



# Research Proposal: Examining the Navigation of Higher Education Among First-Generation, Low-Income College Students

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# Introduction

## ***Research exploration:***

- *First-Generation Low-Income (FGLI),*
- *Identity,*
- *Support,*
- *Sense of belonging.*

## ***Research Significance:***

- Systemic inequalities,
- Land Grant institutions,
- Support FGLI students holistically,
- Inclusive and equitable educational environments.

# Literature Review: Key Insights

## ➤ Theme 1: Social Capital & Institutional Support

- Walpole (2003)
- Valentine (2011)

## ➤ Theme 2: Cultural Mismatch & Identity Tensions

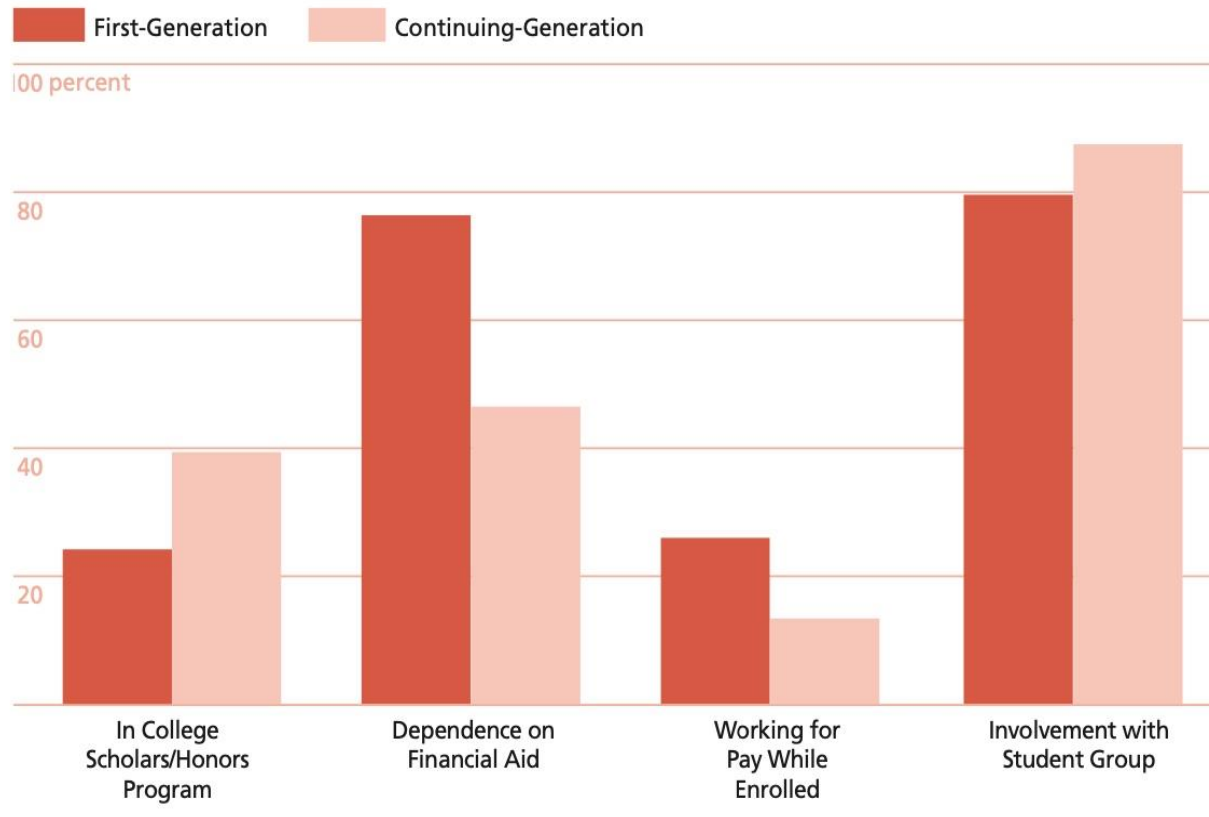
- Stephens (2012)
- Wildhagen (2015)

## ➤ Theme 3: Intersectionality & Institutional Recognition

- Means & Pyne (2017)
- McDossi (2022)

# FGLI Graphs

Gaps Between First- and Continuing-Generation Freshmen in High Status Academic Program Involvement, Financial Aid Dependence, Working for Pay, and Involvement with Student Groups.



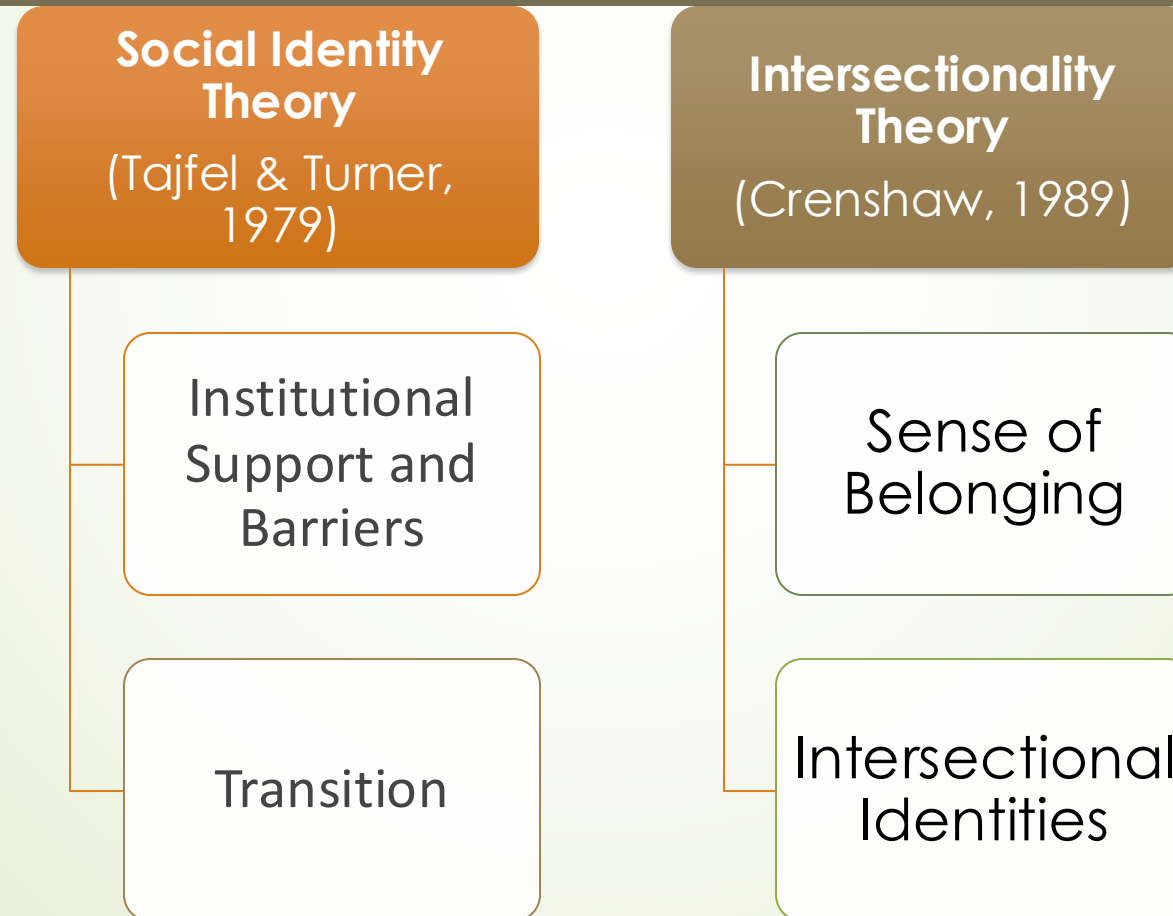
Graph 1: (Mcdossi. 2022)

**Table 8. Number and percentage distribution of Student Support Services (SSS) participants by gender, race/ethnicity, age, eligibility status, and type of grantee: 2013–14**

Participant characteristics	Four-year institutions		Two-year institutions	
	Number of participants	Percent	Number of participants	Percent
<b>Total number of participants</b>	103,691	100.0	101,065	100.0
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	67,403	65.0	68,148	67.5
Male	36,263	35.0	32,869	32.5
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>				
White	34,866	33.8	43,055	42.7
Black/African American	31,076	30.1	26,768	26.6
Hispanic	26,125	25.3	20,803	20.7
Asian	6,576	6.4	3,425	3.4
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	632	0.6	1,294	1.3
American Indian/Native Alaskan	1,760	1.7	3,485	3.5
More than one race	2,269	2.2	1,910	1.9
<b>Age</b>				
17–22 years old	76,724	74.3	50,300	50.0
23–30 years old	17,996	17.4	20,703	20.6
Over 30 years old	8,494	8.2	29,542	29.4
<b>Eligibility status</b>				
Low-income and first-generation	68,314	65.9	69,271	68.5
Low-income only	9,878	9.5	6,832	6.8
First-generation only	14,263	13.8	14,107	14.0
Disabled	5,370	5.2	4,141	4.1
Disabled and low-income	5,866	5.7	6,714	6.6

Graph 2: (U.S. Department of Education 2016)

# Theoretical Framework





# Methodology



## **Qualitative Approach**

- Interviews

## **Data Collection:**

- First Gen Center
- Trio SSS
- Passport Cougs
- McNair

## **Purposive Sampling:**

- Undergraduate, low-income, first-generation.
- 10-15 participants for interviews

## **Data Analysis:**

- Thematic Analysis

## **Ethical Considerations**

# Study Questions

## Research Questions:

- How do first-generation, low-income (FGLI) college students navigate emerging adulthood while pursuing higher education?
- What institutional support systems do first-generation, low-income students rely on to succeed academically and personally, and how effective are these resources?
- How do first-generation, low-income students perceive the role of their campus community (including faculty, peers, and student organizations) in fostering a sense of belonging and support during their college experience?
- What systemic changes are necessary to foster a more inclusive and equitable higher education environment for first-generation, low-income students?

## IRB interview questions:

- Has your sense of identity –how you see yourself- changed since starting college? If so, how?
  - Prompt, if needed: do you think you are the same person you were when you came to college?
  - Are there things you think you've learned about yourself while in college?
- ❖ Copy of interview questions



## Limitations

**Sample Size**

**Generalizability**

**Self-Reported Data**

**Time and Resource Constraints**

**Access to Participants**



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Any questions?



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