employing a phenomenological approach to capture the experience of undergraduate peer mentors. Their study uncovers the meaning of peer mentoring relationships from the perspective of mentors who serve Latino youth (12-16 years old). Their results reveal a set of themes including the relationship with the mentee, the relationships with the mentee's family, and the personal and professional development of the mentor. Knoche and Zamboanga's (2006) study serves as a springboard for the research project and rather than studying undergraduates working with local youth, the study focused on undergraduates mentoring underrepresented first-year students at a predominantly white institution.

Challenges Faced by Underrepresented College Students

The mentors in this study were serving underrepresented students in the University Scholars program at UT Austin. Mentors were recruited from the University Scholars population, which means that the mentors are also underrepresented students. For the purposes of this study, historically underrepresented students included African American, Latino, low socio-economic, and first-generation college students. This diverse student population requires mentors prepared to work with first-year students who may have experienced unique social, cultural, and educational challenges. The following sections present a brief overview describing the unique experiences of Latino and African American students.

Latinos

Recent research estimates that the United States Latino population will reach 30% of the total population by the year 2050 (Aizenman, 2008); in order to prepare this population to enter the workforce, there is a necessity to provide Latinos with the opportunity to pursue and persist in post-secondary education (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2008). However, there are certain setbacks facing the Latino population in the field of higher education. For instance, in examining where Latinos attend college, research indicates that many Latino students will first enroll in community colleges with the intention of transferring to a four-year institution (Crisp & Nora, 2010). Unfortunately, less than 25 percent of Latino students who start at a community college transfer to four-year institutions and/or earn a bachelor’s degree (Crisp & Nora, 2010). Moreover, evidence found in educational research suggests that lower socio-economic levels, educational

levels of parents, inadequate academic preparation, lack of reliable or general access to knowledge regarding the college-going process, and pressures to remain close to family can lead Latino students to miss an opportunity to attend college (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2008; Stewart, 2008). As a result, research shows that first-year Latino students face unique challenges that affect their ability to acclimate to college life and to demonstrate successful college strategies, which in turn influence their persistence (Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996).

In addition, there are differences in persistence levels in higher education for Latinos across gender. For example, in 2005, more than 1.9 million Latino males within the 18 to 34 age group enrolled in or had finished a post-secondary education, representing 28.1% of all Latino males within this age group in comparison to 2.1 million Latina females (35.1%); this results in over a 7% difference between males and females pursuing a college education (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). The gender enrollment gap also continues to increase as student ages increases, demonstrating that females, including older or nontraditional female students, are more likely to earn a degree than Latino males (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2008).

Research provides various factors that affect Latino males from entering higher education. Early school experiences, the idea that achieving academically is somehow negative, *machismo*, being manly, and *familismo*, the importance family or supporting, can contribute to a decreased likelihood of Latino males entering the college pipeline (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2008). More so, researchers now note that females outperform males on almost every academic indicator in elementary and secondary schools (Crosnoe,

Reigle-Crumb, Field, Frank, & Muller, 2008). Researchers also observe that boys and girls who have negative educational experiences in early childhood may experience resentment towards education or lack motivation towards schooling in the future (Crosnoe et al., 2008). This discontent can lead to behavior problems that could incorrectly manifest as psychological or learning disabilities. In addition, Parrish (2002) found that boys and particularly boys of color are more likely to be overrepresented in special education. Nonetheless, research on Latino males is not intended to detract from efforts to improve female educational outcomes; rather, it is to ensure that both educational practices and outcomes are favorable for both sexes.

The perception among Latino boys and young men that high academic achievement is negative is also a significant challenge for this population. Somehow, it has become unpopular to excel academically and social consequences can occur for those who admit they are academically successful (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2008). In the Latino community for instance, this can manifest as one component of *machismo*, which encourages males to hide their emotions and weaknesses to maintain their masculinity (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2008). This mentality adds to a lack of males seeking help, which also has educational and social ramifications.

Another central component of the Latino culture includes the concept of *familismo*, which involves the "strong identification and attachment to immediate and extended family…embodied by strong feelings of loyalty, responsibility, and solidarity within the Latino family unit" (Saenz & Ponjuan, 2008, p. 62). Latino males desiring to maintain this ideal often feel a great deal of pressure to support their families financially

and emotionally. This influence can lead young Latino males to finish high school and go directly to work or to drop out of school prior to graduation to begin providing financially for their families. Educators, community members, and, in this case, peer mentors need to collaborate to identify ways to determine how a college education can preserve and uplift this cultural ideal.

African Americans

African American college student enrollment is increasing at PWIs (Reddick, 2006). Understanding their unique experiences while attending a PWI has uncovered issues of pre-college factors in addition to handling issues associated with campus culture or environment (Allen, 1985; Fry, 2010; Harris, 2012; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2010). Regarding academic performance, Bowen, Kurzweil, and Tobin (2005) documented a 10% college enrollment gap between white and Black college students in 2001. Compounding the issue further, median incomes in the United States in 2003 for whites were estimated at $61,970, while Blacks were an estimated $30,547 and 28.6% of those Black families living below the poverty threshold bring new light to the possible challenges African American students may face when transitioning to college (Bowen et al., 2005). These pre-college factors denote those student background variables (demographics, socio-economic status, etc.) and school environment factors influence the African American student's educational experience (Fischer, 2007).

Continuing an exploration of academic performance, research shows that Black students on average earn lower overall grades and are more likely to not be retained (Bowen & Bok, 1998). Fischer (2007) poses that academic performance and retention

differences are only "partially explained by difference in family background, resources, and academic preparation suggests that these poor outcomes emerge from events and circumstances that occur in the college environment" (p. 128). Therefore, campus culture and interactions with staff, faculty, students, and policies are relevant concerning the higher education experience of African American students.

The campus environment can present both positive and negative experiences for students of color. If attending school at a PWI or at an institution where Black students are in the minority, Steele (1999) implies that minority groups may demonstrate academic underperformance or may feel alienation and perceptions of discrimination. Additionally, "from 1976 to 2000, the number of Black students enrolled in degree-granting institutions rose 14.9%... [and] the vast majority of these students attend predominantly white institutions" (Fischer, 2007, p. 125).

Campus environment can be affected by the types of courses offered; for example, if the "education offerings are Euro-centric, culturally different students may feel unappreciated or come to devalue their own cultural group (Davis et al., 2004). The attitudes and behavior of white students also adds to the campus environment as a whole. Fiske, Xu, Cuddy, & Glick (1999) indicate that those in the dominant culture can demonstrate ambivalence toward those in minority populations. This ambivalence could encourage positive or negative student behaviors toward minority group members as well (Katz & Hass, 1988). Moreover, Black students attending PWIs have shared their perceptions on experiencing incidents of racism; at times, these incidents are intentional while others come about because of the socialization of students, staff, and faculty who

may perpetuate racial stereotypes without the intention of committing racism (Feagin, 1992; Smith et al., 2007). One avenue administrators and faculty can pursue in creating a positive campus climate for underrepresented students lies in creating policies and programming that encourage feelings of comfort and security in embracing their student identity.

Fischer (2007) goes on to state that "race and ethnicity have a fundamental impact on how college is experienced by minority students and therefore their adjustment process cannot be assumed to be the same" as other non-minority students (p. 128). Both African American and Latino students face unique challenges as they transition from high school to college and finding pathways to succeed in higher education. By understanding the relevant literature, it is likely that researchers and practitioners will be able to create programming that will address those needs in addition to meeting institutional goals regarding academic achievement and retention.

Theoretical Frameworks

Selecting an appropriate theoretical framework that can address a multi-faceted topic such as mentoring can be challenging. Jacobi's (1991) meta-analysis describes four distinct theoretical approaches to the study of mentoring found in higher education literature, which include involvement in learning (Astin, 1977, 1984), academic and social integration (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1977; Terenzini, Pascarella, Theophilides, & Lorang, 1985; Terenzini & Wright, 1987; Tinto, 1975), social support (Cobb, 1976, Pearson, 1990; Vaux et al., 1986), and developmental support (Chickering, 1969; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978; Perry, 1970). These four areas each

connect to one or two of functions of mentoring (psychosocial and vocational). However, none address all functions and, more importantly, none of these theoretical frameworks has been utilized in a study examining the experience of the mentor. For these reasons, this study drew on Schlossberg's (1984) transition theory.

Transition Theory

In response to the narrow research focus on the mentees' experience, particularly their transition to college life, this research instead focused on the mentors. Specifically, this research examined the transition from student to mentor. Mentors may experience a great shift in their roles, paradigms, and self-perceptions as they transition from the student to mentor role. Schlossberg's (1984) transition theory will serve as the analytical framework for this study. This framework possesses the foundation to explore the mentor experience in relation to transition.

In developing a theory of transition, Schlossberg (1984) drew on the previous works and concepts of others (Egan, 1982; Levinson et al., 1978; Lowenthal & Chiriboga, 1975; Neugarten, 1979). However, transition theory differs from traditional stage theories in student identity development theory and is psychosocial in its approach. Specifically, transition theory accounts for variability within individual transition experiences and examines how those individuals can connect to beneficial resources. Transition theory is also unique in its suggestion that not all transitions will result in positive outcomes and that both negative and positive transitions are valuable and worth exploration (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). Initially this theory was designed with an adult audience in mind; however, this theory is also relevant to

traditionally aged college students, a category of adults who experience a wide variety of transitions in life (Chickering & Schlossberg, 1995, 2001).

The earliest conceptualization of Schlossberg's transition theory focused on creating a model to "[analyze the] human adaptation to transition" (Schlossberg, 1981, p. 2). Schlossberg asserts that an individual's ability to adapt was shaped by three groups of variables: "the individual's perception of the transition, characteristics of the pre-transition and post-transition environments, and characteristics of the individual experiencing the transition" (Evans et al., 2010, p. 213). In 1995, Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman introduce the most recent version of the theory in response to earlier critiques and endeavored to add a more application-oriented approach for counseling practitioners. In *Overwhelmed*, Schlossberg (1989) introduces the transition process and examines its three components of approaching change, taking stock, and taking charge. This text is significant as it introduces several modifications including the introduction of the fours S's in addition to the three phases of transition, which were introduced and integrated into her theory in the second edition of *Counseling Adults in Transition* (Schlossberg, Waters, & Goodman, 1995).

This study focused on the taking stock section, which introduces the four S's: situation, self, support, and strategies (Goodman, Schlossberg, & Anderson, 2006). The four S's present coping resources as variables that inclusively characterize the transition, individual, and environment (Evans et al., 2010). In addition, the four S's served as a method of analysis when examining the interview transcripts with current peer mentors. Situation explores a variety of components within the transition. For instance, identifying

what may have triggered the transition, the perceptions of the event's timing, their perceived level of control, the role they play in the transition, the duration of the event, previous experience, identifying any concurrent stress, and assessment are all considered components of situation. Self is separated into two types: personal and demographic characteristics and psychological resources, which create the way in which individuals interprets their life.

Support, which according to the theory is social support, was divided into three sub-categories: types, functions, and measurement. The types of social support include "intimate relationships, family units, networks of friends, and institutions and communities [and the functions include] affect, affirmation, aid, and honest feedback" (Evans et al., 2010, p. 217). In addition, measurement was obtained by identifying consistent types of support, supports that are role specific, and those supports that are likely to change. Finally, the concept of strategies introduced and originated from Pearlin and Schooler's (1978) descriptions of coping responses including "those that modify the situation, those that control the meaning of the problem, and those that aid in managing the stress in the aftermath" (Evans et al., 2010, p. 217). In comparison to other theoretical approaches, Schlossberg's (1984) transition theory is most appropriate for this study because it is capable of accounting for variability of the mentor experience through transition; it is not bound by sequential stages; and it is designed with the assumption that both positive and negative outcomes are possible. By utilizing a phenomenological approach involving semi-structured interviews, this study explored the experiences of

undergraduate peer mentors who served underrepresented first-year students at a predominantly white institution (Moustakas, 1994; Seidman, 2006).

Summary

If peer mentoring is to be used in higher education in address a national call to increase graduation and retention rates it is essential that all of the components of mentoring be understood. The peer mentoring research agenda needs to expand in order to explore both the experiences of the mentee and the mentor. Until this occurs, administrators are promoting the use of a mechanism they do not fully understand. Without this comprehensive understanding, program evaluation and future empirical research will fail to reveal accurate findings on the effectiveness of peer mentoring programs.

Furthermore, as mentoring literature lacks a commonly accepted definition, this study will establish a clear definition for mentors who serve underrepresented students to be used in the field of undergraduate peer mentoring (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991). The use of this definition will afford clarity and insight regarding the role of the mentor and promote the concept of reciprocity. This qualitative study could also influence future empirical research by introducing an operational definition that could lead to the creation of more accurate measures in research design.

Previous research also exhibits a deficiency in using consistent and appropriate theoretical foundations to guide mentoring research (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991). Hence, this study is carefully guided by the influences of phenomenology, grounded theory (regarding coding) and Schlossberg's (1984) transition theory. This combination

of theory can address the variability of individual experience and serve as an organized approach to coding the transitions experienced by the mentors participating in the study.

Methodologically, both quantitative and qualitative methods have been utilized in the study of mentoring (Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Jacobi, 1991). A qualitative approach is most appropriate for this study as it permits the researcher to give voice to the participants' individual experiences and to depict how they draw meaning from those experiences (Creswell, 1998). Moreover, "the approach is contextually-dependent: The findings of the study are grounded in the lived experiences of participants (Knoche & Zamboanga, 2006, p. 139). The open and exploratory nature of grounded theory supports the phenomenological desire to reveal what peer mentors experience and to determine how they describe their experience. This research approach also determines what occurs in the mentoring relationship from the mentor's perspective and for the subjective presentation of those lived experiences. This study is a first step in uncovering the experiences of peer mentors serving underrepresented students at a PWI.

This study offered greater insight into the peer mentoring relationship at the higher education level. By understanding the interpretation of the mentor experience, higher education administrators gained a richer understanding of the tool they are using to address goals such as increasing graduation and retention rates. Specifically, this study heightened awareness of how peer mentors can support students from underrepresented populations.

This chapter provided a review of the existing literature, identifies the existing gap surrounding the experiences of the mentor in in a peer mentoring relationship, and

indicates how this research study provides an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the peer mentor perspective. The following chapter will provide a detailed description of the qualitative methodology the researcher employed in gathering and analyzing the data.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Procedures

As the use of peer mentoring programs increase in response to a national focus on increasing graduation and retention rates in higher education (Good et al., 2000; Jacobi, 1991; Obama, 2009), particularly for those serving underrepresented students (Girves et al., , 2005; Gloria, 1993; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007; Zalaquett & Lopez, 2006), it is important to gain a more complete understanding of the peer mentors experience. This chapter will introduce the purpose of the study, the research questions, the research design, the study sample, the procedures and instruments for data collection, and the data analysis, and then, the chapter will close with a brief summary.

Purpose of the Study

The overarching purpose of this study is to understand the experience of undergraduate peer mentors who serve underrepresented first-year students at UT Austin , a four-year, full-time, more selective, public institution with very high research activity, that is also a PWI (Carnegie Foundation, n.d.). Throughout the study, I examined the experience of undergraduate peer mentors in their role, interactions with their mentees, and in their transition from a mentee (University Scholar) to a mentor role. This research also describes how peer mentors are able to transfer knowledge they have gained from their experiences into other areas of their academic, vocational, and personal lives. Finally, this study utilized Kram and Isabella's (1985) psychosocial and vocational functions of mentoring and the four S's (support, self, situation, and strategies) from Schlossberg's (1984) transition theory to frame and guide the research questions and analysis.

Research Questions

As the use of peer mentoring programs expands, particularly for those serving underrepresented students (Campos, et al., 2008; Clark et al., 2000; Good et al., 2010; Ishiyama, 2007; Zamani, 2000), it is important to gain a more complete understanding of the peer mentoring experience. The undergraduate peer mentors who participated in this study are previous University Scholars (who are from underrepresented populations: African American, Latino, and first generation) working with students in the University Scholars program who may face unique challenges as they transition from high school to university life. The University Scholars program is a multi-year academic support program at UT Austin, which supports traditionally underrepresented students. In order to increase the knowledge pertaining to the experiences of peer mentors who serve underrepresented students at a PWI this study addressed the following three research questions:

1. How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor Program at UT Austin (a PWI) describe their lived experience in their mentor role (psychosocially, vocationally, and in their relationship to the institution)?
2. How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor program describe their lived experience through their interactions with their mentees (psychosocially and vocationally)?
3. How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor program describe their lived experience in their transition from mentee to mentor role using

Schlossberg's transition theory, specifically the 4 S's (situation, support, self, and strategies)?

Research Design

This study utilized qualitative methodology using an interpretivist approach. The interpretivist approach proposes that human experience and behavior cannot be thoroughly analyzed by using strict empirical methods and that human experience or activity is viewed as "text – as a collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.8). Interpretivism is characterized by five key assumptions, which include that reality is socially constructed, its purpose is to reflect understanding, it involves both subjective and objective methods for gathering data, it poses that understanding is context-bound and that universal truths should be deemphasized, and both research and practice guide and at times become the other (Willis, 2007). The core of an interpretivist approach lies in uncovering *verstehen*, which is German for 'understanding', [and] "expresses the idea that understanding the particulars of a situation is an honorable purpose" (Willis, 2007, p. 100). For the purpose of this study, understanding the experiences of undergraduate peer mentors who work with traditionally underrepresented students cannot be comprehensively accomplished through traditional survey or quantitative methodological approaches.

By employing a single-site study with a multiple participants design, which uses the participants as the unit of analysis, the complex nature of examining the experiences of undergraduate peer mentors is better assessed (Bloor & Wood, 2006). In order to obtain a rich data set, individual semi-structured phenomenological interviews posed both

specific and open-ended questions, which will result in a "thick description" of the undergraduate peer mentor experience (Geertz, 1983; Seidman, 2006). This lets "the phenomenological researcher [to become] a mediator between the voices and experience of the research respondents and the broader community of interested people" (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 129). A central theme of phenomenology in general and interviewing in particular is that interviews provide "access to the context of people's behavior and thereby provides a way for researchers to understand the meaning of that behavior" (Seidman, 2006, p. 10).

The use of qualitative methodology has many benefits for this particular study. For instance, it allows freedom to study the phenomena in their natural setting unrestricted by contrived or unrealistic settings that may be created in a quantitative study. Further, qualitative methods encourage data collection over an extended period of time and the flexibility to maintain a malleable research timeline (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Quantitative methods, such as a large survey of undergraduate peer mentors who serve underrepresented students across multiple four-year institutions, could provide aggregate information that could reveal some general trends about mentors. These trends could include self-efficacy, benefits and challenges they experience, and academic performance. However, qualitative approaches like phenomenological interviewing and observing events in a particular mentoring environment provided a more in-depth description of the complex nature of being a peer mentor.

Limitations

The scope of the literature on mentoring is expansive and full of areas ready for exploration. As a result, this research study was limited in that it will not identify major trends that apply to all undergraduate peer mentors or mentoring programs by using quantitative methodology, examining the importance of mentor training, or providing an evaluation of the University Scholars mentoring program. The University Scholars program is a multi-year academic support program serving historically underrepresented students. Unlike quantitative methods that are useful for producing results that are generalizable to larger populations, the chief limitation of a single-site study with multiple participants is that it only affords insight for a particular subset of peer mentors or those with similar program designs (Bloor & Wood, 2006).

However, qualitative studies have increased internal generalizability, which "refers to the generalizability of a conclusion within the setting or group studied", and can be generalizable to conceptual and theoretical understanding of phenomena (Maxwell, 1996, p. 97). This study gives practitioners a clearer understanding of the concept of being a mentor and lends support for using transition theory as an appropriate lens for examining the lived experiences of peer mentors. Further, in exploring experience in practical terms qualitative methodology is a mechanism for understanding meaning and is central to the interpretive approach of this study.

As a practitioner and researcher, I was particularly interested in how formal training affects the experiences of undergraduate peer mentors and the outcomes of students served by the program. Initially this was the focus of my dissertation research;

however, after exploring the literature, it became clear that the mentoring experience needed further studying before understanding how formal training affects mentors' experiences. Through this exploratory research study, I was interested to observe what major components of mentoring such as training could emerge as relevant to the mentoring experience. These components shaped the direction of my future research agenda.

Although this study painted a detailed picture of what mentors in the University Scholars program experience, the goal of this research study was not to formally evaluate the University Scholars program or University Scholars Mentoring program. Nonetheless, data collected through individual interviews, documentation analysis, and observing programmatic events could be used to complete a thorough evaluation of a program through structural, political, symbolic, or human resource oriented frames (Bolman & Deal, 2003). This study focused solely on the experience as perceived by the peer mentor and will not pursue evaluative objectives.

Delimitations

This research study was delimited through using qualitative methodology, selecting a specific type of institution, selecting a particular type of mentor population, presenting the mentor perspective, and examining mentors who act in a voluntary capacity. The choice to use qualitative methodology was purposeful and intended to achieve an in-depth examination of what undergraduate peer mentors experience. In addition, this method supplied an exploratory style that is free of limiting assumptions and that will identify major components of the mentoring experience.

Although this method promoted exploration, this study restricted the examination to a particular type institution. The scope of this study was purposefully narrowed to UT Austin, a public, four-year institution that meets the criteria of being a PWI. As a flagship institution, administrators across the nation and state look to UT Austin to set the example of how to reach institutional goals such as increasing graduation and retention rates. Flagship universities seek to attract the highest quality faculty, students, and "compete on behalf of the state in the national marketplace of public research universities" to blaze a trail for quality in higher education (Lombardi, 2003, p. 1). As peer mentor programs are being used to address these goals, it is valid to investigate an institution of this caliber.

The investment UT Austin places on the implementation of high quality peer mentoring programs is evident. Peer mentor programs stem from academic units within a variety of colleges, the Provost's office, the Dean of Students Office, divisions like the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE), and other areas of administration. Within the colleges, such as the College of Natural Sciences, comprehensive initiatives, like the nationally-recognized Texas Interdisciplinary Plan (TIP) program, offer academic support in addition to encouraging smooth transition to university life by providing students with intrusive advising, access to smaller classes, peer mentors, and free tutoring (The University of Texas at Austin, n.d.).

Within the Provost's office, under the leadership of senior vice provost for enrollment and graduation management, Dr. David Laude has created the University Leadership Network (ULN). In full disclosure, I began directing the ULN program in

spring of 2013. The ULN is a four-year incentive-based graduation and leadership program.

> The University Leadership Network (ULN) at the University of Texas at Austin is a new scholarship program designed to support 500 incoming students with unmet financial need. The program seeks to provide opportunities for leadership development and academic success to help students graduate in 4 years with increased professional skills. Students receive an annual scholarship award of $5,000, which is given as a monthly $500 disbursement during the fall and spring semesters as students meet program goals. Students who participate all four years in the University Leadership Network could earn up to $20,000 (The University of Texas at Austin, University Leadership Network, 2014).

The ULN utilizes a peer mentor model in which second year and above ULN students serve as peer mentors to incoming first-year ULN students. Teams of three to four mentors train weekly and facilitate weekly small group training sessions with 20-25 first-year ULN students. The training sessions focus on teaching transferable psychosocial and vocational skills.

Another example is the Orientation Advisors program in the Dean of Students Office, which prepares undergraduates to welcome and guide new first-year students during summer orientation (The University of Texas, Dean of Students, n.d.). Moreover, DDCE's newest mentoring initiative is Project MALES (**M**entoring to **A**chieve **L**atino **E**ducation **S**uccess) Fellows program, which is a multi-generational mentoring model designed to support Latino males in the UT Austin undergraduate population in addition to primary and secondary Latino male students in the local and state community (The University of Texas at Austin, Project MALES, n.d.). As a result, the university

promotes a tangible commitment to providing quality mentoring that is present across campus and collaborating communities.

Although mentoring typically involves a dyadic relationship, a common focus of the mentoring research centers on the experiences and outcomes of the mentee (Jacobi, 1991). This study, however, deviated to present the mentors perspective. This may include insight into the roles mentors play, the duties they are responsible for, the challenges and benefits they experience, the meaning making of their experience, the perceptions of what their underrepresented mentees experience, and mentors' perceptions of the program.

Further, this study did not examine the experiences of all types of undergraduate peer mentors. The use of peer mentoring has increased in higher education over the past 20 years; in particular, peer mentoring programs have focused on underrepresented students as prime candidates for benefiting from the program (Crisp & Nora, 2009; Jacobi, 1991). Specifically, this study concentrated on a single peer mentoring program, the University Scholars program, which offers academic and social support for first-year students who are historically underrepresented. This study revealed unique challenges and benefits experienced by mentees who are themselves underrepresented students. This information can be useful in creating more tailored programming to meet the needs of underrepresented students participating in academic support programs with mentoring components.

Finally, this study concentrated on mentors who serve in a voluntary capacity and do not receive monetary or academic compensation in exchange for performing their role.

Mentor programs are often affected by budgetary restraints or shaped by service-oriented missions that influence administrators to create mentor positions for volunteering purposes. As a supervisor of paid mentors, I was particularly interested in learning more about how mentors who are not paid perceive their experience, identify what motivates them to be mentors, and if their roles or duties differ from mentors who are paid or receive academic credit for their service.

Trustworthiness and Validity

As researchers, being able to establish trustworthiness and demonstrate efforts to ensure the validity of a study are essential (Maxwell, 1996). My preparation through professional experience, education, and conducting sound research creates a foundation of trust for my future participants and peers in academia. In reference to safeguarding the validity of my study, I employed triangulation by using multiple sources of data in addition to engaging in member checking (Maxwell, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Willis, 2007). I engaged in member checking by emailing participants an electronic copy of the transcript giving them an opportunity to review it (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Upon their review, they were asked to confirm if the transcript accurately reflects our interaction, providing an outlet for them to clarify or add additional information at that time. This email also included any follow-up questions I had at that time. Ethically, participants have a right to know what I have found during the research process and collecting their feedback works to eliminate possible researcher bias (Stake, 1976). The use of multiple sources of data "reduce[s] the risk of chance associations and of

systematic biases due to a specific method and allows a better assessment of the generality of the explanations [I] will develop" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 94).

As a second strategy to address possible validity threats, I created opportunities to share my research findings with an interpretive community, which consisted of my dissertation chair, committee members, and colleagues in the higher education community (Kvale, 1996). Reflecting on their thoughts and reactions to transcriptions, analytic memos, data matrices, and coding allowed me to utilize alternative perspectives as I moved through the data analysis process.

Because my professional career involves being a practitioner immersed in the field of mentoring, it was possible that my own bias could influence my interpretation of the individual mentor interviews. In an effort to curtail this risk and to increase the validity of my study, I employed triangulation by conducting a thorough document analysis, by observing mentoring events and training, and by engaging in member checking with participants who contribute in individual interviews (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Maxwell, 1996, Miles & Huberman, 1994; Willis, 2007). A thorough description of these practices will be presented in the procedures section.

Position of the Researcher

Both challenges and benefits surface in a research study that utilizes the researcher as a main instrument for gathering data. Historically, the background experience researchers bring to inquiry have been identified as bias and marked as phenomena that should be avoided whenever possible (Maxwell, 1996). However, some prominent scholars such as Peshkin (1992) and Strauss (1987) emphasize that using

experiential knowledge does not lead to the indiscriminate application of individual beliefs and ideas to the research. Moreover, Reason (1988, 1994) introduces:

> the term *critical subjectivity* which refer[s] to a quality of awareness in which [researchers] do not suppress [their] primary experience; nor do [they] allow [them]selves to be swept away and overwhelmed by it; rather [they] raise it to consciousness and use it as part of the inquiry process. (1988, p. 12)

In alignment with the concept of critical subjectivity, I created a researcher experience memo, which involved documenting my expectations, beliefs, and assumptions that I hold in regards to peer mentors and peer mentor programs. At this stage in my studies I know that I expect mentor programs to thrive when created with clear structure and organization; I believe that training is identifiable as a key component of mentoring success; and I assume that accurate and continuous program assessment is essential to the success of a mentoring program. These expectations, beliefs, and assumptions could challenge my ability to accurately conduct my data analysis. However, by identifying them early in the research process, I gained a level of self-awareness and ability to redirect my analysis before it is affected by those expectations, beliefs, and assumptions.

Because of my professional and educational experiences, further research in understanding new models of mentoring, in recognizing the needs of special populations, and in identifying new or unexpected goals or outcomes of mentoring is important to me. In addition, my career and experiences promote an active role in research and in collaborating with other academics and practitioners through presenting and participating at academic and professional conferences. Finally, my position as a supervisor of peer

mentors gives me a unique perspective on what mentors experience, which could aid in building rapport with study participants.

My ten years of working at UT Austin is where my journey in higher education began. During my professional career, I have transitioned from being an administrative assistant in a teacher preparation program to coordinating a single mentoring program to coordinating the professional development of peer leaders, who are undergraduate mentors, tutors, and paraprofessionals, for an entire college. This unique path has provided me with a firm understanding of the inner workings of a university from an organizational, mission-oriented, and relational perspective. In my various positions, I have been able to observe the structures of the university, the goals of the institution, and the dynamic behavior of individuals at varying levels of authority within the system.

My professional experience served as a catalyst to gain a greater understanding of higher education through graduate study. My educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, a Masters of Education in college student personnel administration, and I have completed all of the coursework required for my doctoral program in higher education administration. Coursework in these disciplines has focused on human behavior, on psychological theory spanning topics of cognitive development to language acquisition, and on educational theory including student identity development, organization, ethics, leadership, and policy.

Participating in research occurred at all three levels of my educational experience. As an undergraduate, I was part of a team who researched relationships between learning and behavior training evaluation criteria at the team level. This research explored the

relationship between the similarity and accuracy of team mental models and compared the extent to which each predicted team performance. During my graduate studies, I have conducted both qualitative and quantitative research studies including but not limited to: graduate student use of financial aid, organizational response to budgetary restraints, creating a mentoring model for Latino male populations, and comparing community college and four-year institution student knowledge of financial aid resources and policy. Being in a doctoral program has granted opportunity for continued learning, understanding, and applying research skills.

Description of the Research Site

The study took place at UT Austin, a four-year, full-time, more selective, public institution with very high research activity and is categorized as a PWI. UT Austin has a student body of 51,112, with an undergraduate population of 38,437 students (Carnegie Foundation, n.d.; The University of Texas Statistical Handbook, 2011). UT Austin is also ranked 45th in academic reputation among national universities and 13th among public institutions (U.S. News & World Report, 2012). As the rankings indicated, the university is a leader in higher education and is of particular interest in this study given its commitment to achieving increased diversity.

The current demographics and culture of the university still echo a difficult inheritance influenced by the university's role during the civil-rights movement. The graduate school was desegregated in 1955 after *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950) followed by undergraduate education in 1956 (Goldstone, 2006). University officials were even slower to integrate campus and living facilities. The Austin community also went

through desegregation; restaurants and entertainment establishments like the Varsity movie theater were not integrated until 1963 (Goldstone, 2006).

As a state, Texas fell under scrutiny following the result of *Adams v. Richardson* (1973), where the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) asserted that the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) had failed to implement Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states:

> No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. (U.S. Department of Education, 1964)

Following the *Adams* (1973) case, HEW and eventually the Department of Education were required to implement Title VI and open litigation against ten states found to be in noncompliance, including Texas (The Higher Education Coordinating Board, n.d.). In 1983, the Texas Plan was put into place in an effort to respond to the 1973 finding that Texas had failed to "eliminate the vestiges of its former *de jure* racially dual system of public higher education" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, n.d., p. 1). A second five-year plan was instated in 1989 to run through 1994, followed by a third plan, entitled Access and Equity 2000, which began in 1994 and was not initiated by federal mandate.

The Access and Equity plan (2000) was challenged after the *Hopwood, et al.* v. *State of Texas, et al.*(1996) case ruling that stated the UT Austin Law School had "violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment when it utilized racial

preferences in deciding which applicants would be admitted to the law school" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, n.d., p. 2). As a further challenge in 1997, Texas was notified by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) that it would come under investigation in response to the *Fordice* (1992) case. The *Fordice* decision determined that eight public universities in Mississippi had not made sufficient efforts to integrate and mandated that the state must engage in affirmative action to meet the requirements under the Equal Protection Clause. The Court found that Mississippi had removed overt prohibitions on the admission of Black students to their institutions and that the Court of Appeals had not properly reviewed the set of discriminatory policies used by the state to suppress Black enrollment at the specified institutions. The OCR's investigation standards were shaped by the U.S. Supreme Court, which "held that any state with a history of segregation in higher education must implement affirmative measures, including racial preferences, to eliminate those vestiges" (Records Appraisal Report, TECB, 2012, p. 2). As of 2006, the Office for Civil Rights is still monitoring Texas (Records Appraisal Report: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2012).

Although Texas is dramatically changing in terms of a burgeoning Hispanic population, UT Austin demographics still do not proportionately reflect the state of Texas which is 43.5% white, 11.5% Black, 40.1% Hispanic, and .05% Other (Texas Department of State Health Services, 2012). As of fall 2011 – spring 2012, UT Austin's undergraduate population is 50.4% white, 20% Hispanic, and less than 5% Black, indicating that it is still a PWI (UT Austin Statistical Handbook, 2012, p. 17).

The history of UT Austin informs the demographic composition of the campus and indicates reasons why the university continues to be a PWI. Within higher education and for the purposes of understanding the context of this study, it is important to understand the race categorizations of institutions. This study focused on the experiences undergraduate peer mentors who are serving underrepresented first-year students at a predominantly white institution. PWI's are institutions that excluded Black and/or other students from enrolling in their institutions before the Civil Rights Acts of 1965 (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 2010). UT Austin does meet the criteria of a PWI; but what made UT Austin an ideal site for this study is its demonstrated efforts in increasing diversity through student admissions, faculty recruitment, and institutional initiatives.

Despite historical inequities, over the past 20 years UT Austin has demonstrated a strong commitment to diversity. In 2011, President William Powers noted:

> In 1990, the student body was composed of 71.2 percent white students, 10.8 percent Hispanic, 3.7 percent African American, and 6.3 Asian American. In 2011, the enrollment was 52.1 percent white, 17 percent Hispanic, 4.5 percent African American, and 15.2 percent Asian American. This indicates a 63 percent increase in Hispanic students, 26 percent increase in African American students, and a 150 percent increase in Asian Americans over a 20-year period. (Impact Report, 2011, p. 6)

As an institution, UT Austin is also providing more support to underrepresented students than ever before. The Provost's Office, specifically the area within graduation and enrollment management, under Dr. Laude's leadership is providing academic support

programs who serve underrepresented students with additional financial support in order to expand their services.

In regards to campus resources, the Multicultural Engagement Center (MEC), also a part of the DDCE portfolio has grown and developed over 25 years. The MEC offers educational programming, informational resources, and innovative program events to engage the campus community in opportunities to explore the diverse cultures present on campus. Services provided by the center include: advising, scholarship programs, social justice education, and outreach programming (The University of Texas at Austin, DDCE, n.d.).

Another way UT Austin is moving its commitment to diversity forward came about in the creation of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE) by President Bill Powers in 2006. Powers charged Dr. Gregory Vincent to lead the division in five key areas, which include campus diversity and strategic initiatives, student diversity initiatives, academic diversity initiatives, community engagement, and university and community partnerships (Impact Report, 2011). Through these five major areas, the university is working to address systemic problems regarding issues of equality, social justice, and equity through student programs, including mentoring programs, recruitment practices, partnering with the local and state communities, etc. (Impact Report, 2011).

An example of a DDCE initiative is the University Scholars program, which offers academic support for underrepresented students at UT Austin. Participants for this study were peer mentors drawn from the University Scholars program. The University

peer mentor program consisted of about 30 sophomores, juniors, and seniors who are all members of the University Scholars program. In 2011, the program had 25 applicants who completed a paper application that included academic information in addition to personal reasons the applicants felt uniquely qualified and motivated them to become a University peer mentor. Applicants that demonstrated potential to be a good mentor candidate and who met the 2.8 grade point average requirement were asked to participate in an interview with current University peer mentors and staff. In all, 18 new applicants were selected to join a team of 12 returning mentors, creating a team of 30 active mentors for that year.

After their acceptance into the program and prior to the beginning of each semester, the University peer mentors participate in a day long mentor orientation that concludes with a "Meet your Mentor" program event. During the mentor orientation, mentors are trained on topics such as the role of the mentor, their responsibilities for attending University Scholar programming, including social events and speaker-series, the best practices for working with students in the University Scholars program, and the methods of referring students to appropriate campus and community resources (Iliana Sortiriou, personal communication, August, 6, 2012). In addition, the program encourages excellence through the Distinguished University Scholars Certification Program. This certification program promotes their core values of scholarship, leadership, service, and diversity (The University of Texas at Austin, University Scholars, n.d.).

Description of the Sample

This study employed a purposive sampling method (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The criteria for the purposive selection included selecting eight to 10 participants ranging in age from 18-25 years of age. All participants were enrolled at UT Austin for the fall 2012-spring 2013 academic year, had participated as a University Scholar during their first-year, completed one year of mentoring, were classified as sophomore, junior, or senior, and serve as mentors in the University Scholars program. In reviewing several qualitative studies examining the mentors' perspective, the number of participants in those studies ranged from six to 19 mentors (Good et al., 2000; Heirdsfield et al., 2008; Knoche & Zamboanga, 2006; Shotton et al., 2007). My range of eight to 10 mentors falls within this range. In addition, in order to present a broad spectrum of mentor perspectives, I endeavored to select an ethnically, gender, and academically diverse sample.

In my professional life, I coordinate a peer-mentoring program within a first-year academic support program, which serves historically underrepresented college students. This mentor population initially piqued my interest in beginning this study. However, as their supervisor and instructor, I felt there would be a direct conflict of interest in conducting research with students that perceive me to be in a role of authority. Fortunately, I was able to identify the University Scholars program as an academic support program that also supports historically underrepresented first-year college students. Selecting this mentor population allowed me to maintain my intended

participant population and alleviate the possibility of introducing a conflict of interest or researcher bias.

The University Scholars program is housed within an academic support center, within the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (DDCE). The four strands of University's core mission include Scholarship, Leadership, Service, and Diversity (About University Scholars, Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, The University of Texas at Austin, 2010). This multi-year program works to support students in their transition from high school to college and serves historically underrepresented students. Currently the program supports over 250 students, 68% percent of which are first generation college students (Tillis Report, 2010). The 2010 demographics of the program show that the population is 64% female and 36% male. By ethnicity the student population is 26% white, 39% Hispanic, 14% African American, 15% Asian American, and 6% other (Tillis, 2011). Students participating in the program are not limited to a particular academic discipline, with students in the colleges of architecture, business, communications, education, engineering, fine arts, geological sciences, liberal arts, natural sciences, nursing, social work, and undergraduate studies (Tillis, 2011).

Procedures for Data Collection

Prior to beginning the research, I obtained Internal Review Board (IRB) approval from UT Austin as well as a letter from the director of the University Scholars program granting mentors permission to participate in the study. After those approvals and permissions were obtained, the program director sent out an email invitation on my behalf to all mentors explaining the purpose of the study and what participants could

expect if they choose to participate (Appendix A). If the initial invitation yielded a large number of willing participants, I would narrow the pool by identifying individuals who would create the most diverse sample in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, and academic discipline. If mentors wished to participate, they would respond to me via email to schedule his first interview appointment. Prior to the first interview beginning, I explained the informed consent form and gave the participants an opportunity to ask questions or express concerns (Appendix B). Then I requested the signature of the participant on the consent form. All consent forms were stored together and a copy of the signed consent form was provided to each participant.

After giving their consent, each participant completed a brief pre-interview questionnaire prior to participating in their first interview (Appendix C). The questionnaire requested information regarding the participant's demographics, college information (college, major, and classification), mentoring experience, and future plans. This information helped me obtain a general overview of the participant's background, which was helpful in building rapport during the first interview.

In alignment with the interpretivist approach, I designed the pre-interview questionnaire and interview guides in a previous pilot study (n=4) in the fall of 2011 (Smith, 2011). Participants in the pilot study were mentors in the University Scholars program. In response to my experience with the pilot, I adjusted the race and ethnicity categories in the pre-interview questionnaire to reflect a broader spectrum of diversity by using the racial categories utilized by UT Austin in their admissions application and eliminated some fields, which may breach participant anonymity (e.g., phone number). I

strove to protect the identity of participants and informed them that a variety of measures were taken to ensure their anonymity. I informed them that I hired a reputable and discreet transcriber who would not misuse participant information. Additionally, transcriptions only contained participant initials instead of their full names and pseudonyms replaced those initials in the final report. If necessary, I actively disguised the participant's identity by changing possibly identifiable information like high school name or name of their hometown. With the exception of the dissertation committee and chairperson, I did not discuss the names or any identifying characteristics of the participants with anyone. Lastly, every step will be taken to adequately disguise the participant's identity in any published materials or presentations. The transcripts will remain in the direct physical possession of the researcher. All digital audio files and electronic transcripts will be kept in an encrypted file on my computer, which is supported by Trucrypt software.

Following the completion of the questionnaire, participants then engaged in two audio-recorded individual interviews spaced over a period of no more than three weeks (Appendix D and E). This qualitative research study utilized a phenomenological interviewing approach in gathering data, which has been adapted from Seidman's (2006) work. Traditionally, Seidman's (2006) model involves three separate ninety-minute interviews: the first, which covers an individual's life history up to the point of engaging in the phenomena the second, which focuses on what takes place while experiencing the phenomena; and the third, which concludes with the participants' reflections on

experiencing the phenomena (e.g., being a mentor). This traditional use of the model was tested in the pilot study.

After reviewing my reflections on the pilot study, I identified a few areas for adapting the model. First, none of the interviews exceeded sixty minutes. This discovery led to the modification of the estimated interview time to sixty minutes instead of ninety. In addition, it seems that traditionally aged undergraduate students, 18-25 years old, may have shorter life history interviews, as they have not lived as long as older adults have. Second, I discovered that during the second interview, mentors showed a desire to discuss their mentoring duties and experiences in addition to their reflections on how they made meaning of those experiences. Third, I found that it is difficult to schedule undergraduates for three consecutive interviews. For example, I began the pilot study with four participants, but only three were able to complete all three interviews. Modifications to this model are also present in the mentoring research literature (Reddick, 2011). Based on these reasons, I decided to combine the two topics typically covered in the second and third interviews into the second interview. I contacted Dr. Seidman and received his permission in August of 2012 to adapt the model based on my experience conducting the pilot study (personal communication, August 1, 2012).

After each interview, I went through a process of analysis and reflection. First, the audio recordings were transcribed and reviewed. I then engaged in member checking with each participant. I engaged in member checking by emailing participants an electronic copy of the transcript giving them an opportunity to review it (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Upon their review, they were asked to confirm if the transcript

accurately reflected our interaction, providing an outlet for them to clarify or add additional information at that time. This email also included any follow-up questions I may have had at that time. The participants' feedback was taken into account during the analysis process.

Aside from interviews, I also reviewed documents produced by the mentor program. The documentation reviewed in this study included all of the information available on the program website: program description, program mission/vision statement, mentor description, calendar of events, etc., and any other pertinent documentation the program director can offer (e.g., training guides/curriculum). Accordingly, documentation was acquired from the program director, the program website, and any materials gathered from attending mentoring events.

I also conducted a few observations of scheduled mentor program events that included mentor training, the "Meet Your Mentor" event, and any on-going mentor programming during the fall 2012 semester. I took detailed notes during the events and collected any documents from each event. By reviewing documents and observing key mentor programming events, I was able to scrutinize and support or contradict findings from the interview data analysis.

Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study draws on influences from phenomenology, grounded theory, and transition theory (Moustakas; 1994; Schlossberg, 1984; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The sources of data for the study included individual interviews, program documents, and observations of selected mentor program events in order to use

triangulation to increase validity of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Phenomenology has deep roots in philosophy stemming back to the thoughts of Descartes and Husserl who promoted the idea of inquiry based on the experiences of self (Moustakas; 1994). The primary focus of phenomenology is to "be able to put behavior in context" to create and distill meaning and understanding (Seidman, 2006, p. 10). The desire to describe how the peer mentor understands and makes meaning of their experience is a principal reason why a phenomenological approach is appropriate for this research study.

After each interview, I wrote analytic memos, keeping a record of my immediate thoughts, questions, and major points of interest (Seidman, 2006). Then a professional transcriber transcribed the digitally recorded audio file. When the transcription became available, I engaged in member checking by emailing an electronic copy of the transcript, giving the participants an opportunity to review it (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Upon their review, they were asked to confirm if the transcript accurately reflected our interaction, providing an outlet for them to clarify or add additional information at that time. This email also included any follow-up questions I had at that time.

After the member checking was complete, both open and axial coding, which originate from grounded theory, was utilized in coding data, which originated from its use in grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), which was:

> inductively derived from the study of the phenomena it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data

> collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, and then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge. (p. 23)

The grounded theory approach fits with my inclination as a researcher to begin with a fresh perspective on peer mentoring and to be free from the bounds of adhering to a strict theory and its assumptions.

Open coding, the initial stage of coding "involves the naming and categorizing of phenomena through close examination of data" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 62). The process of open coding involves labeling phenomena, discovering categories, naming a category, and developing categories in terms of their properties and dimensions. Within the open coding process, I began with line-by-line analysis of each interview in an effort to generate a rich set of categories.

When I completed open coding for both interviews the participants engaged in, I used three conceptually-clustered matrices to begin organizing the data from the transcripts. Each matrix corresponds directly to one of my research questions and was influenced by the concept map of the University Mentor Experience that I created after conducting the pilot study (Smith, 2011; Appendix G). The first matrix addresses research question one, which focuses on the experience of the peer mentor role and includes columns to track the mentor's pre-college experience, campus environment (relationship to UT Austin), vocational interactions, psychosocial interactions, skills acquired, and future goals (Appendix H). Data from both interviews was used to in completing the first matrix.

The second matrix focuses on the mentors interactions with their mentees, includes columns to track interactions centered on the campus environment (acclimation to university life), vocational, psychosocial, and other for data that does not fall into one of those three categories (Appendix I). The final matrix focuses on the peer mentor's progression from the student role to the mentor role, which contains columns to track the mentor's psychosocial, vocational, support, self, strategies, situation, and other, for data that does not fall into one of those categories (Appendix J). In addition to using Kram and Isabella's psychosocial and vocational functions of mentoring, this matrix is also guided by Schlossberg's four S's of support, self, strategies, and situation from her transition theory (Goodman et al., 2006). The matrices were used to identify common and divergent themes across mentors.

The final step of the data analysis process concluded by utilizing axial coding to identify major themes for each research question. While open coding is essentially the breaking apart of data, axial coding involves putting the data "back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories. This is done by utilizing a coding paradigm involving conditions, context, action/interactional strategies and consequences" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 96). Although open and axial coding is laid out for open coding to occur first, I moved back and forth between types of coding while examining the data.

Finally, content analysis was used to examine field notes from observed mentor events and any documents gathered from mentoring events, the program website, or provided by the mentor program director. Content analysis consisted of "counting

occurrences of themes, words or phrases [across the] documents. The approach is objective, systematic, and concerned with the surface meaning of the document" (Bloor & Wood, 2006, p. 58). This approach lent additional validity to the study by examining multiple sources of data.

Summary

The existing literature supports the positive effects of peer mentoring on the mentees, but there is a dearth of information regarding the experience of the peer mentor. It is critical for administrators to understand both parts of the mentoring relationship to use it in answering issues of graduation and retention rates in higher education. This study draws on the disciplines of management, medicine, and higher education to demonstrate the prevalence of mentoring programs (Buddeberg-Fischer & Herta, 2006; Ingersoll, 2002; Jones & Pauley, 2003; Kram, 1983; Roche, 1979; Reddick, 2006; Scandura, 1992). Specifically, this study is situated within the undergraduate area of higher education and centers on understanding the experiences of undergraduate peer mentors who serve underrepresented first-year students at a PWI.

This study utilized qualitative methodology (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The study employed a single-site, multiple participant design (Bloor & Wood, 2006). Upon gaining IRB approval and obtaining informed consent documents from the participants, I used purposive sampling to select eight undergraduate peer mentors from the University Scholars mentoring program who had completed at least one full year of (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

This study adds to the existing mentoring literature, shedding light on the experience of undergraduate peer mentors who serve underrepresented first-year students at a PWI. This study delivers insight into the challenges and benefits undergraduate mentors experience working with historically underrepresented students. The following two chapters will describe the participants of the study and explore the research findings of this study.

Chapter Four: Mentor Profiles

The first section in this chapter describes the participant population's demographics and provides an informative table to view the participant demographic data at a glance. The following section and the remainder of the chapter provides a profile for each of the eight mentors who participated in the study and are based on transcripts from interviews one and two. Each profile is a structured vignette, which "allows [me] to present the participant in context…and to convey a sense of process and time, all central components of qualitative analysis" (Seidman, 2006, p. 119). To protect the anonymity of the mentors in the sample, I have assigned pseudonyms to each participant, and modified references to any identifying information such as hometown or name of their high school. Each mentor profile includes the classification of the mentor during the time of the interview, but actual ages will not be included. Lastly, I have limited the description of their area of study to their colleges, rather than specific majors to further protect their identities.

Table 4.1 serves as a reference to quickly ascertain the demographic data for each of the participants in the study. All of the mentors who participated in the study are all undergraduates, who were classified as juniors or seniors at the time of the study. They all also had at least one or more years of mentoring in the University Scholars program. Additionally, all of the mentors began as first year students in the University Scholars program. Therefore, all of the participants meet one or more of the criteria of being from an underrepresented population (Hispanic or African American), a first-generation college student, from a rural population, or considered from a low socio-economic

background. Some of the participants did not have a formal or active University mentor during their first year as the mentoring program has just been formally developed over the last three years.

Table 4.1 Participant Demographics

Name	Sex	Race/Ethnicity	College	Classification	Years as a Mentor	First Generation
Arianna	Female	White	Liberal Arts	Junior	2	No
Carmen	Female	Hispanic	Communication	Junior	1	Yes
Chris	Male	White	Natural Sciences	Junior	2	Yes
Eliana	Female	Hispanic	Liberal Arts	Senior	3	Yes
Enrique	Male	Hispanic	Business	Junior	2	Yes
Hannah	Female	Hispanic	Business	Junior	2	Yes
Jeremiah	Male	Black/African American	Fine Arts	Junior	2	Yes
Tuan	Male	Asian	Natural Sciences	Junior	2	Yes

The mentors in the study demonstrate a clear motivation to become a mentor. Within this shared concept of motivation, all of the participants were able to describe having an educator who took a special interest in them, which may have added to their motivation to become a mentor. Subsequently, all of the mentors in the study share the trait of altruism and a desire to give back to the University Scholars program. Finally, all of the mentors in the study also describe the development of a variety of transferable skills. These commonalities will be discussed in detail in relation to the three research questions guiding the study.

Each profile offers a description of the mentor's identity and background, their experience as a University Scholar (first-year student), and their definition of mentoring. Identity for each mentor may be expressed through race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, his or her family background, and academics. Then, a glimpse into their experience as a University Scholar provided insight into how that experience shaped their decision to become a mentor and determined what they chose to emphasize in their mentor role (skills, friendship, academics, etc.). Lastly, each mentors definition of undergraduate peer mentoring is provided to help to uncover a foundation of what experiences were unique to the individual and what aspects of mentoring emerge as commonalities across their collective experience as mentors. Combined, the social components of identity, their organizational experience in the University Scholars program, and their definition of mentoring provide the reader with a structural understanding of eight individuals while also uncovering the collective experience of the phenomenon of undergraduate peer mentoring underrepresented students at a predominantly white institution (Seidman, 1998).

Arianna. Arianna is an energetic and confident young woman who is classified as a junior in the college of Liberal Arts. Descriptors for Arianna include sympathetic, compassionate, sporty, tomboy, "peace keeper," compliant, and perfectionist (self-proclaimed). Arianna is a second year mentor for the University Mentor program. She seemed extremely comfortable in her own skin and proud of her identity. In regards to race and ethnicity, Arianna identified herself as a Latina. She frankly explained that she has a white side of the family (her father's side with deep roots in Minnesota) and her

Mother’s side of the family. She identified most with her mother's Latina heritage, and deems it as "super cultured.” Arianna noted that she considers herself to be from her mother’s country of origin although she was not born there. She mentioned spending summers and holidays there, which strengthened the bond with her mother’s family.

The concept of family was central to her identity. Arianna said she felt “having that core family [unit] really shaped who I was growing up.” She described her experience growing up in a multi-generational home as extremely positive. Her father’s mother lived in the home and served as a consistent role model. Arianna noted that her cooking was also especially great. Her mother stayed at home during her formative years and later made the decision to return to the workforce. Arianna made a point to say that she returned because she wanted to. Arianna’s mother and grandmother’s support was a recurring thread as Arianna reflected on significant transitions over the course of her life.

A major transition Arianna faced regularly during while growing up was moving frequently. Her father’s occupation in the food industry prompted these moves as he was promoted or changed companies. Moving so often resulted in her immediate family becoming her most important source of support. She also became well versed in making new friends and adapted to a variety of environments. She explained that moving around was beneficial because it allowed her to appreciate having a core family experience and forced her to interact and build relationships with new acquaintances. She described herself as always being the new person, and because of frequent moving experiences she tried to be inclusive in situations when new people were entering a group environment.

The school environment was often where opportunities to be inclusive emerged. Arianna viewed academics with a positive attitude and paired that with high expectations, which stem from her encouraging relationship with her mother. During her elementary years she described experiencing frequent boredom, which prompted her enrollment in more challenging enrichment programs. During her high school years, Arianna moved once again and she found high school more academically demanding. During this time she made a conscious decision to select friends that also shared her commitment to academics. She also discovered a sense of belonging and flourished socially as a member of the tennis team. She stated that her core circle of friends collectively agreed that college was their next academic goal. Arianna mentioned proudly that all of her friends went on to college.

High school however was not without challenges; she described experiencing multiple fallouts with friends. This seemed typical for a high school student, but her experience in moving frequently prepared her to handle these incidents without seriously disrupting her life or focus on school, sports, or in her social life. She leaned on her mother for the majority of her support and a particularly encouraging teacher.

Her college experience also presented initial social challenges. As a first-year student, she survived a break up with a jealous boyfriend and fallout with a roommate (excessive partying/drugs). Additionally she participated in a religious Greek organization, she describes as the experience as " a really huge mistake…I was just miserable because it was the only organization I was really trying to be involved in." The

experience could be summarized as a mismatch of values, which resulted in the end of her participation in the group after a single semester.

Arianna's sources of support in college included herself, a close friend, her mother, and the University Scholars program. Arianna "didn't really think about it when it was happening [her] freshman year, but [University Scholars program staff and her mentor] provided so many opportunities that …made her college experience really great." She also described how the University peer mentor coordinator and a particular faculty member made her feel cared for.

Initially the program interested her because it sounded like a beneficial program and had it also had early registration. She spoke about not being very active in the program, but when she discovered the opportunity to become a mentor, something clicked inside her and she felt motivated to be a part of giving back to the University Scholars program. This opportunity also helped her to find value in the challenges she has faced and felt it prepared her to give more realistic advice and guidance to her mentees.

University Scholar Experience. Arianna describes the goal of the University Scholars program to ease in the transition from high school to college for first year students. She discussed the University Scholars first-year course as challenging and instrumental in her growth. The University Scholars program prepared her to know that she needed to go to office hours to ask questions and make an effort to know your professors. Acting on this made her feel more connected to the faculty and raised her personal expectations for the quality of her schoolwork. She said initially, the priority

registration was a large motivator for her to join as it has been extremely helpful in helping her get into the classes to ensure she was completing her degree plan on time.

She also mentioned the importance of becoming a University Scholars Distinguished Scholar, which can be earned by fulfilling requirements such as attending workshops, a speaker series, and other events. She said the speaker series also reinforced her desire to get to know faculty, and that it is "important to like your professor. It motivates you to get better grades and to really want to learn about the class material."

Definition of Mentoring. Based on her experience, Arianna believes that undergraduate peer mentoring,

> Means being what the mentee needs through the lens of your own personality. A peer mentor should be a role model for the mentee; someone who emulates academic success and follows their passions. To be a successful peer mentor one must be resourceful, committed to the mentor-mentee relationship, and available to the mentees needs. An undergraduate peer mentor has a huge role in the mentee transition into college life and should be capable of facilitating the academic success of their mentee.

She strongly affirms that mentors who are able to connect with their mentees and are able to help them grow psychosocially and vocationally do so by being genuine, committed to the relationship, and by being resourceful. She bluntly asked "Why are you in the program if you're not going to help others?" She highlights that role modeling this helping behavior is critical to being a mentor.

Chris. Chris is first generation college student who emitted a persistent and committed attitude about achieving his academic and personal goals. Descriptors for Chris include: direct, humble, open-minded, realist, and conscientious. He was classified as a junior in the college of communication. Chris identified himself as a white

male and was a second year mentor in the University peer mentor program. When asked about what parts of identity were most central to who he is, Chris said, “I feel a lot of negative identity in relation with being a white male.” When pressed to discuss the reason behind his response, Chris said,

> I always hear about the systems in America are really broken because they are white patriarchal. I’m like what am I supposed to do with that? Because if you want to do something, then most people think you have to be another race to really inspire change or get some kind of new innovation. Also, there are a lot of negative stereotypes that come with being a white male, and there’s no scholarships. There are no scholarships for us, there’s not a white scholarship foundation. And even males have very limited scholarships as opposed to females.

He showed frustration when discussing the topic of being a white male. This frustration could have led to inaction or adopting a victim-like mentality, however, Chris used it as motivation to press on and explore what educational options were available to him.

In regards to family background, Chris grew up in a single-parent home. He described his family structure by stating,

> My mother and father were divorced when I was about five. I have two younger brothers sixteen, and seventeen, and then my dad got remarried when I was seven, so very quickly after he divorced my mom, and I have an older stepbrother who is now twenty four, and a younger stepsister who is eighteen. And then my mom is currently engaged, and I’ll have a younger stepbrother who is six, so a really large family.

Growing up under his mother’s care, Chris mentioned that she typically waitressed to support the family. He also noted that he grew up on welfare support and lived in public housing (apartments and trailers) that were in “very, very rough neighborhoods…[and said “we actually had a meth house blow up down the street from us.” Chris shared that growing up without a father in the home was challenging, especially “in small country

towns [where] it's all about who [your] dad is. You get a name because of who your father is, so that was really rough." He did not share any positive stories about growing up in his household and kept his answers very brief. He appeared to be slightly uncomfortable when discussing his family, so I did not push the conversation further.

Unfortunately Chris's level of comfort did not seem to increase when discussing his academic experiences from elementary through high school. He said that he's "always been the smaller guy, so [he] always got picked on." Although he did not find a great deal of support through his peers, Chris shared that his kindergarten class was a pilot for the gifted and talented (GT) program at his school. Initially he was not placed in GT classes, however, a teacher who "took an interest in [him, she] tutored [him] after school, and [he] took the test again and passed" and was placed into GT classes in the fourth grade. Chris performed quite well academically throughout his pre-secondary school years, although he did not realize this until his third year in high school. Chris said,

> The big turning point for me was my junior year. We finally did class rankings, and up until that point I had no idea about college. I only saw movies of rich white kids going to college…I didn't know anybody else could. So when class ratings came out, and I found out that I was fifth, my principal actually pulled me into her office and was talking to me. She was like, "Ok, where do you want to go to school?" I was like, "Yeah, you're joking, ok, that's cool." And she goes, "No, no, no, seriously, where do you want to go to school?"

Through all of the social challenges Chris faced in regards to his family life and social interactions at school, he persisted academically. He remembered reading a lot as he grew up and specifically mentioned he "developed a really, really strong work ethic. Even if I didn't have somebody who was advocating for me, I worked so hard where

somebody couldn't go without noticing me." Although his mind set had predicted a life of working after high school, he was shocked to learn that he could and should pursue a college education.

University life proved to be a bit out of Chris' comfort zone as well. He said, "I saw more people on my first day of school than were in my entire town, it was shell shock." In addition to a new and somewhat overwhelming environment, Chris also felt underprepared and ultimately failed his first academic course that year. He said, "I took calculus in high school, but I was nowhere prepared as most of the other kids in my class were." Eventually, Chris was able to navigate the university system and began exploring other majors and colleges, which, might be a better fit for him.

University Scholars experience. During those challenging times, Chris was able to find support from University Scholars staff, particularly a graduate research assistant who served as the cohort leader for the discussion section paired with his first-year University Scholars course. Chris noted that this staff member's background was in higher education, so he didn't teach him about math or science, instead this staff member really helped him to learn to manage his time and explore his passions. Chris said, "He's really the only real male role model I've ever had." Chris described the University Scholars program as separate from the mentoring program, noting "it is designed to take first year students who are low income or minority students and help them transition from high school to college." Chris said that the mentoring program was further developed after his first year and that he "didn't really have mentors who were involved with him."

This confusion about the role of the mentor sparked his interest when his cohort leader encouraged him to apply to be a mentor the following year.

Definition of mentoring. After participating as a mentor for one year, Chris' definition is as direct as he is. He defines undergraduate peer mentoring as, "a program in which a more experienced student, still an undergraduate, mentors to another undergraduate student." Later in the interview he went on to expand on that definition to say, "The mentoring program has also developed into a friendship system," indicating that the mentor role is meant to be a meaningful and reciprocal relationship. Chris' definition also demonstrates how enigmatic the title mentor can be. When he gave his definition, he had a clear understanding of what mentoring means, but in using the word mentor in his definition he makes the term ambiguous. His definition reflects the challenge discussed in mentoring literature in the myriad of definitions associated with the term mentor (Jacobi, 1991).

Eliana. Eliana is a female student, classified as a senior who is in the College of Liberal Arts. She has three years of University peer mentor experience. Descriptors for her include, reformed introvert, proactive, emerging leader, caring, and gaining confidence. Eliana identified primarily by her Latin country of origin , followed by Hispanic as a secondary identity. She said, "I know when they ask you as far as ethnicity goes…usually white, Black native, whatever, I don't know. I never feel like it really fits." She described her family and the influence of being natives of their home country,

> Growing up, for me, being from my country was a big thing. You listen to the music and eat the food. The family would get together for boxing matches. Some of my family is from another Latin country, so it would be someone from my

> home country versus someone from their country. It would be a big deal. We would wear little things with the flag on it, and we were just very proud.

Eliana noted that a good deal of her time was spent with both immediate and extended family. She mentioned her cousins in particular. She said, "We girls were pretty much the same age. There are four of them, so on the weekends and even summertime, we'd all just hang out. We're really close." Family was a central theme in the formation of her identity.

In addition to ethnicity, Eliana also described gender as a major source of her identity. She said,

> My mom, and in general, me and my cousins' mothers, they had us when they were young. They were on welfare, so it was difficult for them. For us, our generation growing up, they instilled in us, "Don't let men treat you this way or whatever. You need to be careful. You need to be able to provide for yourself, be an independent woman."

For Eliana, her identity as a woman influenced many of the choices she made, such as how she spent her time and whom she formed relationships with. The strong female role models like her mother, aunts, and cousins who encouraged her to be an independent woman shaped those choices.

Eliana described growing up in a nuclear family, which included her mother, father, older sister, and a younger brother. She said, "I know growing up, we definitely had some rough spots with each of us going through our teenage years and issues with that, but I think now that we're all older, we're definitely a lot closer." Her family moved thirteen times by the time Eliana turned thirteen. She said, "My mom's family was all up north and my dad's family was all down south. So with my dad's job in security, his

company actually got bought out several times, so we were moving around." She described a variety of living situations.

> I've lived in a trailer and there were a lot of fleas and cats everywhere and that was really bad. I've lived in apartment complexes in not so good neighborhood areas. But when I officially settled down, my family built a house that we love and have been in ever since my sixth grade year.

Eliana intimated that moving into the single-family home near other family members provided her with a sense of comfort and stability, however, in reality the comfort provided by those relationships were not echoed in her academic life. The sheer number of moves Eliana experienced previous to her middle school years negatively affected her ability to create and maintain meaningful relationships. Eliana said,

> I had a hard time making friends and stuff. Since I'm more of an introvert, it's kind of harder for me to get out there. I know my sister and brother didn't really have a problem. In elementary school, I had very few friends. I remember being on the playground and not having anyone to play with. You kind of just stick to yourself or you kind of just hope to go home, or just draw or something.

Eliana tended to isolate herself and not make any significant attachment to peers. Knowing that she would be in her home through high school gave her the confidence to finally develop close friendships in middle school. The development of these friendships did not keep her from developing depression during her middle school years. When asked about the root of her depression, Eliana described her constant comparison of herself with her more outgoing sister who was just one year older than her. Eliana said, "She kind of had everything, and then I looked at myself and it was just a big difference between us, so that was hard to deal with in itself." Eventually, Eliana found her own community to belong to in high school by joining the tennis team. She noted two close

friendships, and described how she found academic and social support through those friendships and also with the continued support of her mother.

These supportive relationships also provided her with guidance through the college application process. She said,

> Since my friends parents had gone to college and had some kind of degree, I kind of looked at them and said, 'OK, so what do we do now?' 'Oh, I have to apply for scholarships, how do you do that?' So, I looked towards them because they already knew from what their parents had been through it…but I didn't. I didn't have any of that.

She successfully navigated the process and made use of her relationships to understand the best strategies for applying to college.

University Scholar experience. University life for Eliana began with several challenges, which include challenges with her roommate, adjusting to the freedom associated with a college schedule, and finding a way to meet her financial obligations while in school. She found continued support during her first and second years of college in her family and through her participation in the University Scholars program. Eliana describes the program as "focused on trying to give underrepresented students a better edge up on people who had either the money or the family or the resources to know what college was all about." Specifically, Eliana said that attending the University Scholars first-year course changed her way of thinking and opened her mind to new perspectives. During her first year, the mentoring program had not yet been established. Based on her challenges and her experience and encouragement from her University Scholars first-year course instructor, discussion leader and roommate, Eliana decided to apply for the mentoring position at the program's inception.

Definition of mentoring. For Eliana, not having a formal mentor as a part of her first-year experience served as motivation for her to become a mentor. According to Eliana,

> The role of an undergraduate peer mentor is to help out and guide and individual who is younger or new to the school. [She] would define undergraduate peer mentoring as an individual offering guidance and support to their peer(s) in order to better that/those peer(s) receiving the aid of the individual.

For her, the purpose of the role of a peer mentor seeks to provide general support and guidance to the mentee. Her definition is all encompassing to emphasize the importance of providing mentoring across the academic and social needs of mentees.

Enrique. Enrique is a first generation, male student classified as a junior in the college of business. He is a second year University peer mentor. Descriptors for Enrique include: extrovert, involved, creative, proud, emotive, optimistic, goal-oriented, and advocate. He identified himself as Latino, more specifically his heritage comes from two Central American countries. He said,

> One side seems calmer, and cooks good food. The other side, they're a lot faster speakers, have strong attitudes, and also good food. But at the same time you find the same values in terms of family and staying together and supporting each other. I'm very proud. I wish I could know more about it. I've never visited either country. Hopefully, that's something I can do in the future.

Enrique has primarily developed his identity through the strong connections with his family members.

In regards to his immediate family, Enrique said "Growing up, my parents were like the Brady Bunch as they were both in prior marriages when they got together. My mom had a boy and a girl, and my dad had two girls and a boy." His mom and stepfather married when he was eight years old. Growing up in a blended family can be

challenging, but Enrique described the experience as "good, and very warm." His mother was a stay at home mom and his father owned his own painting company. He made a point to express that both of his parents spent a great deal of time with the children as they grew up. He said "My parents were always my biggest supporters. They come from not a lot of background educationally, but that didn't matter because I felt like they instilled a drive in me that guided me."

He described growing up in a major city; however, his parents built a home on a plot of land near the outskirts of town. They had few neighbors and he described the area as predominantly white at the time of construction. During high school, he said,

> I started to see more Latino students all over campus. For the most part everyone was came from low socio-economic backgrounds—not terrible, but nobody was wealthy and had cars or got to go out a lot. Everyone was kind of on the same level…[and] most everyone was Latino.

By the time Enrique graduated from high school the community demographics had shifted to a primarily Hispanic population. He noted that the area's main economic contributions came from chemical plants and refineries. Enrique said that the majority of students in the area went to work in those industries as opposed to attending college.

Academically, Enrique described himself as confident and capable. In his words, "Academics for me was always like, I'm going to do them. I guess it was expected for me to just excel in them. It was everything else that mattered for me." He took advanced placement (AP) courses; math was his favorite, followed by science, history, and English. His academic identity was formed by his participation in a variety of extracurricular activities. He was a violinist in the orchestra and participated in a music institute at the

encouragement of his mother. He also participated in theater, cross-country, orchestra, and held several leadership positions in service organizations.

High school was not without its challenges. Academically he struggled and worked hard to succeed in his AP English class, thanks to a supportive teacher and his consistent effort he improved his writing skills. In regards to social challenges, Enrique said,

> I did have girlfriends in high school, but I found out I was gay…my junior year was when I think I finally accepted that. I accepted it, but at the same time I put it on the back burner. I was like, 'OK, that's done.' So I just got myself more involved. My closest friends were the only ones I told in high school. I didn't tell my parents until summer after my senior year.

Enrique leaned on his closest friends for support during high school. He describes his sexual identity as "just one side of me." Students with a variety of central components of their identity like race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality may compartmentalize their identities in order to make sense of their identities and to be able to achieve their goals in a particular environments.

In the university atmosphere, Enrique continued to actively participate in the community. He took on an executive leadership position for an LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) student organization, which gave him an opportunity to gain public speaking and event coordinating skills. Enrique's biggest challenge laid in determining how to successfully balance his focus on academic achievement and participation in extracurricular activities. He said, "School was my biggest thing honestly. I studied my butt off. I did that a lot, just because I was like, 'Well, this is hard."

University Scholar experience. Support to learn how to be a successful college student was provided to Enrique by the University Scholars program. As a first-year student, Enrique found support amongst his peers in the program. He said,

> I guess we identified in terms of our high schools not being top performing schools. We related on other terms, and other students that I knew. So when we would study, we're honest with each other. Like, I don't know what's going on right now [laughs]. You wouldn't feel guilty, or dumb around each other, so that was nice.

Enrique described how his study habits improved over the course of the year due to his involvement with his peer study group in the program. He described group study as a collective experience focused on everyone achieving success as a result of initial shared struggle in understanding the material. His group identity as a University Scholar provided him with a feeling of belonging and connectedness in the university community. The idea of group success was a central theme in his conversation describing his first year in the program.

He described having a mentor, but said, "I had a mentor, but the mentor program was really new at that time. [My] mentor was a year older than me, but she didn't really have a distinguished role." Enrique seemed to find the bulk of his support from his peers in the program.

Definition of mentoring. The developing nature of the program did not result in a strong connection between Enrique and his mentor, but that experience of not having a mentor served as a catalyst for Enrique to apply to be a mentor. He voiced a desire to provide students with mentors with a more defined and active role. Enrique said,

> The role of an undergraduate peer mentor takes three parts in my mind: a friend, a resource, and a role model. Becoming a friend is the hardest part of being a

> mentor. Students typically don't know what a mentor can offer and what boundaries are set. Time, trust, and attention are required to reach 'friend' status. Being a resource is easiest. As an older peer, a mentor should know about academic and social opportunities. Students should be confident that their mentor will have answers or at least know someone that does. Becoming a role model can be even harder than becoming a friend, or possibly easier. I think this just depends on how you present yourself to a student.

Enrique's definition was very specific and covered three major components of undergraduate peer mentoring. The detailed definition was a reflection of his mentoring experience. His definition specifically addressed the importance of developing a friendship or meaningful relationship with the mentee, serving as a resource (campus and personal), and serving as a role model. His more specific definition gave the mentor three measurable goals to achieve, which could lead to a more effective and meaningful mentoring relationship.

Hannah. A female first-generation college student who is classified as a junior in the College of Business, she is a second year University peer mentor. Descriptors for Hannah include: direct, outgoing, physically active, independent, positive, and resourceful. She identified as a Latina, and more specifically as a Mexican-American. She said, "I don't want to say Mexican because I wasn't born in Mexico but I'm Mexican-American. All of my family is Mexican. I know how to speak Spanish. It was my first language. I'm close to my culture."

In regards to family, Hannah described growing up with a generally nuclear family including her mom, dad, and younger sister. However, she also mentioned that at times her grandmother and some times her aunt's and their children also lived with them for short periods of time. She said, "A lot of the family is in and out. Nothing really

stable. Then whenever anybody else needed to stay with us, they would stay with us for a couple of years, or two or three years, and then they would leave." She noted that both her mom and dad worked outside the home while she was growing up. Her dad worked in machinery and her mom worked for a major workforce solutions company.

While growing up she described living in apartments and a few houses out of state. Her parents had purchased their first home in the state where they had met and married, but the cost of living in comparison to their current city made it very appealing to move. Her family has been in her current single-family home for the past ten years. Her current home is in a city outside a major metropolitan area. She described the neighborhood as "super calm, rarely even cars go by. I find it really safe." Her family was in close proximity to her home as well. She spent time with aunts and cousins after school and on the weekends.

In regards to academic identity, Hannah was influenced by her parents support. She said,

> My parents always emphasized how important school is. That I should be working outside of what they do. That I wanted to be better, get a better job, better education, that would help me be a better person in the future. That's always stuck with me.

Hannah kept the encouragement from her parents close to her as she moved through her academic career. In high school, she participated in a math club, an honors society, and excelled on the swim team. She was quick to say, "I did a lot in high school. It was definitely diverse and not just studying but I got to explore more. I liked it a lot."

Hannah was very independent and resourceful in high school. She became aware that the high school she was assigned to had a high rate of teen pregnancy, student

attrition, and few advanced course offerings. She mentioned that her parents were unaware of her assigned school's reputation, so she went forward and navigated the transfer process to another high school on her own. She said,

> You had to transfer to the school I wanted to attend every year. It wasn't like you applied once and it goes for the four years. Every year you have to transfer again and again. I had to figure out how to do that on my own. My parents didn't know. Ever since middle school my parents never really checked up on me, my grades or anything. I kind of just took my own initiative to do it. I did it on my own, I figured out how to transfer, and just told my mom, 'This is what I have to do, just sign here.' She'd sign and I got transferred. Even for college they didn't help me.

Her independent and tenacious nature ensured that she would continue to pursue her academics at a school that met her needs. She described her high school as racially and ethnically diverse. In regards to socioeconomic status, she described her high school as predominantly middle class.

Her tenacity enabled her to pursue her college application process in much the same way. She described using the Internet, going to her school counselor, and contacting the university admissions offices directly. "I'd call the university all the time and it was like, 'I don't know what I'm doing. What do I do? How do I do admissions? Where do I get the application?' I would just call and ask, really." She had no trouble calling and asking for the information, freely admitting that she was unsure of how the process worked. She was able to let go of possible embarrassment because it was worth it to get the information she needed.

In the university environment, Hannah looked for a place to belong. She found her niche by joining a Latina sorority. She said, "I wanted to have friends that I can identify with, which is like Latinas and Mexicans." She described taking comfort in

being able to just be herself and that participation in the organization opened opportunities for her to take on new leadership roles.

From an academic standpoint in her university experience, Hannah said,

> I really did have to study and really apply myself in high school. I was actually really good in high school. I was like number 11 out of 700 or something. Since then academically I wouldn't say I'm horrible, like on bad standing or anything. I'm almost to a 3.0 but not there yet. I wouldn't say it's terrible. I think it's all right. I'm doing a lot of other things, like extracurricular things that I kind of balance out. Of course I would love my GPA to be better, I can always improve on it, but I'm not too bummed out, but I'm not satisfied.

Hannah showed a desire to continue to improve in her academics and demonstrated that she, like many other first-year students found it challenging to balance both academic and social aspects of university life.

University Scholar experience. Hannah described the cohort experience she had as a University Scholar. She said,

> I met some of my really good friends there because we had all of the same classes together. Literally I spent every day all day with them because we had the exact same schedule and we had the exact same classes so we'd study together and everything.

Hannah met her roommate through the University Scholars program as well. She described this friendship as critical to each of their academic achievements and one of her largest sources of support. She said, “We had the same personality, kind of the same views on things. We would say things like, “OK, let's just study.” Or "Come on, stay up. You need to read.” We just kind of tried to motivate each other.

Hannah mentioned that she participated in the University Scholars first-year course and how that communal academic experience allowed her to develop meaningful academically focused relationships with her peers. She described that the University Scholars courses trained her in how to be successful academically. She said,

> I usually go to TA hours or make a lot of friends in my classes. Now I know who to go to, and say "Oh, I have this person in my class, I'll go study with them." Or, "oh I have a question, let me ask them." Or I'll go to TA hours or office hours.

Hannah also attended the University Scholar Distinguished Speaker Series and other University Scholars sponsored events. She described the events as workshops full of information that would help her move forward in securing an internship in the future. Topics for the workshops included helpful topics such as resume writing and interview techniques. Hannah's academic and social needs were met through her participation in the University Scholars program.

Definition of mentoring. When asked about her experience with her University peer mentor she responded, "Mentors? I know I had one assigned in University Scholars but I really never talked to her or anything." At that point in the University peer mentor program history, it was the first year of the implementation of the mentor program. From Hannah's perspective the role of the mentor was not clearly defined and there was not a formal introduction of the mentors to the mentees. When asked to define undergraduate peer mentor, Hannah said,

> To help one of your peers transition into college, help them in whatever they need. To be a person that they can confide in. To guide them by helping them explore all the campus resources they have available and helping them adapt to a new environment. To give them tips on how to manage their time with the school

> workload and the social aspects such as extra organizations they may participate in. Basically, making them feel comfortable and being their for them.

Hannah's definition focused on the unique relationship formed between a mentor and mentee. She highlighted the importance of providing information, in some cases inside information that only an experienced student could offer that could aid in navigation present in the challenging environment of first-year college students. There was a particular focus on providing comfort and ease in transition, which is especially important for underrepresented college students who may be the first in their family to attend college or feel overwhelmed by the university environment.

Jeremiah. Jeremiah is a first-generation, male student classified as a junior in the college of fine arts. He was a second year University peer mentor. Descriptors for Jeremiah include: positive, humble, optimist, and faith-oriented. Jeremiah identified as Black and African American. In describing his identity, he focused on his faith as a foundational component. Jeremiah said

> My identity wasn't made, but now that I think of it, if I would not have grown up in this environment, I just wondered, "What would I be?'" I grew up in church, had to go to church every week, had to sing, had to be in Bible games, and all this type stuff. It made my identity, and is still with me today.

The components of race and faith have clearly shaped Jeremiah's identity development. In our initial interview Jeremiah did not provide a great deal of description regarding how being a Black male has shaped his identity. Jeremiah further explores his identity as a Black male during his college experience, which is covered in a description of his academic identity below.

In regards to Jeremiah's family background and home environment, he grew up in two types of environments, a single-parent household and a blended family. He lived with his mother and also described living with his grandparents. They lived in the same town. He said, "Most of the time I went to my grandparents' house every day when my mom went to work." During those times he and his mother lived in a rental property owned by his grandparents at no cost to his mother. Jeremiah mentioned a few periods, usually a year to two years in length, where his mother moved to another city to find employment. His mother was employed in positions working with state juvenile correction services and retail establishments. During those times he stayed with his grandparents. Jeremiah described a time when his mother returned to the town where he lived with his grandparents, and said,

> I was supposed to move back in with my mom after I graduated from middle school, but I was like, "What am I moving for?" I've been here for most of my life, so I might as well finish off my high school year here.

Jeremiah seemed to be very comfortable discussing his living situation during our conversation. He addressed it very directly and seemed to reconcile his mother's necessity for employment and his ability to find balance between the two living environments.

Jeremiah's grandparents served as his primary caregivers during his middle school and high school years. His grandfather worked in a metal plant and his grandmother was an elementary school teacher. Jeremiah said, "She taught me my first grade year…she taught five of her grandchildren. Her sisters were teachers too, so I had a lot of people who were educators in my family." When asked how he felt about the

environment he grew up in, Jeremiah said, “With my grandparents I had everything I needed.”

Jeremiah mentioned that he knew his father, but he was not a consistent presence for him growing up. When asked about his father, Jeremiah said,

> I had a relationship with my dad, well a little bit of a relationship. But it's getting better now since I'm older, and he's older, wiser. I saw him a few times when I was younger, but I've never lived with my dad before.

Jeremiah did not discuss the reason behind his father’s absence from the home. His mood seemed to sadden a bit at the mention of his dad not being present as he grew up. However, he did appear hopeful at the prospect of working to develop more of a relationship in the future.

Jeremiah grew up in a relatively small town. He said, “The neighborhood that I grew up in was fairly good. I didn't get into any trouble. I've never had any violent things happen around me.” He described a wide network of family living in the town, which included a wide array of aunts, uncles, and cousins. His family was very active in the community and a majority of his family members had roles as educators.

Jeremiah’s academic identity was very positive and stemmed from growing up surrounded by family and a few teachers who were particularly invested in his success from elementary through high school. For Jeremiah, it all began in elementary school with a teacher in the Gifted and Talented (GT) program that affected his outlook on education.

> I loved everything about the academic stuff. My language arts GT teacher, she did a lot of things. The experience was learning. We could sit where we wanted. We had time on Fridays where we can just read books. The different lessons that we

> did, we watched movies. It was a small class. It was like an ensemble. We could work with each other. It was just a great experience.

His initial experience with education focused on the joy found in learning and provided time for creativity and teamwork. In middle school, Jeremiah's family connection to education continued as his uncle was the athletic director. He said that his middle school "years were the best part of being in public school ever. I loved all of my classes. I graduated as the valedictorian my eighth grade year. I made all A's…oh no, I'm lying. I made my first C in shop."

His success continued as he moved into high school. He described his campus as a very small public, predominantly Black school with his graduating class being made up fewer than 60 people. When asked about his friends in high school he said most were his family (cousins) and a few close friends. He described taking dual credit courses and studying with friends during his senior year. His academic identity was very positive.

When asked about challenges he faced during high school Jeremiah described two, one positive and one negative. His first challenge arose when he decided to take Calculus. He described his motivation take the course arose out of a little academic competition. "The girl who was the salutatorian, if she took that class and I took a regular…I chose to take it because she was taking it. I needed to stay in my rank." He described how the class required him to study harder than usual and pushed him to learn something challenging. He earned advanced placement credit for calculus, which eliminated his need to take math to complete his college degree.

The second challenge Jeremiah faced involved confronting a teacher who made disparaging remarks about Black students. The teacher stated "Blacks graduate with biology degrees because they can't do math" during class one day. Jeremiah also described a class with the same teacher where students were to work with other students to help prepare them for an upcoming state exam. Jeremiah felt that this was unfair and voiced that he felt the teacher should be working with the students instead. The teacher responded by calling him a derogatory name. Jeremiah described going and talking to family members in the administration to correct the problem. When asked what it felt like to have the ability to voice his concerns he said, "I think it was empowering, because I had people within the school that I could talk to. It was just good to know that I had somebody to go to and help me out."

Transitioning into the university life, Jeremiah's academic identity remained positive while also addressing challenges that college presents. He said, "When I was in high school, my goal was to get here. Now that I'm here, it's hard for me to set a clear goal of where I want to be." Jeremiah verbalized the challenge many first year students face. For so long, the goal has been to get to college and now that he was here, he became aware of the need to regroup and set new goals. Additionally, Jeremiah faced issues of procrastination. He said, "I wish I could go back and just start over and ask more questions, seek more opportunities, and not wait to the last minute. Because I wait until the last minute, I have passed up a lot of things." Jeremiah found support in three close friendships that developed through common interests like music, major, and academic interests.

University Scholars experience. Jeremiah also found a great deal of support during his first year in particular in the University Scholars program. The first-year course called 'Race in the Age of Obama' provided by a University Scholars instructor had a considerable effect on him. Jeremiah said the instructor asked him "What is your passion? What are you going to do to follow your passion?" Jeremiah went on to share how that lecture led him to change his major from business to theater. He was convinced he should explore his passions and the University Scholars faculty inspired him to do so.

He also took a Black Power Movement course from the same instructor that semester. Jeremiah said, "I had a double dose of him each week. It was inspiring to learn about Black people… because is high school and the public education system you don't learn about that type of stuff." Jeremiah held a deep regard for the University Scholars program and the way their faculty and staff made a point to open the eyes of their students to issues of social justice, how to advocate for themselves, and how to pursue their academic and personal goals.

Definition of mentoring. During Jeremiah's first year in the University Scholars Program, the mentor program was not yet fully developed. He said, "I didn't have a mentor my freshman year within University Scholars." He went on to say, "I became a mentor my second year, because I didn't want nobody to go through what I went through. Mentoring is just a way to give all of your experiences to someone else to help them get to where you are or help them not struggle like you did." Jeremiah described undergraduate peer mentoring as,

> Mentoring is a friend. I'm going to just describe it. It's not a friendship, but it's like a friend that you didn't ask for but a friend that is willing to just give their advice, give their experiences, and give their wisdom to someone. I would also define undergraduate peer mentoring as a humble giving back of skills, knowledge, experience, and wisdom to a younger student in order to help them fulfill and exceed their full potential.

Jeremiah was motivated by a lack of mentoring to become a mentor himself. He voiced a great desire to provide guidance for students and fill the gap of mentoring from his own first-year student experience.

Carmen. Carmen is a first-generation, female student classified as a junior in the college of Communication. Carmen was a first year mentor in the University peer mentor program. Descriptors for her include: focused, direct, goal-oriented, inquisitive, dedicated, and forthright. Carmen identified herself as Hispanic followed by Latina. Within the interview Carmen did not express detail regarding her identity as a Hispanic or Latina. She described growing up and spoke more of the influence of her family, but not in relation to her race or ethnicity. Based on our interview, her current identity centers more on her academic performance and goals.

Carmen group up in a multi-generational household. She described her family as being made up of, "My mom, my dad and my brother, and then my grandparents; and that's still how it is, very unified, family-oriented, everything's strong. My grandfather passed away, probably when I was eight. My grandma moved in with us after that." Carmen noted that both of her parents worked outside of the home during her growing up years. Her father worked with the school district at one point, as a teacher, and later as a human resource services manager. Her mother worked for a plant on the border,

followed by a position within the school district where she currently works in bilingual education.

She described growing up in the same house in a neighborhood near the center of her small town. She described it as being primarily made up of houses, and "right outside of it was apartments. It's kind of a mixture all throughout the town. There is one high school, one Wal-Mart, one HEB (local grocery store). It's really small." She was very positive in describing the area in which she grew up.

Carmen's academic identity began early when her parents enrolled her in a private, Catholic elementary school. She said, "My first language was Spanish. My parent's wanted us to go. The reason they sent us there from Pre-K through third grade was to learn English." She described the process as a positive experience and said, "I just remember that every teacher was really, really nice." She also mentioned that there was an Air Force base located in the town, so many of her classmates were children of those serving in the military.

Carmen transitioned out of a private school environment and into a public middle school. When asked about her experience of shifting to a new environment, she shared that,

> The summer before going into sixth grade, we went to the Boys and Girls Club. It helped me a lot, because they were just a bunch of kids running around, but it actually turned out that a lot of those kids were in my classes in middle school. It helped me bridge the gap between public school and coming in from a private school.

She also discussed how in reality there were not many differences between the two environments except for having to make new friends. The only differences she noticed were that uniforms were no longer required and chapel was not held on a daily basis.

Moving on to high school, Carmen began to develop a clear and positive academic identity. She described herself and her friends as “the ones who were serious. When it came to a party, or hanging out we were always like, ‘Well, we’re going to do school work first and then we’ll come.’” She and her friends were focused on excelling in academics, which may have differed from other students in her class. In reflecting on her high school in comparison with her college roommate she said,

> I remember her saying, at her high school she couldn’t think of one of her personal friends that may have gotten pregnant, or anything like that. In my high school, especially now, it started being a common thing to see other people who were pregnant, or kids who didn’t even think about going to college, or were just staying home. Carmen and her friend’s focus paid off, she said, “For those of us that [got into college], that was just huge for us.”

Carmen expressed a noticeable difference between the college-going cultures of her high school versus her roommates.

Although she was very focused and successful in her academic career, high school also presented her with challenges that led her to rely on a variety of sources for support. Carmen described her father becoming seriously ill during her freshmen year. This caused the family to incur a substantial financial burden. However, Carmen said when it “came to sports, extracurricular activities or even getting to college, [her parents] said that money is not an issue, we’ll figure it out some other way, but you go where you want.” Her parents demonstrated great support for her and her siblings even in times of distress. Anytime she faced challenges in regards to academics she said she would go to

her dad or her brother. When it came to navigating the college application process, she leaned on a friend who had graduated a year ahead of her.

Moving into her university experience, Carmen continued to seek advice from her friend. In particular, this friend showed her the ropes in regards to her major. Carmen mentioned that her parents did not understand what her major was and said, "when I was applying for my first internship they were kind of weird about it. Because they said that's going to take away time from your schoolwork. But in [my major] I need an internship experience to get a job." Here, Carmen's friend was better able to address her questions and support her goals because of her unique position as a peer.

University Scholars experience. Aside from support from her friend, Carmen also received support from the University Scholars program. Carmen described the University Scholars program as designed "for first year, first generation college students. Their goal is to give students that safety place, and support them academically and socially." When Carmen reflected on how University Scholars has helped her she said, "I feel like they helped more academically, like when I had that paper to write. Also knowing that, like they say, 'Whenever you need something, you're more than welcome to just walk in.'"

She also discussed seeking help from an upperclass student upperclassman in the University Scholars program, who was serving as a writing consultant. The upperclass student encouraged Carmen to apply to be a mentor after they had been working together. The older student upperclassman told her, "Hey, I think you would be great for this. This

is a great opportunity. Check out the application." Carmen noted that her uplifting comment gave her the nudge she need to really considering to apply for the position.

Definition of mentoring. When asked to define undergraduate peer mentoring, Carmen responded to the pre-interview question, which read,

> Within the context of this study, undergraduate peer mentoring is defined as a relationship between a more experienced undergraduate student (typically older) acting as a guide, role model, and advocate of a less experienced undergraduate student (typically younger). The aim of the mentoring relationship is to further the mutual development and refinement of both the mentee and the mentor's skills, abilities, and understanding, introducing the theme of reciprocity (Smith, 2012).

Carmen stated, "I agree with the definition that is given. Being a mentor is not just trying to be a guide, or a role model, but also a friend." For Carmen, building a meaningful relationship, a friendship is an integral part of being a mentor that was not found in the definition provided. Although she agrees that a mentor acts as a guide, role model, and advocate, for Carmen the development of a friendship makes her a more effective mentor. She also described a mentor as "trustworthy, loyal, honest, reliable, and show some type of leadership in their own life. No matter where they might have come from, or what they've done, they are taking some kind of initiative." Her thoughtful definition demonstrates the genuine care she feels as an undergraduate peer mentor.

Tuan. Tuan is a first-generation, male student classified as a junior in the college of natural sciences. He is a second year mentor in the University peer mentor program. Descriptors for Tuan include: curious, candid, sincere, dedicated, and concise. Tuan self identified as Asian.

Tuan describes growing up in a multi-generational family, which included his parents, his grandmother, two older brothers, and one younger sister. His mother worked outside of the home as a manicurist and he mentioned that his father has a disability and was unable to work outside of the home. His father received government benefits and funds to help support their family. Tuan spent the majority of his life growing up in his home country. He did not come to the United States until the after he had completed his junior year of high school in the summer of 2007. His grandmother remained in his home country when his family moved to the U.S.

His move to the U.S. was quite a shock to his system. They were assigned an apartment by the government; it was located in a major city. Tuan said, "We were here and had to try the American food. We had to cook it every day. We had to get used to it. The neighborhood is very strange. We had to get to know them from the very beginning and they are also like us. They were immigrants." He described living amongst a diverse group of immigrants in the apartment complex.

In regards to his academic identity, Tuan had a tough beginning in elementary school in his home country. He said, "When I got into elementary school I was so scared. I cried all the time. I didn't know what was going on. They taught me the alphabet. How to speak out loud. I enjoyed school starting the semester after that." He progressed through middle school and completed his junior year of high school before moving to the United States He said,

> In my home country [high school] classes started from 7:00 am until 11:30 am, and then we had to go to extracurricular activities and other classes {chemistry, physics, mathematics, as well. [In the U.S.] I had to spend a lot of time in high

> school every single day. Classes started at 8:30 am and they end at 4:30 pm every single day.

He missed not having a break in the middle of the day to recharge and then head back to school for more coursework. Tuan excelled academically and developed a positive academic identity.

His first day of high school in the U.S. almost did not happen. Tuan said on the "First day I came to high school, I was lost. I didn't know what to do. I didn't see the yellow school bus. I had to go to school by a police car." Not knowing where to turn, Tuan and his sister saw a policeman nearby, asked directions on how to get to school. Luckily, the officer offered them both a ride to ensure they arrived at the right location. The distress in his voice was still very real when in his retelling of the story.

As Tuan entered the school, He said, "I saw diversity. I did not see only people like me. I saw people from all ethnic backgrounds." At the time of the move he had just completed his junior year of high school. In the beginning Tuan felt isolated, and said, "I did not speak English at all." He addressed the challenge of language by using an online dual language dictionary and said his English teachers helped during his English as a Second Language (ESL) courses.

As he became more proficient in English, Tuan was able to establish friendships and felt more secure in his high school community. The majority of his friends were Hispanic. He mentioned having different academic goals than a majority of his friends. He said,

> For them, they care more about jobs. They care about graduation and going to a community college. They care about getting a job after they graduate. They are immigrants like me, and because their parents are not able to support them to go

> to college, the students have to work part-time, or full-time to support themselves and for their families.

Tuan said that a few of his friends did go on to attend four year universities, however the majority stayed at home to work or to attend the local community college.

Aside from the immense challenge of learning English, Tuan also had to navigate the Western high school system and college application process. Tuan mentioned that he found support in his high school guidance counselor. He said, "I wish I could have known [him] earlier, because he's really nice. He helped me with everything about the college application process. He helped me with everything about how to apply for scholarships. He was a good mentor for me." Tuan mentioned having to seek out his counselor, his perseverance proved to be invaluable in seeking out his counselor as a resource and avenue in accessing college.

As a university student, Tuan was quick to say that, "The classes are more challenging, especially I had to study and prepare before every single lecture. I still had a language barrier at that time." He added that the challenge wasn't necessarily knowing English, but knowing what to listen for during lecture. Initially, he also faced a challenge in making new friends.

University Scholars experience. Tuan was quick to say that the University Scholars program provided a way to make friends through his University Scholars first-year course. He said, "I was able to meet all of them, and they knew me very well," when thinking about how the course provided him the ability to make friends through their group identity as University Scholars. In his words, the goals of the University Scholars program are to "assist new incoming students to get familiar with the college

experience and to get the resources available to them and to get help from the mentors." He also noted that University Scholars is designed to serve underrepresented students who did well in high school and may have unmet financial need.

Tuan described his involvement in the University Scholars program. He said, "I was an active member. I came to a lot of the lecture series, almost every single week. I was active in the activities of the program and I got academic help from a peer." After he worked with a peer and learned of the opportunity to become a mentor from a staff member, Tuan applied to be a mentor himself.

Definition of mentoring. Tuan did not have a formal mentor in the University Scholars program. The mentor program was still being developed at that time. When asked to define undergraduate peer mentoring, Tuan said it is,

> A relationship in which a mentor gives education advice to a mentee who is less experienced. A mentor is able to guide a mentee and inform them of everything they need to know about classes and college experiences. A mentor is trustworthy and can give accurate information when asked by a mentee.

Tuan's definition reflects how greatly he values giving mentees precise information to ensure their success in their transition to university life. His direct approach to mentoring lays out a traditional mentor role, where the mentor has experience and knowledge and passes it on to the mentee.

In conclusion, these structured vignettes provide a deeper illustration of each mentor participating in the study in regards to their identity, University Scholar experience, and their definition of undergraduate peer mentoring. Although each mentor had a unique experience, in reading the accounts as a collective occurrence commonalities emerged across the sample that point towards the essence of what it

means to be an undergraduate peer mentor who serves underrepresented students at a predominantly white institution. The following chapter describes the most prevalent findings of the study, which include examining the mentor's motivation and opportunity for social exchange, how mentors develop psychosocial and vocational skills through their role and interactions as a mentor, their connectedness to the institution, and how transition theory served as a useful framework for exploring the transition from mentee to mentor.

Chapter Five: Findings

This chapter presents the findings for the three research questions that guided this study on the lived experiences of undergraduate peer mentors who serve underrepresented students in the University Peer Mentor program (UMP) at the University of Texas at Austin, a predominantly white institution (PWI). Data in this section comes from two interviews that were conducted with each of the eight mentors participating in the study. The research questions used to guide this study are

1. How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor Program at UT Austin (a PWI) describe their lived experience in their mentor role (psychosocially, vocationally, and in their relationship to the institution)?
2. How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor program describe their lived experience through their interactions with their mentees (psychosocially and vocationally)?
3. How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor program describe their lived experience in their transition from mentee to mentor role using Schlossberg's transition theory, specifically the 4 S's (situation, support, self, and strategies)?

Research questions one and two utilize adapted versions of Kram and Isabella's (1985) definitions of the vocational and psychosocial functions of mentoring as experienced by a mentor. The third research question examines the mentor experience as they transition from mentee to mentor through the use of Schlossberg's (1984) transition theory, particularly focusing on the 4 S's of situation, self, support, and strategies. Before answering each research question, adapted definitions for both the psychosocial

and vocational functions of mentoring are provided as a guide in analyzing the mentor's experiences. Next, definitions for an undergraduate peer mentor and their role are provided. Then the unique positionality of the peer is discussed. Textural and structural accounts of the mentor's experience of how and what they experienced within the phenomena of mentoring in regards to each research question are provided. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a brief summary of the findings.

The first two research questions utilized Kram and Isabella's (1985) definitions of the psychosocial and vocational functions of mentoring as an organizational lens to examine the mentor's experiences. Kram's definition of the psychosocial function of mentoring is **as follows:** "The mentor offers role modeling, counseling, confirmation, and friendship, which help the young adult to develop a sense of professional identity and competence" (Kram & Isabella, 1985, p. 111). This definition focuses on the benefit received by the individual being mentored however, for the purposes of this study, the definition has been adapted to focus on the experience of the mentor. The adapted definition of the psychosocial function of mentoring focuses on the mentor's development of traits and behaviors associated with psychosocial or personal growth (e.g. patience, empathy, ability to build relationships, etc.).

Further, the original definition of vocational or the career-enhancing function of mentoring includes the offer of "sponsorship, coaching, facilitating exposure and visibility, and offering challenging work or protection, all of which help the younger person establish a role in the organization, learn the ropes, and prepare for advancement" (Kram & Isabella, 1985, p. 111). The adapted definition of the vocational function of

mentoring for this study is similar however, it is again focused on what the mentor experiences. For this study, the definition of the vocational function of mentoring involves the mentor experiencing sponsorship, coaching, exposure and visibility, and being offered challenging work or protection by program staff, mentees, and fellow peer mentors, all of which help the mentor establish a leadership role in the organization, learn the ropes, and prepare for future opportunities (employment, education, etc.).

Mentor Definition and Role

In chapter two, I introduced Moore and Amey's (1988) definition of mentoring was introduced. They define mentoring as:

> A form of professional socialization whereby a more experienced (usually older) individual acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and patron of a less experienced (often younger) mentee. The aim of the relationship is the further development and refinement of the mentee's skills, abilities, and understanding. (p. 45)

In an effort to create a more tailored definition for undergraduate peer mentoring, the Moore and Amey definition has been adapted to describe mentoring as a relationship between a more experienced undergraduate student (typically older) acting as a guide, role model, and advocate of a less experienced undergraduate student (typically younger). The aim of the mentoring relationship is to further the mutual development and refinement of both the mentee and mentor's skills, abilities, and understanding in order to aid in the student's successful transition to college life. The University peer mentors met the criteria provided in the adapted definition.

A mentor within the University Peer Mentor program (UPM) is an undergraduate student, who participated in the University Scholars program during their first year of

college. UPM program mentors also participate in pre-service and concurrent training activities, interact with mentees in academic and nonacademic settings, programmatic events, and work to build meaningful relationships that further the goals of the University Scholars program.

Jeremiah described the goals of the UPM program in this comment:

> To help first generation students or underrepresented students to actually come to college and reach their full potential and graduate. That's what they want us to do. Their goal is not to make a statement on this campus, but just for us to reach our goals, and to do what we came here to do, and not feel left out or feel like you don't have anybody.

The role of the mentor in the UPM program is to aid in the successful transition of their mentees (University Scholars) from high school to college and to encourage academic achievement and social/civic engagement at the University of Texas at Austin. The role of the mentor is facilitated through building relationships and seeking a variety of avenues to interface and communicate with their mentees.

Position as Near-Peers

Mentors in the UMP program indicated they are able to be effective in their role because of their unique position as a peer. Hannah said,

> I think an incoming student is able to relate more to one of their peers and is more comfortable coming to a peer than to a faculty member. Sometimes they're really intimidated by them. They have a position of authority. [Students think], “I don't want to express how I feel. I don't want to express if I'm struggling in something. They won't really get it. They don't know what college is like for me.” I know that it is easier for them to relate to someone that is their own age, that literally just went through that a year ago or so. They are more comfortable talking to someone like that. The mentor can really guide them and lead them in the right direction.

Hannah described how mentees are preferred to confide in and work with a peer because of how recently their shared experience as a first-year student occurred. She also

described how mentors have experience, but not an authoritative role, which it easier for a mentee to approach a peer mentor as opposed to a faculty member.

Other mentors also described how peers are easier to approach than graduate students, who are closer in age but still held a role of authority in relation to the first-year student. Chris said,

> I think the reason mentors are so valuable is because it gives you an insight that no one else can have. Somebody who is a graduate student can try to mentor to an undergraduate, have gone through the same experiences, have the exact same major, same everything. They can be the same race, same background, hell, even live in the same town. But, unless you have somebody who's close to your same age and who has recently gone through these things it isn't the same.

Chris echoed Hannah's point that his ability to influence his peers is derived from his unique position and proximity in age and to the first-year college experience. The peers in this study are aware of their unique position and seek to utilize their influence to create opportunity to build relationship with their mentees and offer guidance and resources that will support their goals.

Research Question 1

How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor Program at UT Austin (a PWI) describe their lived experience in their mentor role (psychosocially, vocationally, and in their relationship to the institution)?

Within this section, peer mentors in the UPM program at UT Austin experienced their role in three main areas. Mentors experienced psychosocial growth when they met with students as groups and as individuals, through the environment in which mentoring took place, and through interactions with University Scholars staff and fellow peer

mentors. Mentors experienced vocational growth through participation in both pre-service and concurrent training and through their interactions with students and program staff. Lastly, the peer mentor role is explored through their relationship to their institution, the University of Texas at Austin. Specifically their connection to the institution is explored through the topics of altruistic motivation, serving underrepresented students, and being a mentor who identifies as an underrepresented student.

Psychosocial Growth

The following sections describe the areas in which the eight peer mentors who participated in this study experienced psychosocial growth. Psychosocial growth includes the development of skills that increase interpersonal skills such as patience, ability to develop relationships, empathy, etc. This section focuses on the opportunities for psychosocial growth in these areas: meeting in group and individual settings, examining the environments in which mentoring took place, and through interactions with University Scholars staff and fellow peer mentors.

Group and Individual Meetings

Opportunity for psychosocial growth for peer mentors involved meeting with students in both group and individual settings. For example, a peer mentor can meet with their mentees as a group (e.g. in a dining hall or at the library) or individually outside of a classroom or formal environment. The following sections describe the mentor's experiences and their opportunity for psychosocial growth through meetings with students, in-group and in individual settings.

Group meetings. Meeting in groups provided opportunity to engage with multiple mentees, build community, and communicate and gather information from mentees. Mentor to mentee ratios for mentor who participated in this study varied by year as the mentor program continued to develop. Some years mentor to mentee ratios were 1:10, while in more recent years it has decreased to 1:6 to 1:8. Finding a single time when all mentees and the mentor are available to meet can be a significant challenge. When reflecting on how he went about scheduling a group meeting Enrique said,

That was a disaster [laughs]. Everyone has different schedules. Meeting as a group was hard. I think I ended up just meeting with them in two separate groups, like a few of them, and then a few of them later. That was nice. It was just tough to do. As the semester started, I learned that I got busy, and they got busy.

Enrique underscored the common challenge of coordinating a meeting time that aligned with both the mentor and mentee's schedules.

However, some mentors like Arianna overcame the challenge of scheduling and were able to hold successful group meetings. Arianna described that group meetings were successful in engaging students and served as a good mechanism for sharing information. She described meeting face-to-face as the core reason for the success of her meetings. She said,

For me personally, my method as a mentor is to talk face-to-face. Get to know them and not have a shallow electronic relationship with them. And also I feel like if you are face-to-face, they can't leave. Electronically, they have a choice. They don't have to respond to you.

During face-to-face group sessions, Arianna described how mentees were forced to interact with the mentor. Although it may have been awkward initially, as they got to

know one another, both the mentor and mentee benefitted from going through the process of creating a new relationship and grew psychosocially.

Individual meetings. Due to the challenge of coordinating multiple schedules, many mentors met with their students individually. Individual meetings provided an avenue to build trust between mentor and mentee. These meetings also permitted mentors to broach more private topics like academic performance and non-academic or personal issues. Mentors described this aspect as challenging, but part of the mentor's role was to ask how the students were doing academically. Mentors shared that at times, students were reluctant to share when they were struggling, but if they had an existing relationship with a peer they felt they could trust, it was easier to request help. Enrique described the goal of individual meetings:

> My biggest goal was for them to be comfortable with me honestly. That they felt that they could ask me anything, or tell me anything, like if they're struggling. I wanted them to be able to tell me that. I wanted to be able to tell them, "It's OK, this is normal."

Creating a level of trust and being able to create an environment that was conducive to sharing and providing honest feedback was a common theme for individual meetings.

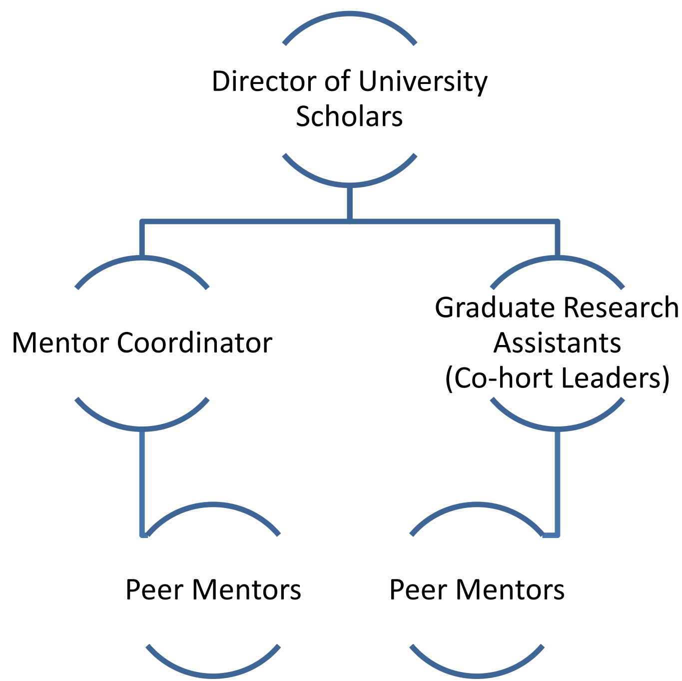
Eliana described how she helped mentees overcome their feelings of homesickness. She said, "I suggested the ways that I got over my homesickness, like trying to meet people in your dorm, going out, looking up different things to do, finding ways to keep yourself entertained here." Because Eliana had developed a rapport with her students they felt comfortable sharing their struggles and asked for guidance. This example illustrated how the mentor was able to further develop her interpersonal skills in her role.

Mentoring Environment

Within the UPM program, mentoring took place in two types of environments: academic and non-academic settings. The academic setting for mentoring took place in the University Scholars first-year course. Non-academic mentoring took place in a variety of settings; essentially these were environments outside of the classroom (e.g. a dining hall, library, restaurant, dorm common space, University Scholars office space, etc.). The environment in which mentoring took place shaped how they experienced their roles as mentors. The following sections examine both academic and nonacademic environments in which mentoring took place.

Academic setting. Mentors who began mentoring in 2011 or later had the opportunity to interact with their mentees in the University Scholars first year course. Peer mentors assisted graduate research assistants in delivering course material and supported students as they progressed through the course. The model of the University Scholars first-year course involves a main lecture, which for the past two years has been entitled "Race in the Age of Obama," which all University Scholars attended together and later in the week, they also attended a smaller discussion section led by cohort leaders (graduate research assistants) who were assisted by peer mentors in the University Peer Mentor program (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Hierarchy of University Scholars Program



Within the academic setting of the University Scholars first-year course, mentors had an opportunity to interact with University Scholars and University Scholar program staff in a consistent manner. Their weekly presence allowed mentees to see them regularly and to have access to them as a resource. Arianna described the classroom setting as comfortable noting, "Our cohort leaders cared so much. Working with them as a mentor in this class makes you feels like you are providing a lot more support to the University Scholars."

Chris described his role in the class as more of a teaching assistant who also mentored. He said, “I would assist the cohort leader with PowerPoint presentations and give my input on some things. I would hand out papers. I would call on mentees in class to speak or be a part of a group discussion.” He described how the course was his initial opportunity to build relationships with students and that he used it as a springboard to invite students to meet him outside of the classroom to learn more about them and offer useful resources.

Academic settings can also prove challenging for mentors who prefer a less formal or structured environment or have had previous experience in building relationships with mentees earlier in the semester. For example, Eliana described her frustration in how the class was used as a mechanism to assign mentors to mentees. She stated,

> Within my class there were four or five groups. By the time the group project came around it was the first week of October and we were assigned to them. Now they know, "Hey, this is your mentor." We spent all that time in the classroom just sitting there as a face. We didn't get to make that upfront connection with them the way we did my second year.

As the mentor program developed, methods for assigning mentors to mentees fluctuated from assigning them in the summer to introducing them in the classroom and then assigning them to mentees during mid-semester. Some mentors with multiple years of experience in the UPM program experienced frustration as shifts in how mentors were assigned to mentees shifted.

Non-academic setting. Outside of the classroom, mentors interacted with students in both group and individual settings. As a mentor who served multiple years in the program, Eliana described her interaction with her mentees. She said,

> For the first year, I mentored in the classroom. For the second year, it was definitely more individually based interaction. I actually got to meet with them outside the classroom, like doing yoga or having lunch with them or talking about classes. Then, this year we are back to the classroom again.

She seemed to feel limited in her ability to build relationships with her mentees if her main point of contact with her students was based in the University Scholars first-year course.

Eliana also said, "A lot of the time we met up on campus and had coffee or lunch together and just talked about what was going on in their lives. I did help out with classes and scheduling and stuff like that, too." Meeting outside of the classroom seemed to create a more relaxed and informal environment. Mentors built relationships through shared meals and conversation, which eventually led to the creation of trust and opportunity for them to voice their needs (help with a class, scheduling, future plans, etc.).

Interaction with Staff and Fellow Peer Mentors

Mentors also experienced their role though interactions with program staff and fellow peer mentors. Mentors in this study often shared how their role as a mentor gave them a unique opportunity to build closer relationships with the program staff and fellow peers. They felt those relationships often led to further psychosocial and vocational growth. The following sections describe the mentor's experience in their role through their interaction with program staff and their fellow peer mentors.

Program Staff

When reflecting on relationships with the program staff in particular, Carmen described the University Scholars staff as having an inviting open door policy. She described the staff in this way,

> Whenever you need something, you're more than welcome to just walk in. With them, I know I have kind a safe place to go to on campus. Yes, they're staff and they work here, but I know their doors are always open. They've made that very clear.

Program staff was perceived as accessible and invested in the well being of all of their students. Mentors understood that if they had a need they were always welcome to approach a University Scholar staff member.

Chris described his relationship with his cohort leader as a significant mentoring relationship in his personal development. He said, “Having somebody who was there to tell me the rules and structure of UT and how you can get around them, and this is how you can do this or that, a navigator. That was really useful.” Chris felt his cohort leader provided him with access to insider knowledge that helped him grow vocationally and to understand how to navigate the university as a system. Here, the staff member provided the mentor with access to knowledge, guidance, and the confidence to move through the challenges of being a college student and mentor.

Fellow Peer Mentor Relationships

Psychosocial benefits of the mentor role include the building of meaningful relationships with fellow peer mentors. Chris said,

> All my friends really have come from the University Peer Mentor program. One mentee last year, his name was Stephen. He is actually a mentor this year. He and I went to a concert together a couple of weekends ago. We hang out.

Chris's mentee relationship not only grew into a meaningful friendship, it also encouraged his mentee to transition into the mentor role as well.

Chris also experienced tremendous personal transformation in regards to developing cultural competency and the ability to respect and befriend individuals from a variety of race/ethnicities and backgrounds through his interactions with mentors and mentees. During our interview, Chris said,

> When I came to UT, I came from a very different kind of background. I came from having experiences where growing up you hated every other race. You learn Hispanics were taking over Texas. They were ruining it. How Black people were lazy and they just did terrible things in the world. They were all criminals. I had that mindset coming in. Being in the University Scholars program and then the University Peer Mentor program was mind-blowing. The culture shock that I got from that was huge. Even more so my sophomore year because I had to personally get to know diverse students as a mentor. It completely, just revamped, what I thought about the world.

Chris was markedly changed as a person as a result of his role as a peer mentor. One of Chris's mentees was a Black female. He mentioned how much he grew to admire her academic persistence and particularly how she participated in community service activities. This relationship in addition to an informal mentor he found in a Black male who was also a peer mentor opened his eyes to what it was like to have close friends outside of his race. He went on to say,

> The transition, actually, while it was happening, I didn't really notice it. When I went home, I had to talk to my parents again about whatever was going on. What they really liked to talk about was my dad's landscaping company. He worked with a lot of illegal immigrants and he complained about how they quit on him. All I could really think was, they quit because you're kind of an asshole. I would quit, too. Matter of fact, I did. This really doesn't sound like my mom, but my dad would say things like all Black people were terrible. But now, one of my best friends is Black. I thought, yeah, you're just a bigot.

Chris experienced his role as a mentor as the reason for the transformation of his mindset from one based in racism to one of revelation and acceptance of diversity. Clearly, the relationships developed between mentors and the program staff and between mentors and fellow peer mentors provided opportunity for both vocational and psychosocial growth.

Vocational Growth

The role of mentoring provided opportunity for vocational development. Within this study, vocational development applied to mentors developing skills which aid in academic success and in the development of transferable skills that could be used in future career or educational endeavors. The primary mechanism that provided opportunity for the mentor's vocational growth was pre-service and concurrent training. Training served as a way to further their vocational growth as they focused on developing specific skills and knowledge needed to be a successful mentor. This section explores the mentor's experience during mentor training opportunities and describes the transferable skills they have acquired as a mentor.

Training

Mentor training models vary from program to program. The following sections depict how the mentors in this study describe their training experience. Specifically, mentors will describe the perceived purpose of mentor training, the role of being a University Peer Mentor, and preparing to face a variety of situations in their role.

Purpose of Training. Mentors participated in both pre-service and concurrent training sessions that were led by full time University Scholar staff and mentors who served in leadership roles. Jeremiah described the purpose of training was to,

…Prepare us to be great mentors, to try to help us know what to expect before we get into this. Then, for people who are new to the mentoring program, to get a transition from being just a freshman student to being a mentor to help somebody else out. They just want us to have a smooth transition into taking this mentoring road.

Jeremiah's description outlined how he felt the training was designed to prepare him for a specific role. It also served to remind the mentors of the overarching goals of the University Scholars program, which is to aid in the transition of underrepresented students during their first year of college.

Specific Role. Carmen described the goals of the mentor training as helping mentors to understand the role of a peer mentor. She said,

I think it's just a better way to prepare them to step into that role. It's not necessarily being a friend, but it's not necessarily being someone in an authority role either. Trying to balance that out is the whole goal of training.

Carmen described the balance of settling into the mentor role and becoming comfortable in moving into a role that involved high interaction with students. Chris described the pre-service and concurrent trainings in this way,

There was mentor training before the next semester started. We interviewed in the spring and then we're going to be mentors for the next fall and the spring semester. Before classes started, we had a one day training session where we went over different resources that were on campus that are available to us and to the mentees. They went over different kinds of personal relationships you were supposed to have, like, how to make sure it doesn't get beyond a professionalism thing. How to balance the professional academic side versus the social side where you'll be giving advice about life.

Variety of Situations. Hannah echoed her fellow mentors and described the purpose of training as a way to,

Get yourself prepared because you're going to get into a lot of situations where you weren't expecting it or something. You should be prepared with all type occasions or situations with different types of people. It's just like separation, so you know what to do. It's just like any other training. I'm a lifeguard in the summer. I can't just go in there and try to be like, "I'll have you knowing how to do CPR and first aid." I don't say it to people

every day. I'm not going to use that tool every day, but if it does happen, I need to know how to do it.

Hannah described mentor training like putting together a set of tools for her role. She might not use every tool every day, but she will be prepared to handle a variety of situations that could occur in her role as a mentor.

Pre-service training. Pre-service training for this study referred to training that occurred prior to meeting their mentees. The mentors expressed how the interactive approach to pre-service provided valuable program and role-specific information, opportunity to build community, insight into the University Scholar's Staff's attitudes about professionalism in their roles as mentors.

Interactive Approach. Training formats can range from lecture style to student-led group activities. Carmen described the interactive approach during their pre-service training (typically prior to the beginning of the fall semester) as effective. She also described receiving a mentor packet that included expectations for mentors, description of the mentor role, information about campus resources, and contact information for University Scholars program staff. Specifically, she said,

They filmed videos, the mentors that were giving the presentation filmed them the day before, and shot certain videos as they were role playing and made it seem exaggerated, I guess, but it was just to make a point. I felt like it was really good training because as a student you don't realize that all these things really do happen because you're used to your own little group, or coming from a small town you don't realize there are so many other things that could happen. I found it really insightful.

Opportunity to Build Community. Pre-service training also provided an opportunity for the team of mentors to get to know one another and begin building a

community. Training activities often involved introductory icebreakers and opportunities to work in a variety of teams throughout the training.

Arianna described the community building process she experienced through training,

> Probably the number one thing was the bonding with other mentors. Bonding with other mentors was the number one useful thing because that gave us all resources to each other, because obviously, all the mentors are selected because we're good representatives of our colleges and of our class.

Building a community that would be able to work together as they served a cohort of incoming University Scholars was critical to the mission of the program. Mentors needed to be able to know one another and be comfortable enough to ask each other for help as well.

Enrique described that the pre-service training made him realize that his role as a mentor expanded beyond the classroom, something he initially had not thought of. He said, “I guess just more aware that some sensitive issues could come up from a student. I guess I didn't realize it before. I was like, "Oh, well I'm just going to help them academically." But, no, they feel that as a student they might be able to talk to you about a sensitive topic. That was like eye opening just because I was like, "OK, I'd better be prepared for that."

Professionalism. In reflecting on his participation in pre-service training, Jeremiah said,

> What I took away was that the University Peer mentoring program was serious. I mean, they wanted us to be serious about what we're doing because we are helping the next group so that this program can grow, expand, and improve each year.

Clearly, Jeremiah felt that the professional and straightforward approach of the mentor training impressed upon him the responsibility involved in being a mentor.

Concurrent training. Concurrent training within this study referred to training that occurred during the year while the mentor was mentoring. Mentors in the University Peer Mentor program describe concurrent trainings as informative and found value in having experienced peer mentors lead the sessions. The following sections provide mentor descriptions of the informative nature of the training sessions and insight into the peer-led model utilized by the UPM program.

Informative. Carmen described the monthly concurrent trainings offered during the semester in this way,

It lasts about an hour. At the beginning, it's announcements, like heads up like, "This is what's going on, or this is what we're going to have." Usually, this year we've been having guest speakers come in and talk to us, there's food sometimes. The mentors in leadership roles gave reminders like, "Make sure you're staying in contact with your mentees. [or] "Are you having problems with contacting any of the mentees?"

Carmen was involved in creating pre-service training for mentors as the chair of the orientation and training committee. She described how working with the University Mentor program coordinator gave her an opportunity to actively participate in shaping the mentor program and acquiring additional skills during the process. She said,

As far as the way I structured the orientation and training, I think I started out by thinking back to my first year and what I needed help with. I did a lot of researching online too, trying to find more resources.

Peer-led. Eliana also participated in creating training. She described her experience here,

I know the mentor coordinator would suggest trying different things, like scenario work. Then I would come up with scenarios that I thought would help address issues that would come up during the year. Mentors would act it out and then we would critique them.

Saying things like "OK, you did this right. Maybe you could have done this better next time.”

The University Scholars mentor coordinator utilized peer mentors in the role of facilitation and helped to further develop their vocational skills like public speaking and presenting.

Transferable Skills

Through their mentoring role, the mentors who participated in the study voiced a litany of skills they believe mentoring has developed in them that can be considered as transferable. For the purposes of this study, transferable skills are skills that can be used in an environment outside of the role in which they were initially designed for. Transferable skills for mentors in this study included: listening, problem-solving, interpersonal communication, time management, project management, public speaking, etc.

At times mentors were unaware of what skills they have gained through the experience until offered an opportunity to reflect. For example, Chris said,

Earlier I said I don't really know how mentoring would make employers view me but now I know the skill set that I've taken from it. Maybe its not the fact that I was a mentor but what I learned as being a mentor is really what's going to be marketable like the leadership experience or being able to work with groups. Being able to get them on task and to take a group that actually has to do a project, start them with absolutely nothing and not do it myself but direct them on how to do it and have a great finished product.

Chris described how his mentor role has provided him the opportunity to develop the vocational skills of leadership, building a team, and project management.

Carmen described her thoughts on developing her time management skills through her mentoring role. She said,

I would say I've developed my time management. Now I can say that. I have these six mentees. This is my team. I'm in charge of these six. If one of them is failing a class or doing poorly in school and I have no idea, that's like, "Hey, you're the mentor. You're supposed to check up on them, make sure they're doing OK in their classes. Knowing that they can reach out to you." Just managing them and making sure they're doing OK. Not being too overly protective, or anything, but just making sure that they're on top of their schoolwork, just managing student group that I have.

Carmen indicated how her role as mentor helped her to hone her time management skills in addition to proactively managing a team.

Eliana expressed how she developed her listening skills, email etiquette, and administrative skills through her role as a mentor. She said,

Through personal interaction I have been learning to be a better listener, speak more effectively, trying to relate to people, understand them better, where they're coming from. For email, learning etiquette, I've been trying to not sound too formal but then I don't want to sound too informal in a way. And, because I'm the orientation and training chair, I have been learning a new program structure and how to schedule events and speakers. It has been a good experience.

Through her interaction with her mentees and in her role as a leader in the peer mentor structure, Eliana was able to develop a variety of vocational skills.

When reflecting on the skills gained from his mentoring experience, Jeremiah said,

I learned how to be open to different students and not be judgmental, be inspiring, be supportive of what people want to do and to be a better listener. When people bring a situation up to you, just listen to them. Don't try to put your judgments or your own opinions on them. Just listen to what they have to say and help them work it out.

Mentors also expressed that they believed that their mentoring experience will lead employers or graduate school administrators to see them as more marketable or attractive. Eliana said,

I think that if you're being put in a position as a mentor that you're trusted to be able to guide someone else. You're a role model in a sense. I think an employer, internship or grad school, is looking for people who are role models and leaders.

Hannah described how her mentor role helped her to develop interpersonal skills. She said,

I know how to talk to people. I know how to be useful to them. You can't just smother them with questions like, are you OK? Sometimes it is nice to just be that person to sit there and listen to them. Sometimes people just want to talk. They are not necessarily asking for advice, just a listener. It's just figuring out the position and how you can be helpful to them.

Both Eliana and Hannah gained valuable transferable skills that have value in professional and academic settings, like trustworthiness and the ability to listen.

In regards to developing the skill of problem solving, Enrique viewed it in more of a business frame. He described it as "Sometimes you have to think on your toes and make use of the resources available to you. It's like being a consultant. They bring you a problem and you're like, 'Well, you can do this.' He highlighted how his mentor role has provided him the opportunity to present solutions and offer guidance.

Enrique also expressed how mentees do not always know or admit that they need help. In his role as a mentor, Enrique has developed creative questioning and discussion skills to persuade mentees to take advantage of the support he can offer academically and socially. This has translated into the transferable skill of self-presentation. He said,

I think it's how you approach someone in need. How do you pitch your help to someone who doesn't know that they need help? How do you make something valuable to someone that they don't know is valuable? That's something that I'll take forward because in working with other people, they don't necessarily see your value or they don't know what you can bring to the table, so being able to present yourself in that way to help will be valuable.

The role of mentoring provided opportunity for mentors who participated in this study to develop valuable transferable skills that will aid them in future opportunities.

Reciprocal Nature of Mentoring

In developing a variety of transferable skills mentors also mentioned that they also learned and developed skills because of their interactions with their mentees. For instance, when Chris thought about developing the transferable skill of leadership he said,

"There's a girl right now that I mentor to. She's a cheerleader. She absolutely kicked my ass. No problem. I don't even really know how to say it. She's just a go-getter really. She does so many things. This is her first year. She's doing really well in school. She takes the world by storm. I'm like God what do I even tell this person? How do I help this person? I showed her how to use Prezie (online presentation platform). I didn't think I could teach her anything. So really it's just the leadership of being able to say, "I don't know all these things more than you. There's no skill area that I am better than you at, but I still have something to offer," and figuring out what that is. I think that's leadership.

Overall, mentors who participated in this study verbalized that their role and interaction with their mentees helped them to develop vocational skills. They also believed that these transferable skills would make them marketable to future employment or educational opportunities.

Connection to the Institution

The role of peer mentoring also affected the mentor's relationship to the institution in which they serve, the University of Texas at Austin. Within this study, the two most prevalent findings in regards to their relationship to the institution were motivation based on the concept of social exchange and the importance of working with underrepresented students. First, the role of being a peer mentor and reflecting on that role led mentors to express their motivation for mentoring. All of the mentors in the study expressed how their role as mentor was founded in a desire to give back to the University

Scholars program and ultimately to the university. Their role created an opportunity for social exchange to take place as mentors served the scholars and the institution; the experience of being a mentor provided mentors with an opportunity to gain valuable transferable skills (psychosocial and vocational). Second, the role of mentoring students from underrepresented populations also created or reinforced the relationship students had with the institution. The following sections provide a textural and structural description of the mentor's experience and how that role has affected their relationship with UT Austin.

Motivation

The peer mentors who participated in this study repeatedly expressed that their experience as mentors created or strengthened a bond between themselves and the university. For example, Chris said, "The biggest reason I feel connected to the University is because I mentor to students at UT. I feel like I'm doing a service for UT and I am bringing a good public image to UT through the mentoring program." Enrique also said,

> Being a mentor definitely brought me closer to the University. I had a fantastic time transitioning from high school to college, and I am so happy to give back and help those that are on a road I was on previously. Through mentoring, I am giving back to the University and ensuring the success of its students.

These words encouraged me to examine what was at the core of their motivation to mentor. Throughout the interview sessions, mentors consistently described their motivation through the concept of social exchange. Additionally, when I began this study, I was interested in hearing perspectives of mentors who served in a voluntary capacity, as my background is working with mentors who are paid student employees.

This section provides insight into their motivation and products of social exchange as they reflected on their mentoring experience.

Social Exchange

The concept of social exchange is derived from social exchange theory, which asserts that individuals create, maintain, and end relationships based on the perceived level of benefits in relation to costs within the relationship (Emerson, 1981; Homans, 1974). The theory describes "the tangible or intangible currencies that are exchanged between two people in a relationship are typically classified into six broad categories of: love/emotional support, status, information, money, goods, and services"(Ensher, Thomas, & Murphy, 2001). More specifically, Scandura (1992) related these categories to three types of support mentors offer their mentees.

The three types of support are social, and role modeling support, which is similar to the love/emotional social exchange category, and vocational support, which can be operationalized as status, information, and services. Social support is often referred to throughout much of the literature as psychosocial support as well (Kram, 1985). Therefore, role modeling, social, and vocational support can be regarded as the currencies of exchange between mentors and [mentees].

Although this research focused on mentors and mentees in the discipline of Business, this study examined social exchange in regards to undergraduate peer mentor and mentee, and between the mentor and the institution. The following sections describe the mentor motivation and social exchange experienced through their role. Below, mentors discussed the idea of giving back to the University Scholars program and the institution, gaining valuable transferable skills,

Giving back to the institution. Mentors described a need to give back to the University Scholars program in an effort to either improve the mentoring experience or to maintain the positive experience of mentoring for future students. Eliana said,

> I know my first year I thought it was rough and then going in not having anyone to say "OK, this is how it's done." You go along and you learn and say "Oh man! I wish I would have known that before." I figured if somebody else coming in, especially being in the University Scholars program, who was in the same position where they probably didn't have anybody else to show them the same stuff, that I could help them out.

Eliana's motivation stemmed from the negative experience of not having an active mentor during her first year in the University Scholars program. Her desire to ensure that another student would not feel lost or unsure during their first year served as the foundation of her decision to become a mentor. Her main concern was the well-being of future mentees. However, in seeking out mentor role, she also placed herself in a position of leadership with opportunity to learn and grow psychosocially and vocationally.

When Carmen reflected on her positive mentoring experience and her own experience as a mentor, she described her motivation to give back to the University Scholars program. Carmen said, "I just saw it more as needing to get involved in something, like my way of giving back to the program. It was a new opportunity to make friends." She also mentioned,

> I feel like knowing that I made a difference, that I was one of their reference points, or key persons to go to was important. Knowing that I gave back to an organization that helped me through my first semester of college was important. I also think meeting new people and hearing their stories and learning about their major, their classes, or their experiences was valuable.

Here Carmen describes how her role permitted her to give back to the program and provided time to develop her listening skills. Additionally, she described the innate value of building relationships and learning about people in order to know how to help them succeed. Psychosocially, the role of mentor allowed her to develop her ability to build rapport and motivate her peers.

Transferable skills. Social exchange is also demonstrated in the mentor's thoughts on the mentor position being a voluntary, rather than paid. When asked his thoughts on voluntary role as a mentor, Enrique said,

> Being a mentor benefits me through experience and the skills that I get from it. I never even considered that this should be paid for the amount of work that I do. I never saw it as that. It wasn't until recently that I heard that other mentor programs paid their mentors. [Laughs] Honestly, it doesn't make a difference. I enjoy being a mentor to students. I enjoy it sincerely so I don't need compensation to be a mentor.

Enrique's response demonstrated the concept of social exchange. He clearly states that in exchange for the support he provides as a mentor, he was able to develop beneficial skills. It is also evident that the University Scholars program has cultivated a culture of mutual benefit through engaging in service in both the first-year and mentor programs. Their focus on service to the community and each other has developed into a mindset of positive social exchange within the mentor population.

Working with Underrepresented Students

Mentors in the UPM program felt that their identity as underrepresented students and their role in mentoring fellow underrepresented students was central in the formation of their relationship to the University of Texas at Austin. Mentors in the UPM program were keenly aware of the challenges and benefits of being from underrepresented

populations at a predominantly white institution (PWI). Through our interviews it was clear that their mentoring role is unique based on their identities as underrepresented students. The following sections describe the mentor's experience in their role in regards to serving underrepresented students and in their identity as underrepresented students.

Mentoring Underrepresented Students

When asked to describe their thoughts on serving as a mentor to fellow students who are members of an underrepresented population (first generation college student, African/African American, Latino) at a predominantly white institution like UT Austin, all of the mentors described the importance of working with underrepresented students. Jeremiah passionately stated,

> I think that mentor programs who serve underrepresented students are valuable because they change and save lives, in a way that certain people...they come to college for a reason, but they may forget why they're here. Or they may feel that they aren't able to overcome the obstacles that they get, from the college experience. Mentoring assures them that they have somebody that thinks they can make it, do these four years on this campus, and actually use their education to do more, to succeed in this world that isn't always fit for you, not systematically. This world doesn't want you to get to certain places. OK, I think these sort of mentoring programs help you know that you have a place, and you can get somewhere with the help of others.

Jeremiah voiced his thoughts on the importance of working with underrepresented students because of systemic barriers that can keep students from reaching their full potential or enjoying the same opportunities as students in the majority.

Mentors were aware of the unique challenges students from underrepresented populations faced during their college experience. They also knew that mentoring is one tool institutions and administrators are employing to increase the success of underrepresented students. Jeremiah said,

My role is needed, because hopefully, my work as a mentor will halt the cycle of underrepresented students that get into college, but don't succeed. Although I'm mentoring students on this campus, I know that my mentorship is much more than that. My mentorship will eventually inspire the community that looks up to mentee. My mentorship will eventually affect a new organization, or company that my mentee will be a part of. My mentorship will eventually influence the socio-economic background of my mentee's family when she/he starts one.

Jeremiah voiced his understanding of his active role in aiding in the mission of ensuring the success of underrepresented students.

Conflict

Some mentors demonstrated an inner conflict between the concepts of the importance of recognizing the identity of underrepresented students and the idea of being blind to their identity and working to show others how success is attained through hard work and persistence. Although these concepts are not incompatible, some students choose to focus on one or the other or experience internal conflict in an attempt to reconcile them as compatible. You can hear this conflict in Enrique's comments about his thoughts on mentoring underrepresented students. Enrique, who identifies as Latino said,

As a mentor from an underrepresented demographic, I am proud to help students that are like me or not like me. I don't think being a minority necessarily changed my experience at UT because most of what is taught is how to be a hardworking student regardless of your background. Yes, it's important to acknowledge that these factors affect students inevitably subconsciously, but as long as the main goal is consistent, one should be successful.

Here, Enrique described how he felt his identity as an underrepresented student did not change his experience at UT Austin because of his work ethic and how he perceives the environment of the university is based on merit and effort. However, in the next breath he stated, "In order for a mentee to be successful, they must be aware of who they are and

remember to stay focused on their goals. Regardless of your background, hard work and determination will get a student very far." I could hear the conflict in his statement, but I also recognized that he is still working through his thoughts on the two concepts.

Other mentors voiced that underrepresented students should receive more support than is typically offered to students from college-going backgrounds. Tuan, who identifies as Asian said,

> For some of my mentees from an underrepresented population, it is more difficult to adjust to a new college environment because we come from different backgrounds. Some students do have language barriers, because they were born in different countries. It is my belief that students who are minorities from underrepresented populations or are economically disadvantaged should get more help from mentors because they have struggled more in their lives. That is how we can encourage them to overcome struggles and achieve their career goals. I strongly believe that it is entirely necessary to have mentors for ALL students, especially for the underrepresented population, at the University of Texas at Austin.

Tuan adamantly voiced a desire to provide additional support for underrepresented students because they face unique challenges like not coming from families with college-going cultures and the knowledge that comes with that culture, having language barriers, and financial struggles.

Surprisingly, Chris, who identified as white, when asked to describe his thoughts on being a peer mentor who is also a member of an underrepresented population (first generation college student, African/African American, Latino) at a predominantly white institution like UT Austin, he said, "I really have no thoughts on this." Chris had been very vocal during our interviews, particularly when it came to being a white male. I had hoped to hear his thoughts on how he felt about mentoring underrepresented students. It

seemed that at times he was tired of talking about being underrepresented and specifically about race.

In their own voices, mentors in the UPM program definitively demonstrated the importance of supporting underrepresented students in their role as mentors and how this relationship has increased their feeling of connectedness to UT Austin.

Mentoring as an Underrepresented Student

Although UT Austin is known for its rigorous academic environment and affordable tuition as a state school, some underrepresented students (Latino, African American, first-generation) are still uncertain if it will be a good fit for them as an individual. When Arianna reflected on her experience she said,

> When I first was applying to college, I did not want to stay in Texas and I was opposed to huge schools. I really wanted to go to California, and I was really excited about going to Pepperdine, I'd gotten in and everything. I also kind of liked UC Santa Barbara and UCLA, but I really wanted to go to Pepperdine because it's a lot smaller, it's a private school, and, I wanted to get out of Texas. UT was my fallback school. Eventually I thought UT is clearly the best choice for me. But, for the first year I came here, I didn't have a lot of school spirit. Being a mentor has really made me soften up to UT a lot more and it has opened my eyes to all the different resources UT offers.

As Arianna felt more connected to the university through her role as a mentor, other mentors also described their role as the mechanism that caused them think of UT Austin as their home or inspired them to take pride in being a Longhorn. Carmen said,

> Being a peer mentor has positively affected my relationship with The University of Texas at Austin. I have felt a stronger connection with not only my peer mentors, but with the university as a whole. I think that the more involved you are with school organizations, the stronger your relationship with the university is.

Carmen voiced her thought on involvement and engagement in a role like mentoring and described how it strengthened her bond with her peers and the institution.

Mentors also voiced their thoughts on the idea of engagement, specifically that the role of being a mentor is unique or different from being involved as a student in roles like being an officer in a student organization. Eliana went on to say,

> I feel more connected to the University. I have more of a stake in it. If I was just going here as a student who wasn't involved as a mentor, then I probably wouldn't think as highly of UT as I currently do. The peer mentor program makes me feel like UT does care about it students because of what it is trying to do, and I appreciate what it has done for me personally and professionally.

Hannah echoed those thoughts and said,

> I feel like being a mentor brings me closer to the University because I am more involved and I know much more about it and all the resources that it provides. It definitely gives me pride in attending this prestigious university and being an ambassador representing this university to incoming students.

Mentors in this study also voiced their thoughts on the concept of role modeling for underrepresented students. Eliana said,

> I think it's good because it shows a different perspective and it's easier to connect with other students of the same background because you know where they are coming from. Also, I like the fact that I am in the position to be a role model to other Latinos, which I think the Latino community needs more of.

Hannah said, “I enjoyed being a peer mentor who is part of an underrepresented population because I felt accomplished. Especially if I can help others overcome that barrier of being underrepresented by stepping up and making us known to the UT community. “ Both Eliana and Hannah emphasized the importance of connecting and supporting students like themselves and how that encouraged their connection with UT Austin.

Jeremiah eloquently described his understanding for the necessity of mentoring underrepresented students and how is role as an underrepresented student who mentors is significant. He said,

> For me specifically being a Black person, I think the retention rate for Black males is really low. These types of programs keep the students here to let them know that they have somebody to talk to, let them know that, "People like you are here on this campus." They can share their experiences and can help you in some type of way. I think that's the institution's job. You can't try to educate students when you don't show that you care about their wellbeing. The institution is here for the students, so we need to try to help them be on campus and actually graduate. Most of the time they get you in, they get these numbers in, like the diversity of the people coming into college, but what are we doing to help the kids stay in college, actually graduate, and do something with this college degree that they have?

Jeremiah's question is a poignant one that the University of Texas is answering through increased efforts to support underrepresented students such as the University Leadership Network (ULN) which has 500 participants with unmet financial and provides up to $20,000 of scholarship funding to them upon maintaining the program's membership requirements. One of the major components of the program is a substantial peer-mentoring program made up of students from primarily underrepresented backgrounds (The University of Texas at Austin, University Leadership Network, 2014).

Based on the voices of the mentors in the UPM program, they described their how their role as mentors connected them to the institution and allowed them to give back to the University Scholars program, through the unique experience of supporting underrepresented students, and in recognizing their own identity as underrepresented students.

Therefore, the core essence of the mentor role for mentors in the UPM program fell across three major areas. First, they experienced psychosocial development through relationships related to their role as a mentor (mentees, fellow peer mentors, and program staff). Second, they experienced vocational development through their participation in

training and interaction with program staff. And lastly, their role creates or reinforces their connection to the institution through the realization of their altruistic motivation and their recognition of the importance of serving underrepresented students while also identifying as underrepresented students.

Research Question 2

How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor program describe their lived experience through their interactions with their mentees (psychosocially and vocationally)?

Prior to answering the question a definition of mentee interaction is provided. Then both textural and structural descriptions of the mentor's interaction with their mentees are given with a specific focus on the concept of communication. The overarching concept of communication is discussed with more detailed description regarding the introduction process mentors experienced with their mentees and the modes of communication in which the mentor/mentee interaction took place.

The mechanism for the introduction of mentors and mentees has varied from year to year. Mentors described this initial interaction as a critical component in the development of a successful mentoring relationship. The modes of communication mentors engaged in and their thoughts on the effectiveness of those modes also varied greatly. Descriptions of the psychosocial and vocational growth in both areas of the introduction process and modes of communication are also examined. This section concluded with a summary of the findings for research question two and describes the core essence of mentor interaction for mentors in the UPM program.

Student Interaction

Peer mentoring cannot take place without an interaction occurring between the mentor and mentee. Within the UPM program student interaction occurred in many ways. In the first research question interaction was described as taking place in a variety of environments (academic, nonacademic, classroom, outside of the classroom, etc.). For the purposes of this study, student interaction is defined as when a mentor and mentee engage in some type of two-way communication. Specifically, this section highlights the interactions that were most frequently coded during the data analysis process. These interactions involved the mechanism in which the mentors were introduced to their mentees and multiple modes of ongoing communication, which included: face-to-face, email, texting, and social media (Facebook).

Mechanisms for Introduction

The mechanism for how mentors were introduced to their mentees has gone through several variations as the UPM program has evolved. Formal mentor introductions have taken place in two ways, the first is through written correspondence prior to University Scholars arriving at the university and meeting their mentors through their University Scholars first-year course. More informal introductions of mentors and mentees have taken place during the University Scholars orientation event. The following sections explore the introduction through written correspondence, the orientation event, and discussion sections within the University Scholars first-year course as experienced by mentors in the study.

Written correspondence

The communication method of writing letters to students seemed out of the norm for many of the mentors, however, the UPM coordinator helped the mentors to understand how writing a letter might get the new University Scholar's attention and let them know that an upperclassmen already knows and cares about them. Jeremiah described the letter writing process as sending out personal letters to his mentees during the summertime letting them know that, "Hey, you have a mentor. I can't wait to meet you," and let them know some of the things that I do as student here on campus." When asked about the response to his letters he said, "I don't remember them writing anything back or saying how they felt when they got the letter, so I'm not really sure if that was effective." For Jeremiah, he seemed disappointed in the response to an approach that demonstrated extra effort to show his mentees that he was excited to meet them and was looking forward to supporting them during their first year of college.

Additionally, Arianna was also disappointed in the response to her efforts to communicate with her mentees through written correspondence. She said,

> In the summer, the first year I was a mentor, we all wrote letters to our mentees, which I told you I didn't get a response from. But it's totally fine. Summers before college are always really busy. And it was just to let them know that we were there. And that, when they came to school in the fall they would have someone to talk to if they needed someone. It wasn't necessarily that we needed a response; we just needed them to know that they had someone there.

However, Arianna attributes the lack of responses from her mentees to the busy time of year and seemed content to know that she had reached out to her students and provided them with her contact information should they need her.

Enrique had a more positive experience and saw some responses from writing his letters. He had three of his eight students contact him after receiving their letters. He described how knowing who they were and contacting them over the summer was a positive aspect of this model of introduction. He said,

> I was able to get to know them before they got to the University, which was really neat. I think as a freshman I would be excited and surprised by that. We sent them a letter and it would have UT letterhead and everything and it had our name on there.

He included instructions on how to contact him on Facebook. Although the mentors were provided a template, some of them may not have included specific instructions on how to contact them. Enrique's directions may have led to increased response rates from his group of mentees. He asked them to find him on Facebook. He said, "They could email me and I gave them my number to text me, that kind of thing. I just made myself really available in terms of communication, as much as I could that way." Availability is a key component of mentoring success. By setting his mentees expectations in how he could be available to them he created an environment that is conducive to mentoring.

Eliana also described a positive experience in regards to writing introductory letters to her mentees. She outlined the process and provided detail about the structure provided by program staff on how to go about writing their letters. She said,

> We were all given a template and told to write letters to our mentees. You could handwrite them or type them. We all wrote letters. We were assigned people before like this year, we wrote our letters and we sent them out over the summer. I gave my number and my contact information. I told them about me, my major, and my classes. I let them know, "I had a really rough first year, but I'm here for you this year. I can help you with academics, with things on campus. Just let me know."

Eliana also mentioned, that for her, the letter writing was quite successful in initiating contact with her mentees. She said,

> I got a really good response. I got them texting me. Some of them hit me up on Facebook. Then, when the school year started, one of them was actually in my discussion section. Then the other ones, I had been emailing as well and they had been emailing me. I actually got to meet up with them.

Eliana was encouraged by this introduction process and used it as an opportunity to quickly engage them on social media and to initiate opportunities for further interaction.

The variability in the success of the letter writing campaign is interesting. Some mentors seemed to really enjoy the process while others found it disappointing. Mentors seemed to voice that response rates varied by student and their individual communication preferences.

Orientation Event

The introductions of mentors and mentees did not always take place in a formal environment. Mentors described how a more general or informal introductions of mentors and mentees took place during the University Scholars orientation event, which his held prior to the start of the fall semester. Mentors had varying experiences where some years attending the orientation event was recommended but not required, where others described it as mandatory. Mentors described this as the kick-off event for University Scholars and a time where the goal of the event was to help the first year students develop their sense of identity as University Scholars.

Jeremiah said, “I went to the University Scholars Orientation event where all of the freshmen came, and I met most of the people who would eventually be my mentees

there." At the time, Jeremiah had not been assigned specific mentees, but he used his attendance at the event to get to know the students he knew were assigned to his discussion section of the University Scholars first-year course.

Arianna also described her proactive approach to the orientation event where mentees hear from University Scholar staff and are oriented about the program. She said,

> I went through, and I looked for all of my mentees. I went through and I met all of them at the orientation. It was really awkward, they're just like, "Oh, you're my mentor," I'm like "I'm your mentor!" and that was basically it."

Arianna utilized the event to ensure that she met all of her students. She mentioned that the year she attended, it was not mandatory for mentors to attend the event. In my interviews with the other mentors, she was the only one who mentioned a goal of meeting all of her students at the orientation event.

Additionally, all of the mentees attended orientation, however, Arianna did not describe a formal recognition of the mentors during the orientation to introduce themselves to their mentees. Arianna's facial expressions and body language during this part of the interview demonstrated that the interaction was clumsy and did not provide an opportunity for a confident introduction.

University Scholars First-Year Course

The mentor's descriptions indicated that the introduction of mentors has taken place in two ways within University Scholar's first year course. In 2010, mentors were assigned to discussion sections based on their availability and the mentees that were assigned to them were spread across multiple discussion sections. In 2012, groups of three to four mentors were assigned to a discussion section and were not assigned specific

mentees until later in the semester as mentees began their group projects. The following sections describe how these methods of introduction were experienced.

2010 Introduction Method. During this academic year, mentors were assigned to discussion sections based on their availability and their mentees were enrolled in multiple sections. This was challenging for many mentors, as they were not able to physically interact with all of their students consistently. This situation also resulted in a lack of opportunity for mentees to create a group identity as a mentor group as they were spread across multiple sections of the course. Hannah said, “Some of my mentees were in my class, but they weren't all in my class. It was split. I felt it was more difficult to meet with them because they didn't see me.”

2012 Introduction Method. As described earlier, in the fall of 2012 groups of three to four mentors were assigned to a discussion section and were not assigned specific mentees until later in the semester as mentees began their group projects. Benefits of this method of introducing mentors tended to be positively described by mentors because having all of their mentees in one class that met weekly led to more consistent interaction. Hannah said, described how all of the mentors assigned to the class introduced themselves on the first day. She remembered saying, "Hi, I'm Hannah and I'm going to be one of the mentors for this course," so they see your face and know you are there to help.” The moment of being established as their mentor was firm in her memory of her mentoring experience.

Hannah also focused on how their role had purpose in facilitating her mentees major project. She described how the project gave her a specific direction and guided her interactions with them. She said,

> They had a project due so I had to meet with them to talk about that. But it also gave me a chance to get to know them better. I would ask stuff like, "How's school?" What classes are you taking? Is everybody OK? What do you do for fun? Have you found orgs? Are you involved in anything?" Just try to get to know how they are doing.

Hannah also said,

> I prefer this year's method because they were all in that one class so I saw them every week or every other week. I got to see them and I think that's a very important thing is our one on one interaction rather than through email or through text.

Hannah expressed how this method of introduction, specifically having all of the mentees in one setting enabled her to initiate successful mentee relationships. She cites consistent meeting time and meeting with them face-to-face as important components to creating meaningful connections with her students.

Carmen also voiced support for this method of introduction. After she was assigned to her mentees she seemed energized and focused in getting to know them. She used the course and their interaction as a springboard to schedule individual meetings with all of her mentees. She also described being provided with structured handouts or resources that guided her individual interactions with her mentees. She said,

> I asked them "What their goals were? Were they planning on transferring? What was their situation? Where are they from? What high school did they attend?" I sat with each mentee probably for about 30, 45 minutes. Then from there we discussed how many times they wanted to meet, if they wanted me to be really involved during the semester, checking up on them and such. From then on if there was certain information as far as workshops, or social activities going on, just like reminders, which I still do. Other than that, I would see them in the Friday discussion, in class.

Carmen was a very driven and proactive mentor who made it a priority to meet with each of her students individually. From a vocational standpoint, Carmen's organizational approach and time management skill led to a positive mentoring experience.

However, some mentors voiced frustration in not being assigned to mentees until later in the semester. Jeremiah said, "We were just sitting there. We didn't have any specific mentees to work with." Not having assigned mentees from the outset of the coursed caused Jeremiah to feel like his presence as a mentor lacked presence and focus.

Some mentors also felt like having their primary interaction take place in the classroom decreased their opportunity to develop more meaningful individual relationships with their mentees. Enrique said,

> This year, since they're all in a group, there is a lot more group communication. If they have a question about their project then they'll ask me. Personally, I feel like I'm getting less out of it as a mentor. The questions they ask apply more to the entire group and rather than individual questions. I've had one student maybe ask me you know, "Where can I go get tutoring?" That was personal to him, which was good, but those questions didn't happen often.

Enrique wanted to meet the needs of his students in ways that would be most beneficial to them as individuals and voiced his frustration in how the group project created a mentality that limited individual interaction between mentors and mentees.

Lastly, some mentors felt that their role shifted or felt under utilized as a mentor in the setting of the first year course. More than one mentor mentioned they felt their role in the course was closer aligned to a teaching assistant rather than a mentor.

Hannah said,

> Most of the time I felt more like a TA, not that much as a mentor. If mentees asked about anything it would be about the class. It was what should I read, or are we going to have a quiz, or what chapters do I do, or how's the final. Advice over the class, not particularly

about just transitioning into the campus and college. I felt like I was only utilized to pass the class, not essentially as a mentor, I guess I'm well rounded, because I have training for so many things. Not just the classroom, but just about transitioning, and getting adjusted into the university. I don't think I was utilized for that at all.

Although this method of introduction provides opportunity for consistent interaction and face-to-face time with mentors, the academic environment and group-project focus may alter how mentees interpret the role of the mentor.

Modes of Communication

Modes of communication varied greatly from mentor to mentor. Based on the interviews with all eight mentors it became clear that communication preferences were highly variable from mentor to mentor and among their individual mentees. The mentors did not describe any specific communication guidelines that would guide them to use one type of communication over another. Within this study mentors utilized the following types of communication: face-to-face, email, texting, and social media (specifically Facebook). This section will describe their desire to meet face-to-face, but that they typically interacted electronically because they were challenged to find a balance in coordinating their schedules with their mentees.

Many mentors describe their flexibility in adapting to the individual communication preferences of their students. For example, Carmen said,

I'm really flexible and I feel if they want to do email, that's fine...If they want to text, if they want to be in person. I guess for me, maybe in person, if our schedules [laughs] were to work out. Just because I feel it's easier and quicker and you can build a better relationship that way, rather than just behind a computer or behind a desk, but yeah, probably in person.

Throughout my interview sessions with the mentors, I found that many voiced a desire for face-to-face contact, but often utilized other modes of communication due to time constraints and preferences for other styles of communication held by their mentees.

Face-to-Face

When asked to describe what type of communication is most effective for building authentic mentoring relationships, face-to-face communication was their top choice. Even in times when technology has made countless advance in communication methods, mentors voiced an opinion that there is no real substitute for face-to-face communication. Arianna said,

> I only like face to face. Personally, I don't really like technology that much. My method as a mentor is to talk to people face to face. Get to know them and not have a shallow electronic relationship with them. I feel like if you're face to face with someone, they can't really leave. Electronically they have a choice. They don't have to respond to you or they can ignore you.

Arianna described an environment in which interaction must occur because both parties are physically present, while electronic forms of communication allow for to opt out of participating because they can be selective in who they want to communicate with (e.g. screening texts and phone calls and choosing to answer or ignore them). Arianna went on to give an example of how face-to-face communication forces individuals to participate in a situation that could make them appear vulnerable but ultimately benefit them. She said,

> Sometimes I have to be forced to do things that I don't want to do but that I need to do and are important for my academics. For example, office hours, it's really awkward going to a professor and talking to them when you don't know them. That was a big problem for me the first year. I would never really ask questions or think that I needed help because I always thought that I could just do it on my own. I didn't really see the point of office

hours. Now I know it's in order to build a relationship with your professor because they can help. That's why I think face-to-face time with the mentee is really important because it forces them to build the relationship. And in order for the conversation not to be awkward, they have to stay and talk to you.

Arianna's example described the risk students take when asking for help or stepping out of their comfort zone to ask a question. Her description points out that although there is risk, the benefit of engaging in the interaction outweighs the risk and ultimately benefits the student and the mentor figure.

Arianna also describes the importance of having the opportunity to interpret body language and tone of voice during face-to-face communication. Electronic communication such as texting or chatting on social media eliminates that opportunity for developing emotional intelligence and interpersonal communication skills. Arianna said,

I think that face-to-face is better than Facebook because it is a lot easier to explain yourself in person. On Facebook, you always want to keep it short because they aren't going to read it. You never know how you are going to sound when you are chatting, and I'm a pretty sarcastic and teasing person. So when you're face to face with me, you can tell because I'm smiling and like ha, ha, ha. But electronically I have to be super nice. And consciously not make any jokes because I never know how they're going to come off. That's why I think face-to-face communication is a better way to facilitate relationships.

Arianna's example emphasizes that a significant part of communicating with her mentees involved be able to communicate genuinely. She described having to be highly aware of her tone and limited her normal personality in order to avoid conflict when she communicated electronically. The face-to-face communication allowed her to be more authentic in her interaction with her mentees and to further develop her psychosocial skills like listening and building rapport.

Challenges of Electronic Communication

Again, face-to-face communication was described as the ideal method of communication for creating meaningful mentoring relationships, however the challenge of setting aside time to meet in person was extremely challenging for the mentors. With some mentors having 5-10 mentees, mentors struggled to find times when both the mentee and mentor were available at the same time. This section describes electronic modes of communication and how the mentors' experienced of their use.

Mentors utilized email as a form of communication with their mentees. For many, email is a quick an efficient way to relay information. Although email provided an efficient way to communicate, some mentors found that it projected an air of formality, which was in opposition to the informal and friendly style of communication they felt was in more alignment with their role as a mentor. Jeremiah said, "Email is more formal and you can't have a whole conversation through email. It is also going to be time consuming."

Additionally, some mentors found that way they communicated to their mentees they often did not receive responses to their emails, electronic chats, or texts. Enrique said,

Mentees wouldn't respond or they just didn't want to. Some mentees are just really hard to get a hold of. They just don't really care to meet or they think that they have it handled on their own. You can't force a person to, you need help, get help. It's just really hard to get someone to really meet with you if they don't want to.

Jeremiah said,

Some people respond more while some are not as open. One of my mentees this semester I don't even know if he's still on campus. I emailed him, I wrote him on Facebook, I

called him, I sent him a text message, and he hasn't responded. I haven't seen him this semester, so some people respond, some people don't.

Enrique and Jeremiah's description underscored the challenge of making a connection with mentees. They both described how some mentees may not wish to participate in the relationship and chose not to respond. They both felt frustration but also voiced that he could not force a mentee to interact with him.

Arianna also echoed difficulty in making connections with all of her mentees. She said,

I've had a lot of trouble with getting to know my mentees and I know I'm not the only one who has. Everyone in the Mentor program, we always talked about how much our mentees would never meet with us because it's voluntary for them also. It's not a required thing that they have to meet with us to fulfill any requirements. Basically we're just there for them. It's more like a relaxed, which is good in a lot of ways but in some ways at times we just feel pretty useless.

Arianna goes a step further as she voiced a feeling of uselessness. Her frustration arose in the mentees not being required to interact with her as a mentor. She struggled with wanted the relationship to be relaxed and comfortable in relation to wanting the mentees to be held accountable for interacting with her.

Many mentors also utilized text messaging to communicate with their mentees. This type of communication is rapid in terms of communication speed and is widely used within the population of mentors and mentees. Carmen felt like the majority of her mentoring interaction took place via text messaging. She said,

I feel like it's probably more texting now. Over the weekend, I had one of my mentees texts me because she had remembered that I took an intro to PR class, or she remembered that I was a PR major. She had a test coming up and she wanted to know if I remembered what the professor focused on when giving exams to figure out how she should study. It's good to see that they are comfortable with shooting me a text message and don't have

to be super formal in an email, or anything. I've have had like half of my mentees contact me through texts.

Carmen regarded texting as a more familiar way to text and described it as less formal than email. She went on to say

I feel like texting is probably more effective because I know my first year of college, I wasn't used to having to check my email so much, now I check it every day, multiple times a day. Everyone sends text messages, I think they're so much more use to that, than trying to get them to check their emails every day.

Carmen described how she used texting as a main method of communication because that it the mode of communication most commonly used by her mentees. Recognizing this trend enabled her to interact more frequently with her students and to develop the vocational skill electronic communication.

Even though she engaged in texting and email frequently she also commented on how she would have preferred face-to-face contact. She described the electronic communication as functional but that it lacked the personal connection that is created during face-to-face communication. She said,

Sometimes with emails, when I send them out, it's just a reminder. I don't expect anyone to email me back. Sometimes I'm just like "Hey, this is a reminder. This is coming up, or don't forget to attend this event" Like that. I just feel like, if we were to have a meeting every two weeks in person it would be better.

Carmen voiced a desire to have consistent face-to-face meeting times as a structured part of the UPM program. She felt having this in-person meeting would help to provide time for more mentor to mentee interaction.

Jeremiah also described the ease of communicating by text, but still voiced how text limited his ability to build meaningful relationships that could be fostered through

more face-to-face contact. His description below demonstrates his own conflict in deciding what mode of communication is best in a mentoring situation. He said,

> For me, I'm kind of busy. At times, texting is better than face to face, but face to face in general is good if you're able to see them or if they're open to coming to meet with you at certain times. I think face to face is better because you can't really say what you want to say through a text message, because it might come across in the wrong way, but with one on one you get to be there and have a conversation and you get to express yourself more. With face-to-face you actually get to see them and hear them and see how things are going instead of them being able to hide behind a text message.

Jeremiah described the conundrum of desiring face-to-face communication and trying to reconcile the reality of his and his mentee's availability.

Lastly, some mentors utilized social media, specifically Facebook in order to communicate with their mentees. What the mentors found was unique about Facebook is its ability to create an online community and to strengthen their existing community as University Scholars. When meeting face-to-face is not possible, Facebook seemed to be a preferred method for engaging mentees and supporting the role of the mentor. Arianna said,

> I added them all on Facebook because I feel like that's how everyone communicates now even though I'm not really big on Facebook. I usually just use it to upload pictures because I'm a photographer. But I know a lot of people; they don't check their email. So I added them all on Facebook so I knew what they looked like.

Eliana also preferred to use Facebook if face-to-face communication was not an option. She said, "I think it's a more personal interaction. Your teachers email you and your TAs email you. When you're with your friends you hang out face to face. I don't know, I guess Facebook is more personal." For her, Facebook simulates an informal interaction that is also associated with friendship and could be utilized to foster closer relationships with her mentees.

Reflection on Communicating with Mentees

Although mentors had specific opinions about which methods of communication they preferred to use or were most efficient, when asked to reflect on if they would do anything differently as a mentor if they had the opportunity many of them described a desire to engage in more face-to-face interaction with their mentees. In this section, mentors describe how they would go about engaging in face-to-face interaction, like building rapport gradually and meeting in person more frequently,

Jeremiah described feeling that he rushed into the mentoring interaction. In the future Jeremiah said,

> I would start off by meeting them and actually slowing down because I think sometimes when I first met my mentees, it was really fast. I asked them all these quick questions. I was in the moment, but I could have been in the moment more by actually listening and letting them say stuff within a conversation that they wanted to instead of me questioning them things about their life and allow them to ask me more questions. I think I would have met up with them more throughout the semester one on one instead of texting so much. I'm applying to be a mentor again next year, and I want to go to more events. I want to see them more. I want them to be able to hang out with me instead of having to be alone and stuff.

When provided time to reflect, Jeremiah verbalized that he wished he would have had more time to interact with his students in person and how that could helped to create strong relationships with his mentees.

Therefore, mentors in the UPM program experience their interactions with their mentees primarily through the concept of communication. Within that concept mentors focused on how they were introduced to their mentees and how ongoing communication occurred using various modes of communication. Through their descriptions of what

they experienced in communicating with their mentees and how they perceived those communication interactions, mentors were able to further their own psychosocial and vocational development.

Research Question 3

How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor program describe their lived experience in their transition from mentee to mentor role using Schlossberg's transition theory, specifically the 4 S's (situation, support, self, and strategies)?

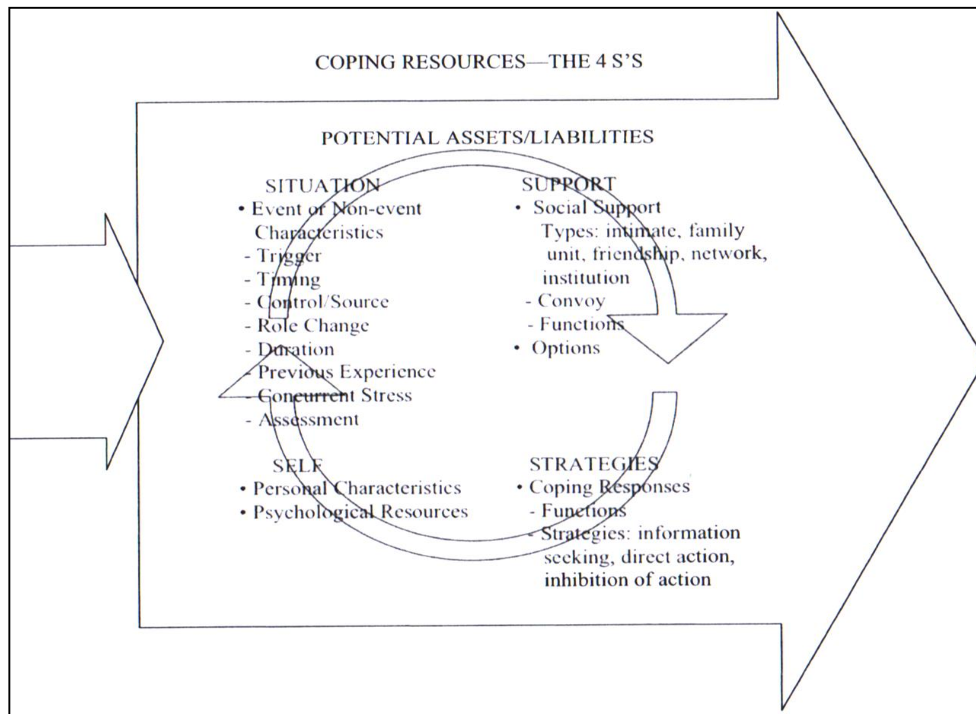
This section examined the transition of the mentors as they moved from a mentee role (University Scholar) to a mentor role (University Peer Mentor). This transition is explored through the analytical framework of Schlossberg's transition theory (Schlossberg, 1984). Specifically, the coping resources known as the 4 S's: situation, self, support, and strategies were utilized as a lens to examine the transition as experienced by the mentors who participated in the study (Goodman, Schlossberg, & Anderson, 2006). The chapter begins with a brief summary of Schlossberg's transition theory, followed by four sections, which introduce the 4 S's: situation, self, support, and strategies. Each of those sections includes a definition of the coping resource and a description of the mentor's experience with that coping resource Both structural and textural descriptions are provided through the voices of the mentors who participated in the study. Finally, a summary of the findings for the third research question is provided and is followed by an introduction to the sixth chapter.

Schlossberg's Transition Theory

This study utilized Schlossberg's transition theory, which was designed to analyze an individual's ability to adapt to transitions or significant life events and how they are able to connect to beneficial resources (Schlossberg, 1981). Transition theory was most appropriate for this study as it accounts for the variability of the mentor experience through transition and it is not bound by sequential stages. Additionally, it was designed with the assumption that both positive and negative transitions are possible, valuable and worthy of further exploration (Evans et al., 2010).

Schlossberg categorized transition in three major phases: approaching change, taking stock, and taking charge (Schlossberg, 1989). Within this study, the phase of taking stock, specifically focusing on the coping resources known as the 4S's: situation, situation, self, support, and strategies were used to characterize the transition, individual, and environment (See Figure 5.2). The mentors experienced a great shift in their roles, paradigms, and self-perceptions as they transitioned from the student to mentor role. Transition theory and the 4S's also served as a good organizational tool during the analysis process.

Figure 5.2



Schlossberg et al, (2006) pg. 56

Situation

The coping resource of situation examines multiple components found within the concept of transition. Components of situation include identifying what may have triggered the transition, the perceptions of the event's timing, their perceived level of control, the role they play in the transition, the duration of the event, previous experience, identifying any concurrent stress, and assessment are all considered components of situation (Evans et al, 2010). This section presents the mentor's experience of each of those components in an effort illustrate the context found within the transition from mentee to mentor.

Trigger. The trigger within the coping resource of situation focused on what events precipitated the transition. Mentors collectively described how the mentoring opportunity was introduced through class or event announcements and through personal interactions with University Scholars staff and current University Peer mentors. Carmen described the triggering in this way, "There was an announcement in class in the late fall semester of my freshman year. A mentor I knew was the one that pushed it, or just gave me that little nudge to apply." Jeremiah said,

> I found out about the position in the spring semester of my freshman year during the distinguished University Scholars speaker series. One of the current mentors made the announcement and said that people should come out and apply, that is was a great thing for people to give back to mentors for next year.

The University Scholars staff and current peer mentors made a great effort to incorporate the recruitment efforts for new mentors in many aspects of their programming and academic classes.

Timing. Timing focused on whether the mentor felt the transition from mentee to mentor as a transition that was occurring at a beneficial time. For the mentors who participated in the study their experience of the timing of the opportunity to be a mentor followed as a chronological and positive next step in their psychosocial and vocational development. When asked why mentoring was the next step for him, Enrique said, "I wanted to give back to the program because it gave back to me, and I also wanted to be a role model for students because it helps me keep my life in check as well." Moving into the mentor role was their next step in giving back to the University Scholars program and provided an opportunity for leadership.

Control. Control focused how the mentor's perceived the control of the mentee to mentor transition as being within their control. Mentors exhibited a great degree of control as they experienced the transition from mentee to mentor. The process of applying to be a mentor was elective. Carmen said, "The application process was not that bad. Once those are submitted then the coordinator emailed you back for interviews, you went to an interview with three other mentors, and the coordinator. Then they emailed you the decision." The process for becoming a mentor was clearly defined and followed a distinct process.

Carmen and other mentors described the application process as relatively stress free; the interview process did introduce stress in regards to their perceived level of control in the mentor transition process. Chris said,

It was actually really intimidating. I got all dressed up. I went into a room and there were three girls that I didn't know, who were mentors, but I'd never met them. I went in and all I saw was a desk in front of these three women and they asked me the most serious questions. They started out with, "what are you involved in?" "What are your time commitments?" because they wanted to make sure I had time for this. Then they threw situations at me. Like if a student tells you they are thinking of killing themselves, what do you do? I thought, God, I don't even know what I would do if I was thinking about it. It was really difficult. A lot of it was just aimed at seeing if I knew the resources on campus. I, kind of, already knew that coming in.

Mentors experienced a bit of stress during the interview process, but it was viewed as a significant component of the process. Ultimately, the mentor coordinator held control of deciding who would become a mentor, but mentors felt in control of their participation in the process.

Role change. Role change focused on recognizing that a role change was taking place and examined how mentors' experienced this role change as a gain or loss for them developmentally. Tuan described being confident in his new role. He said,

I know exactly what I could do to help my mentees. My college experience and the difficulty of classes can be overwhelming for freshmen and new-coming students. I knew I could do my best to ensure that they would not make the same mistakes that I made, and that I could help address their concerns or questions in a timely manner.

Enrique described how he felt regarding the role change from mentee to mentor in this way, "I felt great about it. I was excited to do it. I didn't really have any doubts of not getting into the program. I think it was just like, OK. "This is a commitment that I am going to make." Mentors in this study felt confident in their abilities and that the mentor program would provide training to equip them for the role as a mentor.

Duration. Duration focuses on how the mentor's experienced the length of the transition from mentee to mentor, specifically, did they see it as permanent, temporary, or uncertain? Mentors experienced the duration of the transition from mentee to mentor as permanent, in that once they became a mentor they would not return to the mentee role. They also described the duration of the transition in relation to the length of time that was dedicated to their pre-service training. Chris said,

We had a one-day training session where it lasted from, I want to say, anywhere from eight to one p.m. Then we went over different resources that were on campus that are available to us and to the mentees. They went over different kinds of personal relationships you were supposed to have, like, how to make sure it doesn't get beyond a professionalism thing. How to balance the professional academic side versus the social side where you'll be giving advice about life.

After initial training occurred student felt equipped to work with mentees and knew who to contact on the University Scholars staff or peer leadership team should they need help addressing a mentee issue.

Previous experience with a similar situation. The component of previous experience in a mentoring role centered on if the mentor had previous experience in a mentoring role, and if so, how effectively did they cope with that transition and what implications did that have for the transition for this transition from mentee to mentor in the University Peer Mentor program. Mentors described being asked if they had previous experience as a mentor during the interview process. Some mentors mentioned experience as being a peer mentor in high school or holding a peer leadership position, which gave them experience in building relationships with peers. The interview questions utilized in this study did not focus on this component of situation.

Concurrent Stress. Concurrent stress focused if the mentors identified any types of stress that occurred at the same time as the transition from mentee to mentor took place. The sources of stress experienced by peer mentors in this study at the same time as they engaged in their mentoring role include stress caused by having difficulty in managing their time, specifically academic and social obligations. Tuan described his biggest challenge as time management. He said, “You don’t always have time to respond to them and to have time for your classes.” Carmen echoed Tuan’s statement and said, “Time, like personal schedules and class schedules, trying to find time for everything is hard.

Eliana as noted the challenges of living off campus and facing financial challenges in the midst of being a mentor. She said,

> I was living off campus and not having a car was really hard because I couldn't go anywhere. And I wanted to go out and do things. And I guess at times, not having money to go do things was hard. I worked all my years here but still it never seems to be enough. Schedule wise it's been hard to adjust and academics, it's difficult as well, trying to keep my GPA up especially with the plus minus system is extremely stressful.

Here the mentors described a variety of concurrent stress that took place during their time as mentors. Luckily, mentors also have the coping resource of support that can help to mitigate negative affects of stress.

Assessment. The component of assessment focused on who or what the mentors identified as being responsible for the transition from mentee to mentor. Assessment follows closely with the mentor's perceived level of control. Mentors identified the University Scholars staff and peer mentors who participated in the interviewing process as those who were responsible for their transition into the role of mentor.

Self. The coping resource of self is separated into two types: personal and demographic characteristics and psychological resources, which influence the way in which a mentor interprets their life. The sections below provide a thorough exploration of both areas as well as introducing experiences of those areas through excerpts of the interview transcripts.

Personal and demographic characteristics. Within this study the personal and demographic characteristics of the mentors that were examined include: gender, race/ethnicity, college, classification, years as a mentor, and first-generation status. Table

4.1 from chapter four captured this information and is presented again to summarize the characteristics of the eight mentors who participated in the study.

Table 4.1 Participant Demographics

Name	Sex	Race/Ethnicity	College	Classification	Years as a Mentor	First Generation
Arianna	Female	White	Liberal Arts	Junior	2	No
Carmen	Female	Hispanic	Communication	Junior	1	Yes
Chris	Male	White	Natural Sciences	Junior	2	Yes
Eliana	Female	Hispanic	Liberal Arts	Senior	3	Yes
Enrique	Male	Hispanic	Business	Junior	2	Yes
Hannah	Female	Hispanic	Business	Junior	2	Yes
Jeremiah	Male	Black/African American	Fine Arts	Junior	2	Yes
Tuan	Male	Asian	Natural Sciences	Junior	2	Yes

Traditionally, other demographic characteristics such as psychological age, stage of life, and health are also utilized in transition theory research. However, those characteristics were not included in the scope of this study, as they require additional psychological inventories that are more appropriate in a counseling setting.

Psychological sources or resources. Psychological resources within the component of self are resources that aid in the psychological coping with the transition from mentee to mentor. The identified psychological resource most utilized by mentors in this study is the concept of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy can be described the mentor's belief in their ability to complete a task. Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as, "beliefs

in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (p.2). Mentors in this study developed their self-efficacy prior to entering college and during their college experience. Pre-college self-efficacy is explored below, specifically how that developed in their persistence to pursue higher education. Their college experience self-efficacy is explored through their first year and mentoring experiences. Both sections include structural and textural descriptions of the mentor's experience.

Pre-college experience

During their pre-college experience, mentors commonly discussed a belief that they would attend college, which for most mentors was outside of the norm for their peers. For this study, that belief labeled as persistence. The following section provides structural and textural descriptions of how the mentors developed their level of persistence during their high school experience. These descriptions involve a combination of experiences and attitudes about school from the perspective of the mentor and their experiences with their peers, family, guardians, or influential educators.

Peers. Mentors in this study were asked to describe their high school peers and their thoughts about school. This type of questioning occurred in an effort to reveal if their relationships with their peers supported or undermined their persistence to attend college. Some mentors observed peer norms that were not encouraging or did not offer evidence that their peers typically attended four-year institutions, while other mentors described peer groups whose behaviors were supportive a college-going culture.

Descriptions of and observations of peers who were not on a path to college and descriptions of supportive peer groups are described below.

Mentors took note when peers engaged in behavior that was not leading toward college. When asked to describe his school and peers, Enrique said, "Like a lot of schools, the majority of my high school didn't go to college. A lot of them did go to community college. It wasn't the most challenging high school." Chris echoed Enrique's thoughts and added, "People coming from my area and coming from my school, people who graduate was less than...it was in single digits." Jeremiah said, "I don't know how to describe it. Some of them didn't go to college, some of the people still are in my hometown and do drugs." All three mentors mentioned the role of geography and that students from their schools did not historically attend college.

Carmen discussed how she has lost touch with some of her high school peers. When reflecting on those relationships she said,

I don't talk to them so much anymore. One of them, I think she didn't start out in college, or I think she might have gone a semester, and I think now she's certified with Aveda beauty school. The other one, I think she went a semester, and then did something along the lines of beauty school. The other two, one of them has a baby, so she's not in school, the other one, I think she's still in college, but at a community college back home.

Carmen described the majority of her circle of friends were not attending a four-year institution or a community college. All four mentors described challenging peer outcomes and behaviors that did not lead to college. Although some students may have

followed their peer's example, these mentors persisted and were engaged in behaviors of leading toward a path to college.

Some mentors did participate in groups of peers that were very supportive of attending college. Hannah said,

> My best friend, she's still my best friend. We basically took all the same classes. We took AP Chemistry, AP English, AP Government together. School was important to us so we did focus on getting our grades up. We were both in the national honors society so we did a lot of those activities and other requirements to be in good standing.

From participating in challenging academic courses to engaging in community service, Hannah's peer relationship supported her goal of going to college.

Peers have the ability to positively influence one another. For some of our mentors this was the case. Arianna said,

> I made my friends who I've been friends with now, since my senior year, and I'll probably be friends with them for the rest of my life. All of those people were all in the top ten percent of the academic class. That was really good, because we really challenged each other, and we would read books together and talk about it. We were so mature.

Here Arianna identifies how surrounding herself with peers who were also focused on academic achievement and learning caused her own drive to attend college to be reinforced. Both mentors describe how peers with similar goals supported their pursuit of attending college.

Mentors. Mentors within the study continued to demonstrate an inner drive to achieve. Some mentors always had a plan to attend college, while others had a later introduction to the idea that they could attend college. This section focuses on that inner drive through the voices of the mentors as they reflected on their high school experience. Enrique said,

> I'd say one challenge was making good grades. I didn't know about GPA and what that was until near the end of my sophomore year and someone told me that that is something

you need to have to get into college. I'd just been getting, oh, A’s and, B’s, thinking it doesn't matter. But, then I realized everyone else knew about it. My parents never told me about it. I was like, oh, crap, I've got to catch up now. This is serious. That was kind of a struggle.

Although Enrique came to understand the mechanics (like having a good GPA) of entering college later in his high school experience, when he realized the possibility he was ready to put in the effort necessary to achieve that goal.

Enrique went on to say, “My junior year is when I started thinking about college. I changed my mind from wanting to be a chef to be a civil engineer, [laughs] then finally to a musician, and then I changed to business.” Even though Enrique was unsure as to what he was going to study, his question was never “Am I going to college?” it was “What will I study in college?” That positive assumptive thinking emphasized his internal drive to attend college.

Upon reflection, some mentors also noted how much they have always been motivated to do well in school and how that translated into their increased persistence in working to attend college. Arianna said, “ Well, I love school. I've always been a perfectionist and my mom really instilled that in me and always encouraged me and my siblings to get A's all the time so I always wanted to get good grades.” Here, Arianna described that internally worked toward perfection and was also influenced by her mother’s encouragement to achieve academic excellence.

Family or Guardians. Mentors were heavily influenced by family members or guardians in regard to their beliefs about attending college. Even during times of struggle, family members band together and find ways to help each other reach their goals. Carmen said,

There was the time where my dad got really sick, my freshman year. Till this day, we're still paying the medical bills and the hospital and all that. When it came to me going to college, they said that money was not an issue, they'd figure it out some other way, and told me to go where I wanted.

This vocal commitment to her goal of attending college while in the midst of illness and eventually financial struggle encouraged Carmen to continue to persist.

Influential Educators. Mentor's beliefs about attending college were also greatly impacted by specific educators who seemed to invest in them or take a special interest in helping them on the path to college. Arianna said,

My favorite teacher, she was my English teacher in my junior year. She was known in the high school to be super strict and kind of crazy. No one wanted to take her class, but it was a really good class, because you had to do so much work. It was my favorite class in my entire high school life, and she taught me a lot about writing and how to improve my writing style. She also taught me how to view things in life, and how to read books, which I had never really thought about before. She definitely changed a lot of my academic thinking, and I didn't really have any of those teachers besides her in high school.

Arianna described how her teacher opened her eyes to the benefits of learning, developing skills like writing and analytical reading. This extra investment and challenge provided by the instructor only spurred Arianna on to continue to pursue a college education.

Chris described a situation where a teacher noticed him and was persistent in challenging him to participate in the district's one-act play competition. Chris said,

"Yeah, no, I'm good. Thanks though." I kind of just brushed it off and went on about my day. He kept running into me in school and he's like, "You really should do it, you know, I heard you speak. You can do this." I just kept on ignoring him. Then finally in December, marching band was so we were heading into a slow season. So I said, you know, all right fine I'll do it.

Through one act play I got to know him really well. He used to give me old clothes that he had, he gave me a lot of stuff. And he used to buy me meals, which was a big thing in my house because we didn't normally have a lot of food to go around. I actually really wanted to go to Lamar University because they were offering me a lot of money but he's

really one of the people that convinced me to go to UT, because he had just graduated from there

Chris's teacher showed Chris that someone believed in him and was committed to seeing him through his goal of attending college. He challenged Chris to try new things, push him self academically and socially. It is meaningful experiences like this with a mentor that pushes individuals to continue to persist.

The role of academic advisors also falls into the category of influential educators in the lives of the mentors who participated in this study. Tuan said,

I wish I could have known my school counselor earlier, because he was really nice. He helped me with everything about the college application process. He helped me learn everything about how to apply for scholarships. He was a good mentor for me.

Tuan description demonstrates how the support of his academic advisor encouraged him to persist in his quest to attend college.

College experience

The mentor's experience in college reinforced the mentor's level of self-efficacy. Mentors described how the relationships with their peers influenced and reinforced their level of self-efficacy and encouraged them to continue to work to be a successful college student. The support peers provided supported the continued development of self-efficacy and provided a foundation of confidence that may have been influential in their decision to become a mentor.

Peers. Peers in the college environment are also quite influential in continuing to help peers develop a sense of self-efficacy. Peer mentors in this study described situations in which peers helped them to persist while in college. For instance, peers can help each other navigate academic situations that they may be unfamiliar with. In regards to choosing a major, Carmen said,

> I had no idea what PR (public relations) was. My friend, that was helping me, she was a journalism major her first two years and then she switched to PR. She helped me to understand what the program involved and that it was really something I wanted to do.

Here, Carmen described how her peer was able to help her to understand the nature of a particular major. This peer was able to answer her questions and lead her to try other resources that would help her to be confident in selecting a major.

Some mentors even continued to find support in relationships with former high school peers. Arianna said, “I would also call my best friend Jessie for support, and we’d talk. We were going through a lot of similar problems. We would talk all the time.” That familiarity and existing bond helped Arianna through her first year and encouraged her to persist in her college experience.

Additionally, building relationships with new friends in college is also a significant part of the first-year college experience. Eliana said,

> I know, originally, my support had been my best friend from high school (we were roommates), but then when things started going south it was kind of hard because I felt really isolated over here. A lot of the people on my floor, we were all really cool with each other. I started hanging out with the people in my dorm. That definitely helped me to adjust.

Finding acceptance in new relationships as a first-year student also boosted the mentor’s confidence and helped her to successfully transition into a new community. This growing sense of belonging is helpful in persisting in a college environment.

Support

The coping resource of support within this study is referring to social support provided to the mentors during their transition from mentee to mentor. Support, is divided into three sub-categories of types, functions, and measurement. Types of support involve intimate relationships, family units, networks of friends, and institutions and

communities. The functions of support include: affect, affirmation, aid, and honest feedback. Measurement occurs in the evaluation of identifying if the sources of support are consistent, role specific, or likely to change (Evans et al., 2010). For the purposes of this study, this section examines the types of support experienced by peer mentors.

Types. The types of support experienced by mentors primarily included fellow peer mentors, University Scholars staff, and the campus resources provided by the institution (e.g. educators from units like the Counseling and Mental Health Center – CMHC). The following section will describe those types of support both texturally and structurally in the voices of the mentors who participated in the study.

Peers. Fellow peer mentors in the UMP program served as sources of support for one another during their transition from mentee to mentor. Mentors described how more experienced peer mentors were involved in creating and delivering training. Carmen said,

> Three or four peer mentors would go up in front during the training and share their own mentoring experiences with the group. They would talk a time when they faced a difficult situation or needed to ask another mentor or University Scholar staff member for advice on how to handle it. They would also share ideas of what campus resources to recommend for that given situation.

The peer leadership approach utilized in the trainings draws on the unique influence of peers and provided opportunity for experience mentors to share experiences and support new mentors as they transition into the role.

University Scholars Staff. The University Scholars staff served as consistent sources of support for all of the mentors who participated in the study. Their role involved communicating with mentors, training mentors, and offering advice in handling a variety of situations they may encounter as mentors. Eliana said,

Staff are always offering us different workshops and training, whether it be résumé writing or career prep, anything like that. They organize lots of tutoring sessions and events to try to help us have more opportunities to work with and get to know our students.

Arianna described how the University Scholars staff worked to stay in communication with the mentors to not only hear about how the University Scholars were doing, but to inquire about how the mentors were doing. Arianna said, "The mentor coordinator would stay in contact with us and just ask us how we were doing." This established style of communication provided support to the mentors as they transitioned into their role.

Chris also described how he would check in with University Scholar staff members that he had developed close relationships with. They would talk about more than just the mentoring role; they would discuss their thoughts about race and ethnicity and how that affects the college experience. Having these types of relationships not only bolstered his sense of confidence in his role, but also created a strong connection with the university as discussed in chapter one.

Campus Resources. Peer mentors in the UPM program also had great access to learning about campus resources that enabled them to be more prepared in their role. The University Scholars student population is very diverse and being knowledgeable about campus resources for students with a variety of identities, financial situations, academic backgrounds, etc. was very important to the mentors to successfully transition into the mentor role. Carmen said,

This past month we had a guest speaker from the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) office. The speaker told us what terms we should use and how we should approach anything of that sort. It was to help us know what kinds questions we should ask, what questions we shouldn't ask, and what we should and should not say. It was really helpful. I had never thought about some of the things we talked about.

Multiple mentors commented on how they appreciated the training they received about how to approach LGTBQ students or questions. They described how the training alleviated their stress about being unfamiliar with how to approach topics that LGBTQ students might ask or what resources could provide the most support.

Jeremiah noted that through the training sessions he,

> …learned about the tutoring that takes place in some of the dorms on campus. I always recommend that my mentees to go to the free resources within University Scholars too. I also learned from one of the other peer mentors about the undergraduate writing center. They can help students with writing assignments and learning how to improve their writing style.

Being able to point mentees toward appropriate academic resources was extremely important to mentors. Aside from the writing center, mentors also described telling their students about how to best utilize the major libraries on campus and how to begin a research project.

Additionally, mentors described the need for helping mentees to take care of themselves from a health perspective. Tuan discussed learning about campus resources that helped him to talk to his students about health, exercise, and developing healthy relationships. The mentors received information about university health services and recreational sports opportunities to share with their mentees. The mentors voiced how knowing about campus resources served as a great support in their mentoring role and equipped them to handle a variety of situations that they encountered as mentors.

Strategies

Finally, the concept of strategies introduced and originated from Pearlin and Schooler's (1978) descriptions of coping responses. Strategies "represent…concrete efforts to deal with the life strains they encounter in their roles"(Pearlin & Schooler, p.1,

1978); "or in other words the things an individual does on their own behalf to address or cope with life stresses" (Schlossberg, p. 70, 1995). The three categories of strategies include "those that modify the situation, those that control the meaning of the problem, and those that aid in managing the stress in the aftermath" (Evans et al., 2010, p. 217).

Responses that modify the situation include negotiating for desired outcome, optimistic action, seeking advice, or being disciplined in a course of action (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). Responses that control the meaning of the problem include responses that "neutralize, [offer] positive comparisons, [engage] in selective ignoring, [or] substitution of rewards" (Pearlin & Schooler, p.5, 1978). Lastly, responses that aid in managing stress after the event or transition has occurred include "denial, passive acceptance, withdrawal, magical thinking, hopefulness, avoidance of worry, and relaxation" (Pearlin & Schooler, p.5, 1978).

Within those categories there are four modes of coping that are demonstrated by mentors who participated in this study. Those modes include: information seeking, direct action, inhibition of action, and intrapsychic behavior. The following sections define each mode and provide textural and structural descriptions of how the mentors experienced using those modes in their transition from mentee to mentor. Schlossberg et al. emphasized that effective copers demonstrate flexibility and use multiple methods. (Evans et. Al, p.114, 2010).

Information seeking. The coping mode of information seeking involves seeking out additional facts or data surrounding a problem in order to solve it. The main information-seeking coping mode that mentors utilized was training.

During the pre-service training in which the mentors participated, mentors were able to seek information through interactive training sessions. Tuan described the pre-service training in this way,

> We watched videos about the different contexts of mentoring, about different situations, and the relationship between a mentee and a mentor in different situations. We had to define the mentoring experience and describe how to be good mentors.

Tuan described working in groups to find answers to questions posed by University Scholar staff and returning mentors to help them discover the roles of the mentor, common situations experienced by peer mentors, and best practices for mentoring within their program. This training method encouraged the mentors to seek information not only from the program staff and returning mentors, but to use one another as resources of information.

Mentors are also engaged in information-seeking behavior when they utilized the University Scholars Facebook page. They were able to interact and ask questions in an electronic forum and pose questions to not only mentors, but also University Scholars. This type of information-seeking behavior underscores the reciprocal nature of mentoring and showing that mentor and mentees can seek information from one another.

Direct Action. The coping mode of direct action involves the mentor engaging in behavior that solves the problem and does not rely on having someone help them in the problem-solving process or referring a student to a resource where the problem could be handled at a later time. For mentors in this study they often took direct action to aid their mentees with a particular academic or social issue. In regards to handling personal situations, Carmen said,

Whenever I give advice I make it really personal. I think about what has worked for me and then see if that might work for them. I also ask them questions to help them think about how they have handled things like this in the past. I think trying to make it personal, and trying to help them figure out what will works best for them is really important.

Mentors are faced with helping mentees handle personal issues like finance, family stress, relationship stress, healthy living challenges, etc. Mentors in this study referenced the need to be willing to share their own personal experiences that could help a mentee see one way of handling the problem. Sharing those experiences also builds rapport between the mentor and mentee.

Mentors in this study often engage in direct action in regards to academic situations. Hannah said,

They'll email me and say, "Oh, I got your email about reading. I don't know, do we have a quiz tomorrow or what chapters am I supposed to read, or what am I supposed to prepare for?" I'll would email them back and remind them of what they should be focusing on or answering a specific question. They would often just email me about class work.

In these situations it is clear that the mentor should respond with direct action. Often times it involves responding to electronic communication or answering a question with a clear answer. For these types of interactions, direct action is most appropriate.

Inhibition of Action. The coping mode of the inhibition of action involves the mentor not engaging in direct action, but rather exerting patience and not acting. Mentors are typically trained on how to engage in direct action. Based on our interviews it does not appear that much training time was dedicated to understanding situations in which inhibiting action was discussed.

Mentors in this study experienced times when their mentee voiced a desire to get help from another resource or individual. This type of situation results in the mentor

having to choose not to help or act even if they believe they know how to help the student. Carmen said, "You want to be there for them, but sometimes they will say, "I have another person. I have a friend who's a senior right now, so they're already my mentor." It is at those times that the mentor has to make a choice to not act and still support the student because they are in fact seeking help, just not from the mentor.

The ability to inhibit action also came into play when mentees did not respond to mentor communications like texts and emails. Mentors voiced a desire to ensure that their mentees are always informed and utilized email and texts to make sure that their students are also doing okay. Hannah said,

> Sometimes it's really hard to get them to respond to your emails. I know my first year since if I didn't get to see them every other week, I would email them, but it was so hard to get them to respond. I thought, I don't know if they're getting my emails. When I saw them I would ask, "Do you get my emails, do I have your right email, or are you OK?" And they were like "Yeah that's it, I get them". Just like OK, cool.

Hannah was clearly frustrated and may have desired to engage in direct action at this point. But as noted above, students receive and seek out support in a variety of ways. Hannah's original goal was to provide information to her students and the secondary goal was having the students engage with her in communication. This was a challenge voiced by many mentors.

Intrapsychic Behavior. Intrapsychic behavior describes the internal psychological processes that occur within an individual. For example, a mentor may internally process the mentor experience of introducing themselves to a mentee as the development of interpersonal skills. Mentors in the study described a variety of experiences that resulted in their psychosocial growth. Those experiences are described in the following section.

Eliana described how working with her students has helped her to further develop the ability to adapt to a variety of situations. She said, "A lot of it is just dealing with adapting and changing and trying to be effective and figuring out what works and what doesn't and try to just keep building off of that and hope that you're doing better." The interaction with her students pushed her to examine all of the different ways she could handle a situation.

For Enrique, his interaction with mentees helped him to realize he feels most accomplished in a role when he is helping others. He said,

> I feel like I'm most successful when I'm helping other people. I feel like the person I really am will be shaped along the way, and I don't have to worry about that. When I worry about myself, that's when I start to question what I am doing.

Enrique also discovered that he is able to engage in introspection that helps him to figure out how to define himself through his role as a mentor.

Hannah described how her experience as a mentor has helped her to develop her interpersonal skills with people who are not as extroverted as she is. She said, "It has helped me to work with students who are not as talkative as I am and to try to make them feel comfortable." The ability to learn how to engage new people and to put them at ease is not an easy skill to master. Hannah's experience provided her with an opportunity to develop her ability to build rapport with individuals.

The 4 S's of situation, self, support, and strategies from Schlossberg's transition theory served as an informative lens to describe how mentors cope in their transition from mentee to mentor. Throughout their years of experience each coping resource was included in their descriptions of transition from mentee to mentor role. The

4 S's also allowed the mentor's to describe the intricate role the University Scholar staff and returning peer mentors play in the development and equipping of new mentors.

Summary and introduction to Chapter 6

This section explored how peer mentors in the University Peer Mentor program experienced psychosocial and vocational development through their role and interactions. Additionally, this chapter examined the transition from mentee to mentor role using Schlossberg's transition theory, specifically the 4 S's (situation, support, self, and strategies)? Specifically, the coping resources known as the 4 S's: situation, self, support, and strategies were utilized as a lens to examine the transition as experienced by the eight mentors who participated in the study (Goodman, Schlossberg, & Anderson, 2006). The rich descriptions of the mentor's experience illustrate how Schlossberg's transition theory is an appropriate framework for examining the mentor's transition into their role.

The following and final chapter will focus on connecting research findings to the extant literature and theoretical frameworks guiding this study. Specifically, the following chapter will discuss the major findings of the study, introduce implications for future research, practice, and policy, describe the limitations of the study, and review the significance of this study.

Chapter Six: Discussion: Overview of the Study

Nationally, there is a call to increase graduation and retention rates in our colleges and universities (Obama, 2009). One mechanism educational administrators are utilizing towards this goal is peer mentoring at the undergraduate level (Girves, Zepeda, & Gwathmey, 2007). Although many studies have examined the experience of undergraduate mentees, little research has focused on the lived experiences of undergraduate peer mentors. With rising demographic changes and an increased focus on increasing racial and ethnic diversity, universities are employing peer mentor programs to help increase the graduation and retention rates for specific populations like underrepresented students. For the purposes of this study, underrepresented students include African American, Latino, and first generation college students. The intent of this study was to uncover the lived experiences of undergraduate peer mentors who serve underrepresented students at a predominantly white institution through the following research questions:

1. How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor Program at UT Austin (a PWI) describe their lived experience in their mentor role (psychosocially, vocationally, and in their relationship to the institution)?
2. How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor program describe their lived experience through their interactions with their mentees (psychosocially and vocationally)?

3. How do student mentors in the University Peer Mentor program describe their lived experience in their transition from mentee to mentor role using Schlossberg's transition theory, specifically the 4 S's (situation, support, self, and strategies)?

Rationale of the Study

This study expanded the existing literature surrounding the topic of undergraduate peer mentoring. In this research, I introduced an in-depth account of the lived experience of the mentor's perspective from within the mentoring relationship. Further, my study examined the textural and structural descriptions of the mentor experience. I examined the psychosocial and vocational functions of mentoring through the mentor's lived experience of their role as a mentor and through interactions with their mentees. In this study, I also employed the 4S's of Schlossberg's transition theory to examine the transition from mentee (University Scholar) to mentor (University Mentor). Lastly, through this study I introduced a more tailored operational definition of undergraduate peer mentoring for mentors who serve students from underrepresented populations. Although this definition is very narrow in scope, the number of programs within the United States that are supporting underrepresented students is expanding. This collective definition provides researchers with a consistent definition that is explanatory and could be used to guide future research.

Method and Analysis

In this study I employed qualitative methodology and a single-site, multiple participant design (Bloor & Wood, 2006, Miles & Huberman, 1994). Purposive sampling was used to select eight undergraduate peer mentors from the University Peer Mentor

program who had completed at least one full year of mentoring (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The mentors completed a pre-interview questionnaire to gather demographic and academic information, as well as their definition of undergraduate peer mentoring. They also participated in two semi-structured interviews. The first interview concentrated on their life story prior to becoming a mentor and the following interview provided time for them to explain the nature of their role and their reflections on their role as a mentor.

The data analysis approach for this study drew on influences from phenomenology, grounded theory, and transition theory (Moustakas; 1994; Schlossberg, 1984; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The sources of data for the study included individual interviews, program documents, and observations of selected mentor program events in order to use triangulation to increase validity of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Both open and axial coding techniques and three conceptually matrices specific to each research question were used in the data analysis process.

Discussion of Findings

This chapter discusses the four major findings of this study and introduces a definition of undergraduate peer mentoring that is specific to mentors who serve underrepresented students. The first finding revealed how the role of mentoring and mentor interactions provided opportunity for psychosocial and vocational development for the mentor. Second, the role of mentoring increased the mentor's connection to the university. This connection was specifically important in relation to their identity as underrepresented students. Third, the four coping resources of the 4S's of Schlossberg's transition theory served as an effective analytical framework for examining the mentor

transition. Fourth, mentors gained transferable skills as a result of their mentoring experience. Lastly, based on the individual mentor definitions provided by the study participants I have developed a collective definition of undergraduate peer mentoring that is tailored for mentors who serve students from underrepresented populations.

Finding One: Mentor role and interactions provided opportunity for psychosocial and vocational development

The lived experience of the eight peer mentors who participated in the study revealed how their role and interactions led to their own psychosocial and vocational development. The role of the mentor in the University Peer Mentor (UPM) program was to help their mentees transition smoothly into university life and to encourage academic achievement and social/civic engagement during their college experience at UT Austin. The domains of psychosocial and vocational functions of mentoring were initially introduced by Kram and Isabella (1985) and applied to the development of the mentee in the mentor relationship. This study expanded the scope of these functions to the development of the mentor.

Psychosocial skills involved growth in areas that increased interpersonal skills. The types of psychosocial skills mentors developed during their mentoring experience included: listening, patience, empathy, and ability to build rapport with others. For mentors in this study, vocational development applied to skills that would aid in academic performance as well as transferable skills that could help them in their future careers or academic pursuits like graduate school.

Social Exchange

Psychosocially and vocationally, mentors in this study demonstrated how social exchange is facilitated through their role as a mentor (Homans, 1974). As voluntary mentors, participants in the study voiced a desire to give back to the University Scholars program. However, through social exchange, the mentor not only gives back by serving the mentee in a mentor role, the mentor role also provides the mentor with opportunities to gain valuable psychosocial and vocational skills. My analysis of the data suggests that the voluntary nature of the role grew out of a culture of mutual benefit, created by the University Scholars program. In reviewing the data, I found that promoting social exchange and supporting one another was an unvoiced expectation that individuals possessed or developed by being a part of the University Scholars program. Mentors often voiced that they were always there to offer support to anyone associated with the program (staff, students, mentors). From my interviews with participants, social exchange was not overtly discussed; often, it was more of a general understanding that giving back to the program and gaining valuable skills was a fixed membership experience held by members of the University Scholar or University Peer mentor communities.

Psychosocial and Vocational Development

Mentors also described how their mentor role provided them with unique opportunities to interact with University Scholars staff, which led to psychosocial and vocational growth. In fact, multiple mentors believed University Scholars professional staff served as mentors to them. The open-door policy and inviting environment created

by the staff not only provided mentors with support in their roles related to peer mentoring, but also provided an example of mentoring for the peer mentor to emulate.

More than any other mentoring experience, mentors noted pre-service and concurrent training as the prime mechanism for the development of vocational skills. Although trainings mainly focused on developing skills to be used directly in their role as mentors, mentors consistently voiced how they were able to use skills or knowledge acquired in training in other areas of their lives. Mentors also commented on the value of hearing campus experts describe and promote on campus resources. Mentors in the University Peer Mentor program had ample opportunity to understand what campus resources were available, and how to prepare students to take advantage of those resources.

My analysis revealed that pre-service training served to build community and confidence in participants' upcoming role as a mentor. Mentors found value and comfort knowing that the University Scholars staff wanted them to be prepared and successful in their role as a mentor. The combination of student-led and staff-led training also reinforced the idea of reciprocal learning and provided opportunity to utilize the unique level of influence peers hold. Mentors who were involved in the training process voiced how the experience pushed them to learn or refine skills like public speaking, organizing events, and running formal meetings.

Although the finding that psychosocial and vocational growth takes place through the mentor role is not surprising to me as a practitioner, the ability to point to research that thoroughly depicted what took place within the mentor experience is valuable in a

number of ways. First, having sound research that reveals the mentor experience is valuable and helps to further define the phenomena. Second, as practitioners employ mentoring as a tool to increase four-year graduation and retention rates, this research finding lends support to the validity of the tool. Lastly, as practitioners are asked to justify the existence and expense of mentoring programs, using research findings to demonstrate how the mentor experience offers tangible learning and developmental outcomes for students is powerful.

Finding Two: The mentor experience was transformative

The experience of becoming an undergraduate peer mentor served as a notable transition for the mentors in this study. After I analyzed the interview transcripts, I describe the experience of being a mentor as transformative. The nature of the transformation was as unique as the mentors who participated in the study. The types of transformations ranged from psychosocial to vocational, and for some mentors it related specifically to the development of their identity as a student.

For Chris, a White male first-generation college student the transformation was psychosocial. He grew up surrounded by his father's negative beliefs about Latinos and African-Americans. The experience of being a University Scholar and being a University Peer Mentor transformed his beliefs about race and ethnicity: the interactions and relationships he forged with students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds provided evidence to transform his way of thinking.

Other mentors experienced a professional transformation. Mentoring provided them with the opportunity to develop skills and abilities that opened doors for them

academically and professionally in internship settings. Carmen, a Hispanic female first-generation college student was able to obtain an internship in as a result of developing marketable skills, like time management, professional communication, and the ability to manage a group. Enrique also experienced a professional transformation. His involvement as a mentor led to leadership opportunities in student professional organizations. His skills in project management, conflict resolution, and event planning provided a good foundation for leading a student organization.

For Tuan, an Asian male first-generation college student the role of being a mentor transformed his identity and sense of belonging. Being a part of the University Scholars program and having progressed into the role of mentor allowed him to create and claim his identity as a University Peer Mentor. He was no longer a student struggling to find a place where he fit in; his role helped him to move into a role of maturity, responsibility, and care for others. Tuan expressed his role as a mentor with great pride and conviction.

This study introduces the need for further exploration of the concept of psychosocial, vocational, and student identity transformation that can occur as a result of participating in an undergraduate peer mentor program. It is possible to imagine a cycle of transformation that is associated with being a mentor. Further research in this area could yield valuable insight into the role of the mentor.

Finding Three: The role of mentoring increased their connection to the university

All of the mentors identified their mentoring role as a key experience, which created or solidified their feeling of connectedness to The University of Texas at Austin

in two distinct ways. The first way centered on how their connection to the university was created or strengthened by identifying the source of their motivation to be a mentor. This motivation was demonstrated through the concept of social exchange. Second, mentors specifically described how their identity as an underrepresented student and the identity of their mentees as underrepresented students were central to their feeling of connectedness. The following sections discuss those two components that led to the mentor's feeling of connection to the university.

Throughout the study mentors described how the idea of social exchange motivated them to serve as a mentor in the University Peer Mentor program. It is through this participation in social exchange that created or strengthened their connection with the institution. This occurred as mentors reflected on how personally satisfied they felt in giving back to the University Scholars program as a mentor and realized the variety of psychosocial and vocational skills they developed through their participation in the program. Mentors felt a personal need to provide assistance to students who were in their place just a year or two earlier and were seeking increased responsibility that led to further personal development. The knowledge that they were providing support as they reflected on their college experience to date also brought out descriptions of pride in their role and legacy of leading as a peer.

The mentors and mentees identity as underrepresented students also played major role in the creation or strengthening of the mentor's feeling of connectedness to the institution. Mentors felt that because the university invested in programs such as University Scholars, and because the institution recruited students to serve as had roles

such as peer mentors, they understood this to mean that the university must care about underrepresented students. Which in turn, led them to feel that the university also authentically cared for them.

Finding Four: Transition theory was an effective analytical framework for examining the mentor transition

The 4 S's of Schlossberg's transition theory was an appropriate and useful approach to examining the transition from mentee to mentor. My analysis indicates that mentors primarily utilized strategies and support more so than situation and self. Situation within the context of transitioning to a mentor is somewhat static, and can be described as a planned or voluntary transition rather than a transition that involves sudden change or negative outcome. The planned nature or feeling as if becoming a peer mentor is the next step in their development as a University Scholar is very different than experiencing the loss of a loved one or being fired from a long-time job. Schlossberg's transition theory is well matched to study mentoring because it allows for transition to be categorized as both positive and negative. For example, becoming a new mentor could be experienced positively as an opportunity for personal growth, while it could also be perceived as negative if the mentor has difficulty connecting with their mentees.

Because the role of the mentor was focused on helping students' transition from high school to college, the nature of the role is one of care taking and assistance. The nature of the role provided more opportunity for mentors to engage in the coping resources of strategies and support. Having access to pre-service and concurrent training

served as the main avenue for acquiring new strategies on how to help mentees positively manage their transition from high school to college life.

The coping resource of support was also readily available in the form of the University Peer Mentor program staff and experienced peer mentors. Mentors identified the University Scholars staff and their fellow peer mentors as the biggest sources of support during their peer mentor experience. The training mentors participated in provided extensive education in regards to how to access the most appropriate and helpful sources of support for their role as mentors.

Definition of Undergraduate Peer Mentor: specially mentoring underrepresented students

In reviewing the mentoring literature, I initially selected the definition of mentoring introduced by Moore and Amey (1988) to depict the concept broadly:

A form of professional socialization whereby a more experienced (usually older) individual acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and patron of a less experienced (often younger) mentee. The aim of the relationship is the further development and refinement of the mentee's skills, abilities, and understanding (p. 45)

In an effort to create a more tailored definition, I adapted Moore and Amey's definition to limit the scope of the relationship to an undergraduate peer mentor and mentee. The modified definition for peer mentoring reads,

Mentoring is a relationship between a more experienced undergraduate student (typically older) acting as a guide, role model, and advocate of a less experienced undergraduate

student (typically younger). The aim of the mentoring relationship is to further the mutual development and refinement of both the mentee and mentor's skills, abilities, and understanding in order to aid in the student's successful transition to college life (Smith, 2011).

During the pre-interview questionnaire and during the interview mentors were asked to provide their own definition of undergraduate peer mentoring. A thorough analysis of the transcripts has provided me with the ability to create a collective definition for undergraduate peer mentoring that is specific to mentors, who identify as underrepresented and also serve underrepresented students:

[Undergraduate peer] mentoring is a relationship between a more experienced undergraduate student from and underrepresented population (typically older) acting as a role model, friend, and resource to a less experienced undergraduate student (typically younger) who is also from an underrepresented population. The aim of the mentoring relationship is to further the mutual development and refinement of both the mentee and mentor's psychosocial and vocational skills in order to aid in their successful transition to college life.

This definition outlines three distinct functions within the role of the peer mentor. First, is the function of being a role model, which includes both academic and social functioning Second, the function of being a friend or confidant is introduced. This function brings to light the unique position of the peer and how their proximity in age can facilitate the development of a meaningful relationship. Lastly, the function of being a resource highlights the importance of mentors provide valuable information about

university processes and campus resources. The definition then goes on to describe the opportunity for reciprocity within the mentoring relationship. Specifically, the definition describes the opportunity for both psychosocial and vocational skill development as a result of participating in the mentoring relationship. The close of the definition points to the overarching goal of the undergraduate peer mentoring relationship, which is to encourage a successful transition from high school to university life.

Implications for Research, Practice, and Policy

Research

My analysis of the data derived from the study provides insight to practitioners, policymakers, and researchers useful for future research endeavors, informing practice, and policy within the field of higher education. Gaining a full understanding of what takes place in the undergraduate peer mentoring relationship by knowing how the mentor experiences their role, understanding how mentoring facilitates both psychosocial and vocational growth opportunities, and using theory to shape the development of mentor programs will provide administrators, practitioners, and researchers a more complete understanding of the phenomena of undergraduate peer mentoring for mentors serving underrepresented students.

The exploratory nature of this study provides a strong starting point for additional research in the area of undergraduate peer mentoring. The findings from my study encourages researchers to continue to investigate the experience of the undergraduate peer mentor. Avenues for research in this area could focus on mentoring programs for specific populations, such as students from particular academic areas (i.e. science,

technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), or in programs designed to support students of a particular gender). More studies are needed in order to identify the common experiences of undergraduate peer mentors.

Additionally, researchers can utilize data gathered about mentor training from this study to design new studies that have a specific focus on examining mentor training. This study described the lived experience of the mentor in training and highlighted topics that mentors found useful. Further studies could also examine what type of training model (peer- or staff-led) is most effective in preparing mentors for their role.

Lastly, this research study demonstrated how transition theory is a useful framework for examining the undergraduate peer mentor transition from a mentee to mentor role. It would be helpful to see other scholars replicate this study using transition theory as a framework. It would also be interesting to utilize other theoretical frameworks such as Astin's (1991) Input Environment Output (I-E-O) Model, which could explore how the mentor environment contributes to their development, academic success, and or retention. Moreover, it would be interesting to examine findings from similarly designed studies whose populations were not from underrepresented populations to see if the findings in regards to the 4S's were consistent with the findings from this study.

Practice

For practitioners, the findings from my study offer opportunities for understanding and improving mentor programs. This research study provides a foundation to discuss the value of assessing and evaluating what types of transferable

psychosocial and vocational skills mentors acquire through their participation in a mentor program. Second, this study encourages practitioners to take note of the University Scholars program and identify best practices for mentoring programs demonstrated by their staff and experienced peer mentors who helped to facilitate many components of the program. Third, this study also provides insight into how mentors experienced their training and what types of training were useful in preparing them for their roles as mentors. Finally, this research reveals how the mentor role influences students' feeling of connection to the institution. This feeling of connectedness is a key indicator of engagement, as found by Astin (1993), Kuh (1991), Tinto (1988) which can also lead to increased academic performance and retention. This data could be used to persuade institutional administration to invest in mentor programs in an effort to support the goal of increasing graduation and retention rates for underrepresented undergraduate students (Girves et al., , 2005; Gloria, 1993; Good et al., 2000; Jacobi, 1991; Obama, 2009; Strayhorn & Terrell, 2007; Zalaquett & Lopez, 2006).

The participants in my study provide practitioners the opportunity to hear directly from mentors in regards to what types of psychosocial and vocational skills can be acquired by participating as a mentor. These data could be particularly used in developing recruitment materials for incoming mentors and also for prospective University Scholars and their parents or guardians during orientation. Prospective mentors will be interested in learning what the role of mentoring has to offer them and set the expectation that they can gain psychosocial skills like listening, building rapport, demonstrating empathy as well as vocational skills like time management, problem-

solving, and professional communication. Prospective University Scholars and their parents' or guardians' decision to attend the university and be a part of the University Scholars program could be affirmed in hearing how prepared the mentors are to help them in their transition into college.

The University Scholars mentor program could serve as a mentoring model for underrepresented students and exhibits best practices that can be emulated by other programs in the country. Specifically, the University Scholars program staff provided role modeling to the peer mentors by creating an environment that is inviting and open. By vocalizing an open-door communication policy, staff invited students into their professional space and created opportunity to build meaningful relationships with the mentors. This staff mentoring individually benefitted mentors and staff, but this welcoming and invested approach also identified the University Scholars staff members as role models for the University Peer Mentors to follow.

This study brought the undergraduate peer mentor experience into the scholarly arena and offered attention to their pre-service and concurrent training experiences. Mentors in this study described how peer-led training was particularly effective and the importance of being educated about resources found on campus that are useful for first-year students to know about. Mentor training coordinators can utilize the data presented in this study to begin to examine their own program's approach to training, explore training topics, and inform the assessment practices used to evaluate mentor training.

As institutions are increasingly being asked to provide evidence of how co-curricular activities and student programming lead to direct student outcomes, this study

documents the types of transferable skills mentors acquire through their role as mentors. Program coordinators or educational administrators can use the findings from this study to support the creation or continuation of existing undergraduate peer mentoring programs. By utilizing the findings regarding transferable skills and the increased feeling of connection to the institution, program administrators can provide documented accounts of how the mentor develops psychosocially and vocationally through their role as a mentor. Although this study is specific to the population of mentors found within the University Peer Mentor program at The University of Texas at Austin, programs supporting the transition of underrepresented first year students are widespread. Program administrators from similar programs can use this study to improve and assess their programs in a variety of ways.

Lastly, program administrators can use the findings of this study to demonstrate how their programs can increase the level of connection students feel towards their university. Both mentors and mentees are affected by their participation in the mentoring program. These increased feelings of connection can aid in graduation and retention rates and creating an institutional identity, which promotes a culture of inclusiveness and care. Having data that demonstrates how co-curricular activity like mentoring can aid in providing creating a sense of connection to the institution can also be helpful when universities go through re-accreditation processes.

Policy

This study can be used to inform and support institutional policy in regards to providing support for underrepresented students and for initiatives focused on increasing undergraduate retention and graduation rates.

For example, The University of Texas at Austin is currently moving toward policy initiatives that support increased four-year graduation rates (Enrollment Management, 2014). I am directing a new initiative, called the University Leadership Network (ULN) program. The ULN program is designed to:

Help incoming students develop leadership skills while achieving academic success that is consistent with graduating in four years. In exchange for their participation, students receive an annual award of $5,000, which will be given as a monthly $500 disbursement throughout the fall and spring semesters as program goals are achieved. Students who participate all four years in the University Leadership Network could earn up to $20,000. Participants will begin their first year with interactive training followed by opportunities to apply their new leadership skills. In the second through fourth years, students will participate in on-campus experiential learning opportunities, continued leadership development and opportunities to engage in community and university service. (University Leadership Network, 2014).

This study affirms the peer mentor model utilized within the ULN. ULN trains second year ULN students to serve as mentors to first-year ULN students. This model was used by the University Peer Mentor program and provides further evidence that mentors develop beneficial psychosocial and vocational skills through their role and interaction

with program staff, peer mentors, and their mentees. This study's findings in regards to the increased feelings of connectedness to the institution through their roles as peer mentors can also contribute to the ULN's programmatic goal of increasing retention and graduation rates. Students who feel connected to their institution through involvement often persist and perform better academically. Institutions with similar goals could utilize this study to initiate policy efforts that focus on increased graduation and retention rates.

Limitations of the Study

The study design and participating mentors led to a productive study on the lived experiences of undergraduate peer mentors who served underrepresented students. However, two limitations did arise in the course of conducting the study. The first limitation was the variation in the experience levels of the mentors who participated. Second, the data collection process was interrupted and resulted in a three-month delay in conducting the remaining four mentor interviews. The following sections describe these limitations.

Mentor experience levels

The criteria for a mentor to participate in the study involved having completed at least one year of mentoring. This permitted mentors to participate with a variety of levels of experience. Initially, the prospect of hearing from mentors with varying degrees of experience was something I hoped to achieve as mentors were selected to participate. The thought was that this approach would yield a richer and more in-depth look at the peer mentor experience, which it did.

However, the challenge in interviewing students with one year of experience versus a mentor with three years of experience resulted in a few challenges. As the mentor program developed over the last three years, components of the mentor experiences also varied from year to year. For example in 2010, mentors introduced themselves to their mentees through written correspondence, while the following year, mentors introduced themselves within the context of the first-year University Scholars course. At times mentors found it difficult to remember what occurred each year they participated as a mentor in regards to training and key components of the mentor experience.

As a researcher I found it challenging to organize their experiences when analyzing the interview transcripts. The interview was semi-structured and followed a chronological order, however this design did not anticipate that mentors would have a tendency to skip around to experiences that occurred in different years of their college experience and in their role as a mentor.

In the future, I would still recommend purposely selecting mentors with varying levels of mentoring experience to participate in the study, but I would advise conducting focus groups with mentors who have the same number of years mentoring or began mentoring in the same cohort. Utilizing a semi-structured interview that follows a chronological path may be more successful if all of the participants in the focus group have had a shared experience.

Disruption in data collection process

Data collection for the study began in October of 2012. Four of the eight students were interviewed twice from October 22, 2012 through November 16, 2012. On November 22nd my second child was born and was diagnosed with a serious medical condition. A delay in the data collection had been initially planned to resume in January. However, due to this complicated situation, the data collection did not resume until February 8th and concluded on February 15. The remaining four students were interviewed during that time frame.

Although this disruption was planned for, the length of the disruption was longer than anticipated. Each set of students did participate in two interviews, which were no more than two weeks apart as outlined in the methodology of the study. I do not think this disruption affected the findings of the study as the interviews still took place in the order and timing as prescribed by the methods used to guide the study.

Review of Significance and Contributions of the Study

The exploratory nature of this study provided an in-depth description of the experiences of undergraduate peer mentors who served underrepresented students at a predominantly white institution. This descriptive approach adds depth to the mentoring literature and provides insight into how mentors experienced their role in regards to psychosocial and vocational development, and how they utilized the four coping resources of situation, self, support, and strategies in their transition from mentee to mentor.

This study also provided rich texture and context of the experiences of mentors from underrepresented populations and their thoughts and feelings surrounding their service to fellow underrepresented first-year students. Although diversity efforts at UT-Austin and other institutions around the country continue to progress and gain momentum, it is important to examine what mechanisms or educational approaches are effective in improving graduation and retention rates for students in underrepresented populations. Engaging underrepresented students in mentoring activity in their sophomore through senior years in a university setting could add to the likelihood of mentors and mentees graduating and being retained at the institution at higher rates than if they were not participating as a mentor.

This study clearly indicated that underrepresented students who served as mentors felt more connected to their institution as a product of their role in mentoring fellow underrepresented students. Predominantly white institutions that are looking for ways to support underrepresented students on their campuses should consider peer mentoring as one possible solution.

In conclusion, this study introduced a tailored definition of mentoring that can aid in conducting future research and more clearly depict what occurs in an undergraduate peer mentoring relationship. This definition seeks to delineate the role of the mentor and the reciprocal nature of the mentoring relationship. Lastly, this definition attempts to provide researchers with a specific definition that decreases the ambiguity that has previously surrounded the mentoring literature in the past.

Concluding Thoughts

Conducting this research study has opened the door to understanding the lived experiences of undergraduate peer mentors who serve underrepresented students. I would urge researchers to explore the phenomena of mentoring through both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Examining aggregate mentor data from similar mentor programs could be very useful in measuring student outcomes like academic performance (GPA, graduation rates, graduate school acceptance or employment rates) are affected by their role of being a peer mentor.

Practitioners are more likely to gain institutional support for their initiatives when they are able to point to sound academic research or conduct their own programmatic research. It is my hope that more researchers and practitioners will be encouraged by this study to expand the areas of undergraduate peer mentor research to include training, motivation, transferable skills, post-mentoring marketability in regards to employment and professional or graduate education, and the influence of peer leadership.

Next steps

As a practitioner this study provided validation for many aspects of undergraduate peer mentoring that I have come to believe based on my experience in training mentors for over eight years. For example, this study validated the perception that mentors gain transferable vocational and psychosocial skills, the unique influence of peers, that Schlossberg's (1985, 2006) transition theory is one enlightening way to examine the transition from mentee to mentor. However, the findings in my research study encourage my research efforts to move in the following areas: the development of an undergraduate

peer mentoring theory, consideration of utilizing new terminology within mentoring, and broadening the audience of peer mentoring research.

Development of Mentoring Theory

As a scholar trained to utilize theory in conducting sound research I struggled with the lack of an undergraduate peer mentoring theory as I designed my research plan. As alternative to using an existing peer mentoring theory, I utilized Schlossberg's (1985, 2006) transition theory and existing mentoring terminology to provide the framework for my study. The findings of my study lead me to begin exploring the creation of an undergraduate peer mentoring theory. Options for exploration include, but are not limited to creating an ecological model of mentoring (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) and a life cycle model of mentoring, specifically focusing on programs where first year students transition to the role of mentor during their college experience.

Mentoring as a topic must shift into the academic arena as a field of study and move outside its current identity as a practitioner's tool. Theory evolves over time through the iterative process of researchers adding to and adapting theory. Developing a theory of mentoring can serve as an opportunity to create a foundation for mentoring in the scholarly arena and encourage other researchers to explore the phenomena of being an undergraduate peer mentor.

Examining New Terminology

This study highlighted the reciprocal nature of mentoring and described peer mentoring as an opportunity for social exchange (Homans, 1974). It is time to consider whether or not the terms mentor and mentee are accurately depicting the true reciprocal

nature of mentoring. The dyadic terms create a mindset of the mentor pouring knowledge into the novice mentee, which depicts a transactional paradigm. My study demonstrated how both mentee and mentor experienced times of learning and teaching. New language that depicts the reciprocal nature of mentoring would more accurately describe the mutual learning and teaching that takes places within an undergraduate mentoring relationship.

Broadening the Audience

The findings of my study naturally appeal to practitioners and peer mentor program coordinators within the field of higher education. Insights from my study are useful to practitioners wanting to gain a greater understanding of the peer mentor's perspective. However, my study provides exciting findings relevant to a wider audience including university development, alumni relations, and executive administration focused on increasing retention and graduation rates of underrepresented students.

Mentors in my study expressed time and time again that the experience of being a peer mentor was the quintessential college experience that made them feel connected to their university. Alumni relations and development officers should examine the connective effects of undergraduate peer mentoring and how it creates feelings of connection and pride between the institution and the undergraduate student, particularly underrepresented students. In a time where the sources of funding for higher education are dwindling, alumni-giving is a key focus of development offices. Drawing on the positive experiences of underrepresented former students who participated as peer mentors could be an effective method of cultivating new populations of alumni giving.

As institutions seek to increase levels of student economic, racial, and ethnic diversity within their student populations, they are also invested in retaining and graduating underrepresented students. Executive administrators and academic deans (e.g. STEM fields) focused on increasing the retention and graduation rates can create opportunities for students to engage in peer mentoring programs with the expectation of progressing into the role of mentor. Creating these opportunities can be a targeted strategy to gain positive ground in student retention, development, and graduation rates. This effort aligns with the idea that increasing student engagement also increases academic performance and social development (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 1991; Tinto, 1988).

In closing, my study affirmed my own inclinations that mentoring creates opportunity for psychosocial and vocational development through social exchange, mentoring is a transformative experience, the mentor experience results in the creation of strong feelings of connection to the institution, Schlossberg's (1985, 2006) transition theory is one useful frame in analyzing the transition from mentee to mentor, and the introduction of a tailored definition of undergraduate peer mentoring for underrepresented students. Further, my study provides the opportunity to begin creating a peer mentoring theory, broadening the audience of mentoring research, including alumni relations, development officers, and executive administrators focused on increasing graduation and retention rates of underrepresented students. Peer mentoring is a powerful tool within higher education that requires additional study and attention. It is my hope that my study will encourage conversations about peer mentoring across disciplines and areas within higher education, drive the phenomena of peer mentoring

into the scholarly arena, and draw attention to unique ways to engage, retain, and graduate underrepresented students.

Appendix A: Letter to Potential Participants

<< Date >>

Dear <Student Name>,

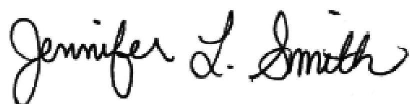
Hello, my name is Jennifer Smith and I am a doctoral student in the Higher Education Administration program in the College of Education, at the University of Texas at Austin. Your program coordinator recommended you as a potential participant in my dissertation study. I am writing this email to inquire whether you would be interested in participating in two interviews I am conducting this summer.

I am interested in learning more about the undergraduate peer mentoring experience at UT Austin. To accomplish this, I plan to conduct two 60-minute interviews with up to ten undergraduate peer mentors from the University Mentor program. If you feel this study is of interest to you, I ask that you review the selection criteria below:

- Be an undergraduate peer mentor in the University Mentor program at the University of Texas at Austin.
- You must have worked as a University Mentor program mentor for at least one year or one full mentoring cycle.
- You must be willing to have the interviews audio-recorded (the audio-files will be destroyed when the interviews are transcribed).
- You agree that the data collected during the interviews can be used in reporting my findings for my pilot study and any subsequent publications derived from this study.

If you agree to meet those criteria and are willing to participate in this study, please let me know as soon as possible. You can email me directly at: jlsmith@mail.utexas.edu to let me know if you would like to participate. Please feel free to email or call me at 512-589-0597 if you have any questions regarding the study. I greatly appreciate your interest in the study and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best,



Jennifer L. Smith
Doctoral Student, Higher Education Administration Program
College of Education, The University of Texas at Austin

jlsmith@mail.utexas.edu ~ 512-589-0597

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Title: Uncovering the experience of undergraduate peer mentors

IRB PROTOCOL #

Conducted By: Jennifer L. Smith

Of The University of Texas at Austin:

The College of Education, Higher Education Administration Doctoral Program / FAC 334

Telephone: 512-232-6197 or 512-589-0597

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The person in charge of this research will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate or stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can stop your participation at any time and your refusal will not impact current or future relationships with UT Austin or participating sites. To do so simply tell the researcher you wish to stop participation. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this consent for your records.

The purpose of this study is to examine the experiences of undergraduate peer mentors through a series of semi-structured interviews. Information gathered during the interviews will be used to identify common experiences shared by mentors. A secondary goal of this is to identify how the experience of being an undergraduate peer mentor affects the meaning of your overall college experience. Lastly, a third purpose of this project is to provide administrators, faculty, and student affairs professionals who are involved with peer mentoring efforts a framework to create more effective mentoring models and training curriculum. Up to 10 students will participate in the study.

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:

- Participate in two individual semi-structured interviews that will be audio recorded
- Participate in follow up phone calls if clarification is needed after an interview session

Total estimated time to participate in study is four hours total, spread across two 60-minute interviews. There will be at least two days between each interview.

Risks of being in the study

- The risk associated with this study is no greater than everyday life
- If you wish to discuss the information above or any other risks you may experience, you may ask questions now or call the Principal Investigator listed on the front page of this form.

Benefits of being in the study:

- There are no benefits for participation in this study aside from enjoying the time to reflect on their experiences as an undergraduate peer mentor.
- Participants may enjoy the time reflecting on their experiences as an undergraduate peer mentor.
- Benefits that may accrue to society in general could include a better understanding of the mentoring experience, additional areas for higher education administrators to focus on to improve mentor training or mentoring program guidelines, and lastly institutions of higher education may be able to glean additional information in regards to how participating in mentoring programs can increase academic achievement and graduation and retention rates.

Compensation:

- No compensation is provided for participation in this study

Confidentiality and Privacy Protections:

- Interviews will be audio recorded
- Audio files will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them
- Audio files will be kept in a secure place (encrypted file folder on the investigator's computer)
- Audio recordings may be shared for non-research purposes, such as during presentations at scientific and educational conferences with explicit permission provided by participant consent.
- All data (protocols, transcripts, notes, consent forms) will be retained for at least 3 years after the closure of the study.
- The audio files of the interviews will be erased after they are transcribed and coded in an effort to protect the confidentiality of the participants.
- The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate

you with it, or with your participation in any study.

The records of this study will be stored securely and kept confidential. Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin and members of the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review your research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject. Throughout the study, the researchers will notify you of new information that may become available and that might affect your decision to remain in the study.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have any questions about the study, please ask now. If you have questions later, want additional information, or wish to withdraw your participation call the researchers conducting the study. Their names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses are at the top of this page.

If you would like to obtain information about the research study, have questions, concerns, complaints or wish to discuss problems about a research study with someone unaffiliated with the study, please contact the IRB Office at (512) 471-8871, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at (512) 232-2685. Anonymity, if desired, will be protected to the extent possible. As an alternative method of contact, an email may be sent to orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu or a letter sent to IRB Administrator, P.O. Box 7426, Mail Code A 3200, Austin, TX 78713.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and have sufficient information to make a decision about participating in this study. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature:____ Date: ___________________

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent ____

Date: ____________________

Signature of Investigator:___________________________ Date: ___________________

We may wish to present some of the findings from this study at scientific or educational conventions or as demonstrations in classrooms. Please sign below if you are willing to allow us to share audio recordings using disguised voices, which reflect a direct transcription of your audio file.

I hereby give permission for the disguised audio file to be used for educational purposes.

Signature:____ Date: ___________________

Signature of Person Obtaining
Consent____ Date: ____________________

Signature of Investigator:___________________________ Date: ___________________

Appendix C: Pre-Interview Survey

Pre-Interview Survey

Thank you for participating in this interview study. Please take 10-15 minutes to complete this brief questionnaire. Please not that you will be assigned a pseudonym in the final version of this research project.

Personal Information:

Initials:___________ Email: ___________________________

Gender: Male _______ Female_______
Age________

Ethnicity & Race:

Are you Hispanic or Latino? (a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or Other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race)

Yes ____ No ____

How would identify yourself in terms of Race? Please select the racial category or categories with which you most closely identify. Check as many as apply.

American Indian ____

Alaska Native ____

Asian ____

Black or African American ____

Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander ___

White ___

Hispanic ____

Other______________

Educational Information:
Classification: (soph, jr., sr.) _______First-Semester Enrolled at UT Austin _______ (Year/Semester)

Estimated Graduation Date: _________(Year/Semester) College:___________ (e.g. Natural Sciences)

Major: ____________________

Family Educational Background:

Please indicate the highest level of your parents' or legal guardians' educational background

Father's educational level	**Mother's educational level**
No High School ___	No High School ___
Some High School___	Some High School___
High School Diploma or GED___	High School Diploma or GED___
Some College___	Some College___
Associates Degree___	Associates Degree___
Bachelors/4-Year Degree___	Bachelors/4-Year Degree___
Graduate/Professional Degree___	Graduate/Professional Degree

Undergraduate Peer Mentoring:

Within the context of this study, undergraduate peer mentoring is defined as:

- a relationship between a more experienced undergraduate student (typically older) acting as a guide, role model, and advocate of a less experienced undergraduate student (typically younger). The aim of the mentoring relationship is to further the mutual development and refinement of both the mentee and mentor's skills, abilities and understanding, introducing the theme of reciprocity.

In your own words, how would you define the role of an undergraduate peer

Appendix D: First Interview Protocol

Student's Identifier: Date:
Classification: Years
Mentoring:

[Show Letter of Informed Consent]

Thank you for participating in this study. As you know, I am interested in uncovering the experiences of undergraduate peer mentors. This is the first of three interviews. In this interview, I would like to learn about your personal history and what led you to decide to become an undergraduate peer mentor.

Before we begin, I want to assure you that your anonymity will be upheld. I will not identify you by name either verbally or in writing in my analysis and reporting. At this time, do you have any questions before we begin the interview?
[Begin digital recorder]

This interview serves as a time for you to share your personal history leading up to your decision to become an undergraduate peer mentor. These questions will focus on your life and educational experiences and how you arrived as an undergraduate at this institution.

a) Tell me about yourself. How would you describe your "growing up" years?
    a. Describe the make-up of your family for me (family unit)
    b. Did your caregivers work in or outside the home? What type of jobs did they work in?
    c. Where did you grow up? Can you describe your neighborhood to me?
    d. How did you spend your free time growing up (after school, summers)?

b) Regarding identity, how would you describe yourself in terms of race and ethnicity? Are there other facets of your identity that are central to who you are? If so, what are they?

c) What was your elementary school experience like?

d) How would you describe your experience as you moved into middle and high school?
    a. How would you describe your high school?

e) How would you describe your friends in high school?
    a. Were your friends similar to you in background? (race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background).
    b. What did they think of school?
    c. What was important to them during high school?
    d. What did your friends do after high school? (college, work, etc.)
f) Did you face challenges in high school? If so,:
    a. Describe the challenges you faced (academic, social, etc.)
    b. How did you overcome those challenges?
    c. Who helped you to overcome those challenges? (peers, teachers/faculty, family, community members)
    d. How did they "help" you?

g) Did you face challenges in college? If so,:
    a. Describe the challenges you faced (academic, social, etc.)
    b. How did you overcome those challenges?
    c. Who helped you to overcome those challenges? (peers, teachers/faculty, family, community members)
    d. How did they "help" you?

h) What is your definition of "mentoring?"
    a. Can you describe the critical characteristics of a mentor?

i) Were you involved in any "first-year" student programs? (FIGS, University Scholars, TIP, LSP, etc.) If so, which program was it and please describe the program's goals and components (advising, mentoring, tutoring, registration help, etc.)
    a. Describe the population of students supported by the program

j) How did you become aware of peer mentoring opportunities at your university?

Close

Thank you so much for giving your time today. Do you have any questions for me at this time? Is it okay if I call you if I have any follow-up questions? Our next interview is schedule for ____(day/time) – does this day and time still work with your schedule? Thank you again for sharing your experience with me.

Appendix E: Second Interview Protocol

Student's Identifier: Date:
Classification: Years
Mentoring:

The questions in this interview will focus specifically on the experience of being an undergraduate peer mentor.

First, I have a few questions I would like to follow up on from our first interview. (At this point, if there clarifications needed based on the previous interview, I will ask those questions.) Thanks – now let's move on to the second part of the interview.

a) How did you become an undergraduate peer mentor?

b) Were you involved in a formal program or did it occur naturally (or informally)?

c) If involved in a formal program, describe the recruitment process:
    a. How did you find out about the position?
    b. Was there an application? If so, what did it include? What criteria were required to apply?
    c. Was there an interview process? Describe that process for me.
    d. How did you feel during the recruitment process?
    e. Was the position a paid or volunteer position?

d) Describe your peer mentor preparation
    a. Did you participate in any type of mentor training or job preparation?
    b. If so, describe that experience.
    c. What was the duration of the training process? (One day, ongoing, etc.)
    d. Describe your thoughts regarding your training – how did it make you feel?
        i. Describe what you took away from that training/preparation
        ii. Are you able to use your training or preparation in areas outside your mentoring role? If so, please walk me through a time when you used skills learned in mentor training outside that role.
    e. What is the purpose of mentor training or preparation? What goals does it seek to accomplish?

e) How did you become involved as a mentor with another student or students? Who initiated the relationship: you, the student(s), or another individual?

f) How many students did you form a mentoring relationship with?

g) Was the nature of the time spent together in a mentoring relationship on an individual basis or group-oriented?

h) Describe your role in detail
    a. What are the overarching goals for you as an undergraduate peer mentor.
    b. Describe typical interaction(s) with your student(s)

i) Describe your methods of communicating with your student(s).
    a. Which method of communication do you prefer? Why?
    b. Were some methods more effective than others? Why?
    c. How would you describe the quality of communication in person? Electronically? On the phone?

j) Describe the identity of your mentee(s) in terms of race and ethnicity
    a. Are there other facets of their identity that are central to who they are? If so, what are they?

k) How did you go about building relationships with your student(s)?

l) How would you describe your mentee(s)?
    a. What did they think of school? How would they describe school?
    b. What was important to them?
    c. What did their friends do after high school? (College, work, etc.)

m) What challenges did your mentee(s) face?
    a. Describe the challenges they faced (academic, social, etc.)
    b. How did they overcome those challenges?
    c. Who helped you to overcome those challenges? (peers, teachers/faculty, family, community members)
    d. How did you "help" them?
    e. What resources did you recommend to them?

n) Based on your mentee(s) experiences with you, do you think that they would come to you for help in the future?

The questions in this section of the interview are going to focus on your reflections of your peer mentoring experience.

a) What are the gratifying aspects of being an undergraduate peer mentor?

b) What are the disheartening or challenging aspects of being an undergraduate peer mentor?

c) How important do you feel your assistance is to your mentee(s)? Who else at UT Austin supports your student(s)?

d) What do you think your mentee(s) have learned from their time spent with you?
    a. How do you know they have learned something from you? (provide examples)

e) What you have learned from your mentee(s) during your time as their mentor?
    a. How do you know you have learned something from them? (provide examples)

f) What has the experience of peer mentoring meant to your college experience? How has it shaped your college experience?

g) What skills are you taking away from your mentoring experience that you can use later on in life?

    a. How do you think your mentoring experiences affects your marketability to employers, graduate school/professional school opportunities?

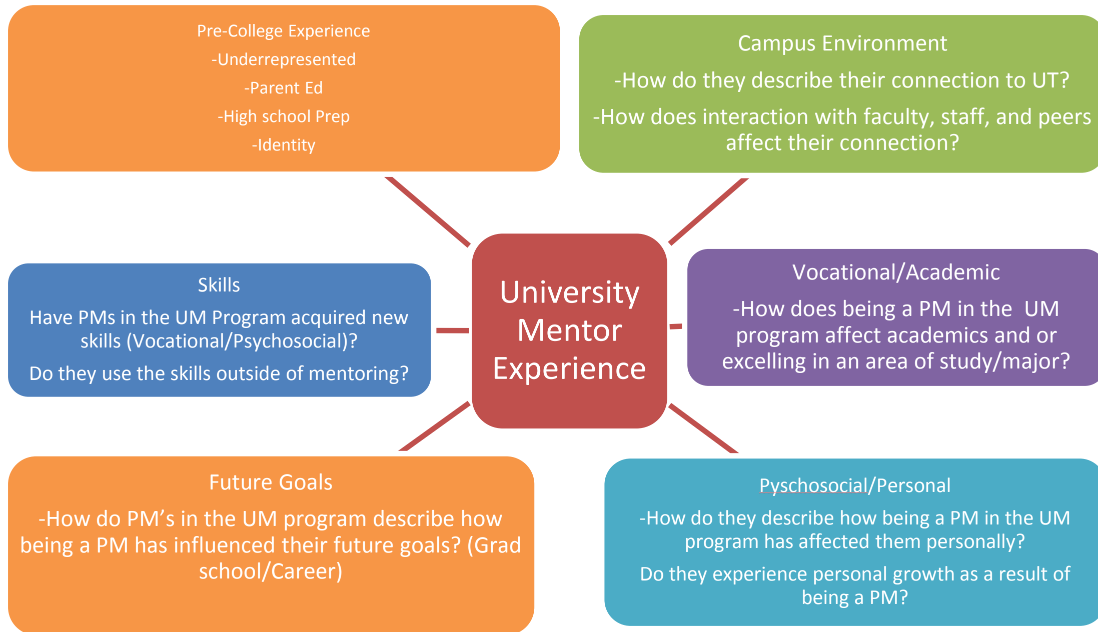
h) If you were talking to a prospective peer mentor, what advice would you give them?

i) If you had it to do all over again, what would you do differently as a peer mentor?

j) During these difficult economic times, universities are forced to make tough decisions regarding budgets and deciding which programs to continue to fund. Why should institutions have peer-mentoring programs? Why are they valuable?

Close
Thank you so much for giving your time today. Do you have any questions for me at this time? Is it okay if I call you if I have any follow-up questions? Thank you again for sharing your experience with me.

Appendix F: University Mentor Experience Concept Map



Appendix G: Conceptually-Clustered Matrix: University Mentor Role (RQ1)

	Pre-College Experience	Campus Environment/Relationship to UT Austin	Vocational Interactions	Psychosocial Interactions	Skills	Future Goals
M1						
M2						
M3						
M4						
M5						
M6						
M7						
M8						

Appendix H: Conceptually-Clustered Matrix: University Mentor Interactions w/Mentees (RQ2)

	Campus Environment/Acclimation to University Life	Vocational Interactions	Psychosocial Interactions	Other
M1				
M2				
M3				
M4				
M5				
M6				
M7				
M8				

Appendix I: Conceptually-Clustered Matrix: University Mentor Experience

Progressing from Mentee to Mentor (RQ3)

	Psychosocial	Vocational	Situation	Self	Support	Strategies
M1						
M2						
M3						
M4						
M5						
M6						
M7						
M8						

References

About (University Scholars), Division of Diversity and Community Engagement [Gateway Program], The University of Texas at Austin The University of Texas at Austin. (2010). Retrieved from http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/lcae/University.php

Aizenman, N. C. (2008, February 12). U.S. Latino population projected to soar. *Washington Post.* Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/02/11/AR2008021101294.html

Adams v. Richardson 356 F.Supp. 92, 95 (D.D.C.*1973*).

Allen, T. D. (2003). Mentoring others: A dispositional and motivational approach. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 62*(1), 134-154. doi: 10.1016/S0001-879(02)00046-5

Allen, T. D., & Poteet, M. L. (1999). Developing effective mentoring relationships: Strategies from the mentor's viewpoint. *Career Development Quarterly, 48*(1), 59-73. doi: 10.1002/j.2161-0045.1999.tb00275.

Allen, T. D., Poteet, M. L., Russell, J. E., & Dobbins, G. H. (1997). A field study of factors related to supervisors' willingness to mentor others. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 50*(1), 1-22. doi: 10.1006/jvbe.1995.1525

Allen, T., Russell, J., & Maetzke, S. (1997). Formal peer mentoring: Factors related to proteges satisfaction and willingness to mentor others. *Group & Organization Management, 22*(4), 488-507. doi:10.1177/1059601197224005

Allen, W. R. (1985). Black student white campus: Structural, interpersonal, and psychological correlates of success. *Journal of Negro Students, 54*(2)*,* 134-137. doi: 10.2307/2294928

Allen, W. R. (1992). The color of success: African-American college student outcomes at predominantly white and historically Black public colleges and universities. *Harvard Educational Review,* 62, 26-44. Retrieved from http://ets.mnsu.edu/darbok/ETHN201/the%20color%20of%20success.pdf

Allen, W. R., Kimura-Walsh, E., & Griffin, K. A. (2009). *Towards a brighter tomorrow: College barriers, hopes, and plans of Black, Latino, and Asian American students in California*. Unites States of America: Information Age Publishing Inc.

Amaral, K. E., & Vala, M. (2009, May). What teaching teaches: Mentoring and the performance gains of mentors. *Journal of Chemical Education, 86*(5), 630-633. doi: 10.1021/ed086p630

Aryee, S., Chay, Y., & Chew, J. (1994). An investigation of the predictors and outcomes of career commitment in three career stages. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 44*(1), 1-16. doi: 10.1006/jvbe.1994.1001

Astin, A. W. (1977). *Four critical years: Effects of college on beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge*. San Fransisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Astin, A.W. (1982). *Minorities in American higher education.* (1 ed., pp ix-263). San Francisco: CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers.

Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 297-308. Retrieved from http://www.ydae.purdue.edu/lct/hbcu/documents/Student_Involvement_A_Developmental_Theory_for_HE_Astin.pdf

Astin, A. W. (1993). *What matters in college: Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Atkins, S., & Williams, A. (1995). Registered nurses' experiences of mentoring undergraduate nursing students. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 21*, 1006-1015. doi: 10.1046/j.13652648.1995.2105006.x

Awayaa, A., McEwana, H., Heylerb, D., Linskye, S., & Wakukawac, P. (2003). Mentoring as a journey. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 19*, 45-56. Retrieved from http://112.137.138.6/jspui/bitstream/123456789/708/1/TeacherEducation180.pdf

Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control New York: Freeman.

Barondess, J. (1997). On mentoring. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine, 90*, 347-349. Retrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/pmc/articles/PMC1296318/pdf/jrsocmed00039-0053.pdf

Beebe, S. A., Redmond, M. V., & Geerinck, T. M. (2004). *Interpersonal communication: Relating to others*. Toronto, CAN::Pearson/Allyn & Bacon.

Berdahl, R. M. (1998, October 5). *The future of flagship universities*. Convocation address presented at Texas A&M University , College Station, TX. Retrieved from?

Bird, S. J., Didion, C. J., Niewohner, E. S., & Fillmore, M. D. (1993). *Mentoring means future scientists: A guide for developing mentoring programs based on the AWIS mentoring project*. Washington DC: The Association for Women in Science.

Blackwell, J. (1987). *Mainstreaming outsiders: The production of Black professionals*. Dix Hills: NY: General Hall, Inc.

Bloor, M., & Wood, F. (2006). *Keywords in qualitative methods: A vocabulary of research concepts.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (2003). *Reframing organization: Artistry, choice, and leadership*. San Francisco: CA: Jossey-Bass.

Bowen, W. G., & Bok, D. (1998). *The shape of the river: Long-term consequences of considering race in college and university admissions*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Bowen, W. G., Kurzweil, M. A., & Tobin, E. M. (2005). *Equity and excellence in American higher education*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press.

Bower, G. (2007). Factors influencing the willingness to mentor 1st-year faculty in physical education departments. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 15*(1), 73-85. doi: 10.1080/13611260601037397

Boyle, P., & Boice, B. (1998). Systematic mentoring for new faculty teachers and graduate teaching assistants. *Innovation Higher Education, 22*(3), 157-179. doi: 10.1023/A:1025183225886

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995). Developmental ecology through space and time: A future perspective. In P. Moen & G. H. Elder, Jr. (Eds), *Examining lives in context: Perspectives on the ecology of human development* (p. 619 – 647). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (II), 349 U.S. 294 (1955).

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (No. 1), 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Buddeberg-Fischer, B., & Herta, K. D. (2006). Formal mentoring programmes for medical students and doctors: A review of the Medline literature. *Medical Teacher, 28*(3), 248-257. doi: 10.1080/01421590500313043

Cambridge Business English Dictionary. (2011). *Definition of transferable skills*. Retrieved from Cambridge University Press website: http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/business-english/transferable-skills

Campbell, T., & Campbell, D. (1997). Faculty/student mentor program: Effects on academic performance and retention. *Research in Higher Education, 38*(6), 727-742. doi: 10.1023/A:1024911904627

Campos, C. M. T., Phinney, J. S., Perez-Brena, N., Kim, C., Ornelas, B., Nemanim, L., … Ramirez, C. (2009). A mentor-based targeted intervention for high-risk Latino college freshmen: A pilot study. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 8*(2), 158-178. doi:10.1177/1538192708317621

Carlson, W. S., & Single, P. B. (2000). *Factors related to success in electronic mentoring of female college engineering students by mentors working in industry.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Association for Research in Science Teaching, New Orleans, Louisiana. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED439952)

Carnegie Foundation. (n.d.). *Institution profile: The University of Texas at Austin*. Retrieved from http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/lookup_listings/view_institution.php?unit_id=228778&start_page=index.php&clq={%252

Cherwitz, R. (2010). A new social compact demands real change, connecting the University to the community. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 37*(6), 48-49.

Cherwitz, R., Sullivan, C., & Stewart, T. (2002). Intellectual entrepreneurship and outreach: United expertise and passion. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 7*(3), 123-133.

Chickering, A. W. (1969). *Education and identity*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Chickering, A. W., & Schlossberg, N. K. (1995). *How to get the most out of college*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Chickering, A. W., & Schlossberg, N. K. (2001). *Getting the most of out college*. Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Clark, C., Howard, I., Lazare, S., & Weinberger, D. (2000). A peer mentoring program for underrepresented students in the sciences. In J. Bart & Purdue Research Foundation (Eds.), *Women succeeding in the sciences: Theories and practices across disciplines* (pp. 149-167). West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press.

Cobb, S. (1976). Social support as a moderator of life stress. *Psychosomatic Medicine, 38*(5), 300-314. Retrieved from http://www.psychosomaticmedicine.org/content/38/5/300.full.pdf+html

Cokely, K. (2000). An investigation of academic self-concept and its relationship to academic achievement in African American college students. *Journal of Black Psychology, 26,* 148-164.

Cokely, K. (2002). The impact of college racial composition on African American students' academic self-concept: A replication and extension. *Journal of Negro Education, 71* (4), 288-296.

Colvin, J. W., & Ashman, M. (2010, May). Roles, risks, and benefits of peer mentoring relationships in higher education. *Mentoring & Tutoring, 18*(2), 121-134. doi:10.1080/13611261003678879

Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.

Crisp, G., & Cruz, I. (2009). Mentoring college students: A critical review of the literature between 1990 and 2007. *Research in Higher Education, 50*(6), 525-545. doi:10.1007/s11162-009-9130-2

Crisp, G., & Nora, A. (2010, November). Hispanic student success: Factors influencing the persistence and transfer decisions of Latino community college students enrolled in developmental education. *Research in Higher Education, 51*(2), 175-194. doi:10.1007/s11162-009-9151-x

Crosnoe, R., Riegle-Crumb, C., Field, S., Frank, K., & Muller, C. (2008). Peer group contexts of girls' and boys' academic experiences. *Child Development, 79*(1), 139-155. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01116.x

Dahlvig, J. (2010). Mentoring of African American Students at predominantly white institutions (PWI). *Christian Higher Education, 9*(5), 369-395. doi: 10.1080/15363750903404266

Davis, M., Dias-Bowie, Y., Greenberg, K., Klukken, G., Pollio, H., Thomas, S., & Thompson, C. (2004). "A fly in the buttermilk": Descriptions of university life by successful Black undergraduate students at a predominantly white southeastern university. *The Journal of Higher Education, 75*(4), 420-445. doi: 10.1353/jhe.2004.0018

Dayton, B., Gonzalez-Vasquez, N., Martinez, C. R., & Plum, C. (2004). Hispanic-serving institutions through the eyes of students and administrators. *New Directions for Student Services, 2004*(105), 29-39. doi: 10.1002/ss.114

Dearden, J. (1998). Cross-age peer mentoring in action: The process and outcomes. *Educational Psychology in Practice: Theory, research and practice in educational psychology, 13*(4), 250-257. doi: 10.1080/0266736980130406

Deneef, A. L. (2002). *The preparing future faculty program: What difference does it make?* Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Division of Diversity and Community Engagement. (2011). *Impact report*. The University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved from?

The educational effectiveness of historically Black colleges and universities: A briefing before the United States Commission on Civil Rights. (2010). Washington DC: US Commission on Civil Rights.

Egan, G. (1982). *The skilled helper*. Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Emerson, R. M. (1981). Social exchange theory. In M. Rosenberg & R. H. Turner (Eds.), *Social Psychology: Sociological Perspectives.* New York: Basic Books.

Ensher, E. A, Thomas, C., & Murphy, S. E. (2001). Comparison of traditional, steph-ahead, and peer mentoring on proteges' support, satisfaction, and perceptions of career success: A social exchange perspective. *Journal of Business and Psychology.* 15 (3), 419 – 438.

Evans, N. J., Forney, D. S., Guido, F. M., Patton, L. D., & Renn, K. A. (2010). *Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Fagenson, E. (1989). The mentor advantage: Perceived career/job experiences of proteges v. nonprotoges. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 10*(4), 309-320. doi: 10.1002/job.4030100403

Feagin, J. (1992). The continuing significance of racism: Discrimination against Black students in white colleges. *Journal of Black Studies, 22*(4), 546-578. doi: 10.1177/002193479202200407

Fischer, M. J. (2007, March/April). Settling into campus life: Differences by race/ ethnicity in college involvement outcomes. *The Journal of Higher Education, 78*(2), 125-160. doi: 10.1353/jhe.2007.0009

Fiske, S., Xu, J., Cuddy, A., & Glick, P. (1999). (Dis)respecting versus (dis)liking: Status and interdependence predict ambivalent stereotypes of compentence and warmth. *Journal of Social Issues, 55*(3), 473-489. doi: 10/.1111/0022-4537.00128

Flowers, L. & Pascarella, E. T. (1999). The effects of college racial composition on African American college students' orientations toward learning for self-understanding. *Professional Educator, 22(1)*, 22-47.

Freeman, K. (1999). No services needed? The case for mentoring high-achieving African American students. *Peadbody Journal of Education, 74*(2), 15-26. doi: 10.1207/s15327930pje7402_3

Fry, R. (2011). 24% growth from 2009 to 2010 Hispanic college enrollment spikes, narrowing gaps with other groups. *Pew Research Center,* (August), 1-29. Retrieved from www.pewhispanic.org.

Gartner, A., & Reissman, F. (1993). *Peer tutoring: A new model*. New York: NY: Peer Research Laboratory.

Geertz, C. (1983). *Local knowledge: Further essays in interpretive anthropology*. New York: NY: Basic Books.

Girves, J. E., Zepeda, Y., & Gwathmey, J. K. (2005). Mentoring in a post-affirmative action world. *Journal of Social Issues, 61*(3), 449-479. doi: 10.1111/j.1540-4560.2005.00416.x

Gloria, A. M. (1993). *Psychosocial factors influencing the academic persistence of Chicano/a undergraduates* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Arizona State University, Tempe: AZ.

Goldstone, D. (2006). *Integrating the 40 acres: The 50-year struggle for racial equality at the university of Texas*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press.

Goodman, J., Schlossberg, N. K., & Anderson, M. L. (2006). *Counseling adults in transition* (3rd ed.).New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company, Inc.

Good, J. M., Halpin, G., & Halpin, G. (2000). A promising prospect for minority retention: Students becoming peer mentors. *Journal of Negro Education, 69*(4), 385-383. doi: 10.2307/2696252

Griffin, K. A., & Fries-Britt, S. (2007). The Black box: How high-achieving Blacks resist stereotypes about Black Americans. *Journal of College Student Development, 48*(5), 509. doi: 10.1353/csd.2007.0048

Harris, V. (2012). The effectiveness of African American and Hispanic mentoring programs at predominantly white institutions. *Center for Higher Education, Working paper series, Ohio University,* 1-15.

Heirdsfield, A. M., Walker, S., Walsh, K., & Wilss, L. (2008, May). Peer Mentoring for first-year teacher education students: The mentors' experience. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 16*(2), 109-124. doi: 10.1080/1361126081916135

Higgins, M. (2000). The more, the merrier: Multiple developmental relationships and work satisfaction. *Journal of Management Development, 26*, 277-296.

Hoffman, C. M., Snyder, T. D., & Sonnenberg, B. (1996). *Historically Black colleges and universities, 1976-1994.* (NCES 96-902). National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. Washington DC: Government Printing Office.

Homans, G. C. (1974). *Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Homer. (n.d.). The Odyssey. Trans. Rober Fagles. New York, NY: Viking, 1996.

Hurtado, S., Carter, D. F., & Spuler, A. (1996). Latino student transition to college: Assessing difficulties and factors in successful college adjustment. *Research in Higher Education, 37*(2), 135-157. doi: 10.1007/BF01730113

Husband, P. A., & Jacobs, P. A. (2009). Peer mentoring in higher education: A review of the current literature and recommendations for implementation of mentoring schemes. *The Plymouth Student Scientist, 2*(1), 228-241.

Ingersoll, R. M. (2002, June). The teacher shortage: A case of wrong diagnosis and wrong prescription. *NASSP Bulletin, 86*(631), 16-31. doi: 10.1177/019263650208663103

Ishiyama, J. (2007). Expectations and perceptions of undergraduate research mentoring: Comparing first generation, low income, white/Caucasian and African American students. *College Student Journal, 41*(3), 540-549.

Jacobi, M. (1991, Winter). Mentoring and undergraduate academic success: A literature review. *Review of Educational Research, 61*(4), 505-532. doi: 10.2307/1170575

Johnson, W. B. (2002). The intentional mentor: Strategies and guidelines for the practice of mentoring. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 33*(1), 88-96. doi: 10.1037//0735-7028.33.1.88

Johnson, W. B. (2007). *On being a mentor: A guide for higher education faculty*. Mawah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Johnson-Bailey, J., & Cervero, R. M. (2004). Mentoring in Black and white: The intricacies of cross-cultural mentoring. *Mentoring & Tutoring, 12*(1), 7-21. doi: 10.1080/1361126042000183075

Jones, M. S., & Pauley, W. F. (2003, Winter). Mentoring beginning public school teachers. *Adult Learning, 14*(1), 23-25. Retrieved from http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=4c1797f4-296b-422d-aa06-bedbb29cb262%40sessionmgr113&vid=2&hid=125

Kahn, R. L., & Antonucci, T. C. (1980). Convoys over the life course. Attachment, roles, and social support. In P. B. Baltes & O. G. Brim. (Eds.), *Life-span development and behavior.* New York: Academic Press

Knoche, L. L., & Zamboanga, B. L. (2006, March). College student mentors and Latino youth: A qualitative study of the mentoring relationship. *Qualitative Report, 11*(1), 138-160. Retrieved from ERIC: Education Resources Information Center database.

Kram, K. (1983). Phases of the mentor relationship. *Academy of Management Journal, 26*(4), 608-625. doi: 10.2307/255910

Kram, K. (1985). *Mentoring at work: Developmental relationships in organizational life*. Glenview: IL: Foresman and Co.

Kram, K., & Isabella, L. (1985). Mentoring alternatives: The role of peer relationships in career development. *Academy of Management Journal, 28*(1), 110-132. doi: 10.2307/256064

Kram, K., & Ragins, B. R. (2007). *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviewing: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Kuh, G. and Others (1991). *Involving colleges: Encouraging student learning and personal development through out-of-class experience.* Sand Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Laden, B. V. (2004). Hispanic-serving institutions: What are they? Where are they? *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 28*(3), 181-198. doi: 10.1080/10066892049025638l

Levinson, D. J., Darrow, C. N., Klein, E. B., Levinson, M. H., & McKee, B. (1978). *The seasons of a man's life*. New York, NY: The Random House Publishing Group.

Levinson, W., Kaufman, K., Clark, B., & Tolle, S. (1991). Mentors and role models for women in academic medicine. *The Western Journal of Medicine, 154*, 423-426.

Lewellen-Williams, C., Johnson, V., Deloney, L., Thomas, B., Goyol, A., & Henry-Tillman, R. (2006). The POD: A new model for mentoring underrepresented minority faculty. *Academic Medicine, 81*(3), 275-279. doi: 10.1097/00001888-200603000-00020

Lombardi, J. (2003). *Competing for quality: The public flagship research university*. Baton Rouge: LA: Reilly Center for Media & Public Affairs.

Lowenthal, M. F., & Chiriboga, D. (1975). *Four stages of life: A comparative study of men and women facing transitions*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks: CA: SAGE.

McElroy, E., Armesto, M., & American Federation of Teachers. (1998). TRIO and Upward Bound: History, programs, and issues - past, present, and future. *Journal of Negro Education, 67*(4), 373-380.

McLean, M. (2004). Does the curriculum matter in peer mentoring? From mentee to mentor in problem-based learning: A unique case study. *Mentoring & Tutoring, 12*(2), 173-186. doi: 10.1080/1361126042000239929

Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: CA: SAGE.

Moore, K. M., & Amey, M. J. (1988, Winter). Some faculty leaders are born women. *New Directions for Student Services, 1998*(44), 39-50. doi: 10.1002/ss.37119884406

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2007). *Digest of education statistics* 2007, Table 6. Retrieved from http://nces.edu/gov/

Neugarten, B. L. (1979). Time, age, and the life cycle. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 136*(7), 887-894.

Nielson, T., Carlson, D., & Lankau, M. (2001). The supportive mentor as a means of reducing work-family conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 59*(3), 364-381. doi: 10.1006/jvbe.2001.1806

Obama, B. (2009, July 14). *American graduation initiative*. Address presented at Warren, Michigan. Retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-on-the-American-Graduation-Initiative-in-Warren-MI

O'Neill, R. M., Sylvia, H., & Crosby, F. J. (1999). Gender issues in developmental relationships. In A. Murrell, F. Crosby, & R. Ely (Eds.), *Mentoring dilemmas: Developmental relationships within multicultural organizations* (pp. 63-80). Mawah: NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Palepu, A., Carr, P., Friedman, R., Ash, A., & Moskowitz, M. (2000). Specialty choices, compensation, and career satisfaction of underrepresented minority faculty in academic medicine. *Academic Medicine, 75*(2), 157-160. doi: 10.1097/00001888-200002000-0014

Parrish, T. (2002). Racial disparities in the identification, funding, and provision of special education. In D. Losen & G. Orfield (Eds.), *Racial inequity in special* education (pp. 15-38). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Pascarella, E. T., Smart, J., Ethington, C. & Nettles, M. (1987). The influence of college on self-concept: A consideration of race and gender difference. *American Education Research Journal, 24*(1)*,* 49-77. doi: 10.2307/1162852

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (1977). Patterns of student-faculty information interaction beyond the classroom and voluntary freshman attrition. *Journal of Higher Education, 48*(5)*,* 540-552. doi: 10.2307/1981596

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (1991). *How college affects students: Findings and insights from twenty years of research* . San Francisco: CA: Jossey-Bass.

Pearson, R.E. (1990). *Counseling and social support: Perspectives and practice.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Peluchette, J., & Jeanquart, S. (2000). Professionals' use of different mentor sources at various stages: Implications for career success. *Journal of Social Psychology, 140*(5), 549-564.

Perry, W. G. (1970). *Forms of intellectual and ethical development in the college years*. New York, NY: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston.

Pearlin, L., & Schooler, C. (1978). The structure of coping. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 19*(1), 2-21. doi: 10.2307/2136319

Pitney, W. A., & Ehlers, G. G. (2004). A grounded theory study of the mentoring process involved with undergraduate athletic training students. *Journal of Athletic Training, 39*, 344-351.

Provasnik, S., & Shafer, L.L. (2004). *Historically Black colleges and universities, 1976 to 2001*. (NCES 2004-062). National Cneter for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. Washington DC: Government Printing Office.

Ragins, B. R., & Cotton, J. L. (1999). Mentor functions and outcomes: A comparison of men and women in formal and informal mentoring relationships. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 84*(4) 529-550. doi: 10.1037//0021-901084.4.529

Rastogi, S., Johnson, T., Hoeffel, E., & Drewery, M., Jr. (2010). *The Black population: 2010* (Rep. No. C2010BR-06). U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, U.S. Census Bureau.

Reason, P. (1988). Introduction. In P. Reason (Ed.), *Human inquiry in action: Developments in new paradigm research*. Newbury Park: CA: Sage.

Reason, P. (1994). Three approaches to participative inquiry. In *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 324-339). Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage.

Reddick, R. (2006). The gift that keeps giving: Historically Black college and university-educated scholar and their mentoring at predominantly white institutions. *Educational Foundations*, 61-84.

Reddick, R. J. (2011). Intersecting identities: Mentoring contributions and challenges for Black faculty mentoring Black undergraduates. *Mentoring & Tutoring, 19*(3), 319-346.

Reddick, R., & Young, M. (2012). Mentoring graduate students of color. In *Handbook of mentoring and coaching* (pp. 412-429). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Roche, G. R. (1979). Much ado about mentors. *Harvard Business Review, 57*, 14-24.

Rodger, S., & Tremblay, P. (2003). The effects of a peer mentoring program on academic success amoung first year university students. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education, 33*(3), 1-17.

Saenz, V. B., & Ponjuan, L. (2008, December). The vanishing Latino male in higher education. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 8*(1), 54-89. doi: 10.1177/1538192708326995

Sanft, M., Jensen, M., & McMurray, E. (2008). *Peer mentor companion*. Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin Company.

Santiago, D. A. (Ed.). (2011, March). Roadmap: Ensuring America's future by increasing Latino college completion [Special issue]. *Excelencia in Education*.

Scandura, T. A. (1992). Mentorship and career mobility: An empirical investigation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 13*(2), 169-174. doi: 10.1002/job.4030130206

Scandura, T., & Viator, R. (1994). Mentoring in public accounting firms: An analysis of mentoring-protege relationships, mentorship functions, and protege turnover intentions. *Accounting, Organizations and Society, 19*(8), 717-734. doi: 10.1016/0361-3682(94)90031-0

Schapira, M., Kalet, A., Schwartz, M., & Gerrity, M. (1992). Mentorship in general internal medicine. *Journal of Internal Medicine, 7*(2), 248-251. doi: 10.1007/BF02598026

Schlossberg, N. K. (1981). A model for analyzing human adaptation to transition. *Counseling Psychologist, 9*(2), 2-18. doi: 10.1177/001100008100900202

Schlossberg, N. K. (1984). *Counseling adults in transition*. New York, NY: Springer publishing company.

Schlossberg, N.K. (1995). *Counseling adults in transition: Linking practice with theory.* New York, NY: Springer publishing company.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Sharpe, S. (1996). The role of peers in tackling bullying in schools. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 11*(4), 17-22.

Shotton, H., Oosahwe, E., & Cintron, R. (2007). Stories of success: Experiences of American Indian students in a peer-mentoring retention program. *The* Review *of Higher Education, 31*(1), 81-107. doi: 10.1353/rhe.2007.0060.

Simmons, S. (2012). Learning by doing. Retrieved from College of Natural Sciences website, The University of Texas at Austin: http://www.utexas.edu/know/2012/02/27/freshman_research_initiative/

Sipe, C. L. (1996). *Mentoring: A synthesis of P/PV research: 1988-1995.* Retrieved from: www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/40_publication.pdf

Smith, J. (2011). Uncovering the lived experiences of underrepresented peer mentors (pilot study). The University of Texas at Austin.

Smith, W. A., Yosso, T., & Solórzano, D. (2007). Racial primes and Black misandry on historically white campuses: Toward critical race accountability in educational administration. *Educational Administration* Quarterly*, 43*(5), 559-585. doi:10.1177/0013161X07307793

Somers, P., & Cofer, J. (2001). What influences student persistence at two-year colleges? *Community College Review,* 29(3), 56-76. doi: 10.1177/009155210102900304

Sornicelli, M., & Yun, J. (2007). From mentor to mentoring networks: Mentoring in the new academy. *Change*, 58-61.

Stake, R. (1976). *Evaluating educational programs: The need and the response.* Washington DC: OECD Publications Center.

Steele, C. M. (1999, August). Thin ice: Stereotype threat and Black college students. *The Atlantic Online*. Retrieved from http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1999/08/thin-ice-stereotype-threat-and-Black-college-students/4663/

Stewart, D. L. (2008, March/April). Being all of me: Black students negotiating multiple identities. *Journal of Higher Education, 79*(2), 183-207. doi: 10.1353/jhe.2008.0007

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded* theory *procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park: CA: SAGE.

Strayhorn, T.L. (2008). Sentido de pertenencia: A hierarchical analysis predicting sense of belonging among Latino college students. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 7*(4), 301-320.

Strayhorn, T. L., & Terrell, M. C. (2007). Mentoring and satisfaction with college for Black students. *The Negro Educational Review, 58*(1-2), 69-83.

Strayhorn, T. L., & Terrell, M. C. (2010). *The evolving challenges of Black college students new insights for policy, practice, and research.* (1 ed., pp. 1-4). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Sweatt v Painter. 339 U.S. 629 (1950).

Tekian, A., Jalovecky, M., & Hruska, L. (2001). The impact of mentoring and advising at-risk underrepresented minority students on medical school performance. *Academic Medicine, 76*(12), 1264. doi: 10.1097/00001888-200112000-00024

Tenenbaum, H., Crosby, F., & Gliner, M. (2001). Mentoring relationships in graduate school. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 59*(3), 326-341. Doi: 10.1006/jvbe.2001.1804

Terenzini, P. T., Theophilidies, C. & Lorang, W. G. (1984). Influences on students' perceptions of their academic skill development during college. *Journal of Higher Education 55,* 621-636. doi: 10.2307/1981826

Terenzini, P. T., & Wright, T. M. (1987). Influences on students' academic growth during four years of college. *Research in Higher Education, 26*(2)*,* 161-179. doi: 10.1007/BF00992027

Terrell, M. C., & Hassell, R. K. (1994). Mentoring undergraduate minority students: An overview survey, and model program. In W. A. Wunsch (Ed.), Mentoring *revisited: Making an impact on individuals and institutions* (pp. 35-45). San Francisco: CA: Jossey-Bass.

Terrion, J. L., & Leonard, D. (2007, May). A taxonomy of the characteristics of student peer mentors in higher education: Findings from a literature review. *Mentoring and Tutoring, 15*(2), 149-164. doi: 10.1080.13611260601086311

Texas Department of State Health Services. (2012). *Texas population 2012*. Retrieved from http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/chs/popdat/ST2012.shtm

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2010). *Records appraisal report:* Texas *Higher Education Coordinating Board files*.

The University of Texas at Austin. (n.d.). *Texas Interdisciplinary Plan (TIP)*. Retrieved from http://www.utexas.edu/tip/

The University of Texas at Austin, DDCE. (n.d.). *Multicultural Engagement Center*. Retrieved from http://ddce.utexas.edu/multiculturalengagement/

The University of Texas at Austin, DDCE. (n.d.). *Project MALES: Mentoring to* achieve *Latino educational success*. Retrieved from http://ddce.utexas.edu/ projectmales/

The University of Texas at Austin, Dean of Students. (n.d.). *Orientation* Advisors *Association*. Retrieved from http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sa/ viewogs.php?org=2119

The University of Texas at Austin. (2011). *Statistical Handbook: Student* characteristics*: Fall 2011*. Retrieved from http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ima/sites/default/files/SHB11-12Students.pdf

The University of Texas at Austin., University Leadership Network (2014). *University Leadership Network.* Retrieved from http://www.utexas.edu/enrollment-management/programs/university-leadership-network

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (n.d.). *The Texas plan for equal* educational *opportunity*. Retrieved from http://thecb.state.tx.us/reports/ PDF/0221.PDF

Tillis, T. (2011). *University scholars program trends: 7 year review*.

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. *Review of Educational Research, 45*(1), 89-125. doi: 10.3102/00346543045001089

Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes an cures of student* attrition. Chicago: IL: University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (1988, July/August). Stages of student departure: Reflections on the longitudinal character of student leaving. *The Journal of Higher Education, 59*(4), 438-455. doi: 10.2307/1981920.

Tinto, V. (2006-2007). Research and practice of student retention: What next? *Journal of College Student Retention, 8*(1), 1-19. Retrieved from http://edit.uaa.alaska.edu/governance/facultysenate/upload/JCSR_Tinto_2006-07_Retention.pdf

Topping, K. J. (1996). Reaching where adults cannot: Peer education and peer counselling. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 11*(4), 23-29. doi: 10.1080/0266736960110405

U.S. Census Bureau. (March, 2001). Population by race and Hispanic or Latino origin for the United States: 1990 and 2000; Table 4: Difference in population by race and Hispanic or Latino origin, for the United States: 1990-2000. Retrieved August 8, 2012 from http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs/phc-t1/tables/tab04.pdf

United States v. Fordice, 505 U.S. 717 (1992).

U.S. News and World Report. (2012). *Best colleges in 2012*. Retrieved from http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges

Van Ausdale, D., & Feagin, J. R. (2001). *The first r: How children learn race* and *racism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Van Emmerik, I. (2004). The more you can get the better: Mentoring constellations and intrinsic career success. *Career Development* International , *9*((6/7)), 578.

Vaux, A., Phillips, J., Holly, L., Thomson, B., Williams, D., & Stewart, D. (1986). The social support appraisals (SS-A) scale: Studies of reliability and validity. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 14*(2), 195-219. doi:10.1007/BF00911821

Waldeck, J., Orrego, V., Plax, T., & Kearney, P. (1997). Graduate student/ faculty mentoring relationships: Who gets mentored, how it happens, and to what end. *Communication Quarterly, 45*(3), 93-109. doi: 10.1080/01463379709370054

Walters, N. B. (1997). *Retaining Aspiring Scholars: Recruitment and Retention of* Students *of Color in Graduate and Professional Science Degree Programs. ASHE Annual Meeting Paper.* (ASHE Annual Meeting Paper). Retrieved from ERIC database.

Willis, J. (2007). *Foundation of qualitative research: interpretive and critical* approaches. Thousand Oaks: CA: SAGE.

Zalaquett, C. P., & Lopez, A. D. (2006). Learning from the stories of successful undergraduate Latina/Latino students: The importance of mentoring. *Mentoring & Tutoring, 14*(3), 337-353. doi: 10.1080/13611260600635563

Zamani, E. (2000, Winter). Sources and information regarding effective retention strategies for students of color. *New Directions for Community Colleges,2000*(112), 95-104. doi: 10.1002/cc.11209