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# Nuestra Fuerza: Understanding the Resilience of Latinx, First- Generation Students from Single-Parent Families

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**Nuestra Fuerza: Understanding the Resilience of Latinx, First-Generation Students from  
Single-Parent Families**

Alejandra González-Zúñiga

Prepared for the Degree of  
**Master of Arts in Higher Education Leadership**

**University of San Diego**

May 2022

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Mamí, Te amo con todo mi corazón y con todo mi ser. Te debo mi vida entera. Si no fuera por ti, no sería la mujer fuerte, educada e independiente que soy hoy. Desde muy pequeña fui testigo de lo duro que trabajabas y sigues trabajando para que todos tus hijos tengan todo lo que tú nunca tuviste y más. Eres la mujer más increíble que conozco y mereces mucho más de lo que este mundo te ha dado. Siempre me esforzaré por enorgullecerte y demostrarte que tu sacrificio no fue en vano. Gracias por todo lo que me has dado.

My action research project is also dedicated to my three younger sisters. Gabi, Adi, and Yuleidy, I love you all so much and it is an absolute honor to be your older sister. You three are my biggest motivation and the reason that I do this work. I am so proud of all of you for everything you have accomplished despite having countless barrier put in your way. The odds have always been stacked against you but you all have persevered regardless. Through your lived and labored experiences, you have all developed intrinsic value far beyond your tangible belief. You are brilliant! Do not ever let anyone tell you or convince you otherwise.

### **Abstract**

This study explored resilience among Latinx, first-generation students at the University of San Diego who are products of single-parent families. Being a product of a single-parent household while holding these other identities affects students in a variety of ways throughout their educational journey. Even when controlling for economic and racial differences of the family, students from two-parent families outperform students from one-parent families across a plethora of measures (Barajas, 2011). Despite having extra challenges, some of these students have learned to be quite resilient to achieve their goals and educational aspirations. This study aimed to answer the following questions: (1) What factors contribute to resilience among Latinx, first-generation students who are products of single-parent families? (2) What types of resources, programs, events, and/or initiatives can predominantly White institutions implement for Latinx, first-generation students who are products of single-parent families to foster resilience and enable students to leverage their different forms of capital? My questionnaire and one-on-one interviews revealed my co-participants' biggest motivation in their educational journey was correlated with sacrifices made by their single parents to get them to higher education. Additionally, being the product of a single-parent family made my co-participants feel they had something to prove. My co-participants also indicated they would have benefited from resources and programs such as Spanish/bilingual orientations, Latinx support groups, and financial literacy workshops.

*Keywords:* resilience, first-generation, Latinx, single-parent families, cultural wealth

## **Nuestra Fuerza: Understanding the Resilience of Latinx, First-Generation Students from Single-Parent Families**

I am a Mexican-American first-generation college student from the small town of Tulelake, California. Tulelake is a rural town on the California-Oregon border with a population of 1,000 people. I am the product of two immigrant parents from Mexico and lived in a household with five siblings; two older brothers and three younger sisters. However, starting when I was about 14, I lived in a single-parent family structure.

Growing up with a single mother in Tulelake, a less privileged community has not only offered financial and academic challenges but has also helped me realize the value of a college education. Tulelake is a town with lots of agricultural employment opportunities dealing with physical labor, which does not require a college education. Many get comfortable with having these jobs and ponder the question, "Do I really need to go to college?" Unfortunately, oftentimes the answer is no and folks settle, never unlocking their full potential or breaking out of the small-town mindset.

I was never expected to amount to much. So, when I became the first in my family to not only attend college but graduate with a degree, I felt a huge sense of accomplishment. Especially, because applying to college, in my situation, was extremely difficult at the time. I did not have the first clue how to even begin the process. My single mother only spoke Spanish and did not receive an education past elementary school. My two older brothers graduated from high school but did not go to college, so they could not offer much advice either. Fortunately, I had an incredible college counselor who believed in my abilities and helped me every step of the way until I made it to college.

As I reflect on my life and my upbringing, I am grateful I have the mother I do and the character traits she instilled in me. My mother sold food, cleaned houses, and picked up any job she could from catering parties to intensive agricultural labor to cleaning houses. Even though she was constantly working, she always found the time to make it to parent-teacher conferences, sports events, and awards assemblies. She did this to make sure my siblings and I had everything we needed. She would give us the clothes on her back and go hungry to make sure we were okay because her world revolves around us. My mother has taken very good care of all her children and has played both parent roles exceptionally.

My mother is my biggest motivation for my goal to start a non-profit organization that supports first-generation students from single-parent families in fulfilling their educational aspirations. I want to be able to help these students fill out and understand college applications, FAFSA applications, and any other applications that are difficult to complete especially as first-generation students. I want my non-profit to also support these students' families with basic needs like food, hygiene products, and financial aid for water and electricity bills. I know firsthand how much my family would have benefitted from an organization like this growing up. Creating this organization would be just one way I can honor my mother and give back to my communities. To work toward this goal, I needed to make sense of what type of resources and support this population needs which is where my action research come in. I want this study to be meaningful far beyond my time at the University of San Diego.

The overarching purpose of my study is to better understand the factors that contribute to resilience among Latinx, first-generation students who are products of single-parent families. If we are able to understand how these students become resilient, institutions can implement specific resources for these students that foster and encourage it. Resilience is the key to higher educational attainment. The research tells us resilient students were found "to have higher



motivation to master tasks and to have a greater ability to set and pursue goals” (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2020).

My action research will focus on answering the following questions:

- (1) What factors contribute to resilience among Latinx, first-generation students who are products of single-parent families?
- (2) What types of resources, programs, events, and/or initiatives can predominantly White institutions implement for Latinx, first-generation students who are products of single-parent families in order to foster resilience and enable students to leverage their different forms of capital?

In the following section, I will provide a list of abbreviations and definitions to help the reader understand my study and my co-participants.

### **Definitions and Abbreviations**

To keep my study consistent and organized, I will use the following definitions and abbreviations for my action research:

- Latinx: “A term used to describe people who are of or relate to Latin American origin or descent. It is a gender-neutral or nonbinary alternative to Latino or Latina” (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020).
- First-Generation: The Higher Education Act amendment of 1998 defines a first-generation student as— “(A) An individual both of whose parents did not complete a baccalaureate degree; or (B) In the case of any individual who regularly resided with and received support from only one parent, an individual whose only such parent did not complete a baccalaureate degree (ED, 1998).
- Single-Parent Family/Families: SPF
- Two-Parent Family/Families: TPF

- Latinx, first-generation, products of a single-parent family: LFP
- Co-participant: Those participating in my action research are referred to as co-participants because I will be actively participating in my action research alongside them. I believe my experience is truly relevant to my action research, and I hold the same identities as the people who participated in the study. Referring to them as my co-participant allows us to be on the same level, which adds a layer of comfort and reduces the pressure of being part of a formal study.

### **Background and Literature Review**

Going into my research, I aimed to search for articles that allowed me to understand the ways that LFP students thrive or struggle in their educational experience. Identifying the factors that contribute to resilience and academic achievement among LFP students helped inform how I engaged my co-participants.

To give some background on the importance of researching students from SPF, according to a 2015 U.S. Census report, “About 22.4 million children had a parent who lived outside their household, representing more than one-fourth (27.0 percent) of all children under 21 years of age.” Approximately 28 percent of these 22.4 million children from SPF are Hispanic which is a significant number (United States Census Bureau, 2015, p.1). From a global perspective, divorce rates are higher in the United States than in most other countries. Additionally, in terms of educational attainment, the gap between children from SPF and TPF was studied across 11 countries, and the results concluded the United States had the most significant gap between the academic achievement of children from SPF versus children from TPF (Pong et al. 2003 as cited in Barajas, 2011).

Growing up in a SPF poses many barriers for students socially and academically. For example, among children in such a family structure, delinquency, teenage pregnancy, and high

school dropout rates are two to three times higher than those who have two parents in their household. Additionally, males who have a single parent are twice as likely to be arrested before they are age 30 (Koon, 2012 as cited in Galan & Almaraz, 2016, p. 3).

### **Factors to Consider**

Several factors play a role in determining how long students stay in school. For example, socioeconomic background, the age of the parent, the parent's education level, the number of siblings students may have, and the gender of both the parent and the student (Ziol-Guest et al., 2020). Having one parent often means there is reduced income in the household, leading to financial barriers in college if they can attend college in the first place. I believe it is safe to assume a student who is an only child with a single parent who has a college education is far more likely to succeed and have more resources than a student who has five siblings and whose single parent did not receive an education beyond elementary school. The parent's gender was also essential to consider because most single parents are female. In fact, single-father families represent only 7% of all SPF in the country (DeBell, 2008, as cited in Barajas, 2011). In students, gender is important because male students tend to be more adversely affected than female students (Barajas, 2011). Another factor that may also be crucial to consider in this population is citizenship status (Galan & Almaraz, 2016, p. 17-18). There are extra barriers placed on students and their families who are Dreamers or have an undocumented citizenship status. For context, "Dreamers" refers to an immigrant youth who qualifies for the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. Dreamers are also frequently referred to as "DACA recipients" (Hildreth, 2020).

### **Parent and Peer Support**

A study conducted on Canadian adolescents to identify the condition under which

educational aspirations were fostered concluded youth from SPF have lower educational aspirations than those from TPF (Garg et al., 2006, p. 1010). Researchers concluded this by examining three categories: (1) background (gender, socioeconomic status, parental education, age, and family structure), (2) personal (personal attributes, self-perception of competence, attitude toward education, and school achievement.), and (3) environmental (social support from parents and teachers, and peer influences) factors (Garg et al., 2006, p. 1011). Garg et al. discussed the importance of parent and peer support for educational aspiration and achievement. Parent involvement was linked to higher levels of aspirational capital in students (Yosso, 2005). Still, Gard et al. asserted single parents who have lower educational levels also have lower incomes, leading to less parental involvement in their children's education. This in turn leads to "negative attitudes towards school, lower parental educational expectations, and less monitoring of school work" (Garg et al., 2006, p. 1011).

When parental support is not there, positive peer influences are crucial for resiliency despite lacking financial and social capital (Yosso, 2005). This is where institutions can intervene and continue to provide more ways for students from SPF to connect with peers in an academic setting to foster self-confidence, a sense of belonging, and higher educational aspirations in students (Garg et al., 2006, p. 1012). Being around and studying with other students from similar backgrounds and racial identities served as encouragement and helped students focus more on their academics (Gonzalez & Padilla, 1997 as cited in Galan & Almaraz, 2016, p. 7).

### **Academic Resilience**

I found one study where scholars researched the same population I used in my study. Galan and Almaraz (2016) examined the academic resilience of LFP students who had a 3.0 GPA. However, they accepted a slightly lower GPAs due to their definition of resilience which

was “the result of a system (i) preventing adverse consequences, (ii) minimizing adverse consequences, and (iii) recovering quickly from adverse consequences” (Galan & Almaraz, 2016, p. 11). The questions the researchers asked the participants helped them understand what motivates students to be successful and what hinders their success.

One of the questions related to students’ gender. One participant expressed being a woman alone has not influenced her but being a Latina woman has influenced her. Another participant who identified as a male said he wanted to prove that Latino men can be successful in college too (Galan & Almaraz, 2016). Another question focused on what role race/ethnicity played in their education. One student shared she had to take remedial classes, and a sizable portion of her classmates were also Latino/a, and she hated it. She was told in high school she would most likely need to take a remedial class upon entering college. The researchers examined this further and stated that this just goes to show that students “know they are at a disadvantage based on their race and their expectations from society” (Galan & Almaraz, 2016, p. 16).

With other questions, the researchers asked the participants about the challenges they encountered in college. The majority of them said they lacked support from their parent due to academic issues that their parent had never experienced because they never went to college. These students felt like they had to figure things out independently because their parents did not know any better, and they already had so much to deal with. For example, one student said, “Not being able to afford shit, I can’t ask my parent for help” and another student shared, “I could never go to my parents for like help over like homework” (Galan & Almaraz, 2016, p. 14-15).

Although having many barriers to overcome, these participants were motivated by what education could offer them and their families. Participants expressed they want to bring their family up and be an example for younger family members. Essentially, all students’ barriers are

their motivators.

### **Familial Obligations and Responsibilities**

Apart from being a product of a single-parent family, Latinx students are constantly navigating two different worlds in U.S. higher education. United States culture tends to be individualistic, while Latinx culture tends to be collectivist. Individualism has been defined as emotional independence from groups, organizations, and other collectivities, lack of attention to the views of others, relatively little concern for family and relatives, and tendencies toward competition (Shkodriani & Gibbons, 1995). Collectivism is related to solidarity, concern for others, and integration with other people. It also focuses on the goals, needs, and views of the in-group over those of the individual (Shkodriani & Gibbons, 1995). Latinx students are stuck between the values and norms of their own culture and U.S. culture. Often, they clash, leading to a sense of guilt. For example, it is common in the United States for people to move away from home to attend college; however, Latinx students are often encouraged by their parents and family to attend a school close to home or not attend at all in to help their family. This phenomenon is called *familismo*, a cultural value emphasizing family closeness and loyalty (Sy & Romero, 2008).

Even if students are able to move away, there is often an unspoken expectation they will continue supporting and staying connected with the family. For instance, while Latinx students are away at school, they send money to their family to help pay bills and other living expenses, they help translate essential documents, and call home nearly every day. Unfortunately, these familial obligations are not recognized in higher education, which inevitably forces students to decide between helping family or doing well in school. This further complicates a student's capacity to achieve academic success (Covarrubias, 2021).

## Gaps in the Literature

As I was researching to prepare for my research cycles, I found most of the existing literature focused on the negative factors and disadvantages of holding identities like Latinx, first-generation, or products of a single-parent family. Although it is true students who hold these identities have additional barriers and obstacles when compared to their counterparts, they also hold cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) that can be very valuable in higher education. Yosso's community cultural wealth model "explores the talents, strengths, and experiences that students of color bring with them to their college environment" (Da Graca & Dougherty, 2015). This model developed after Yosso critiqued Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction. Bourdieu's work asserted low-income students enter college "disadvantaged" or "lacking" due to their lack of financial capital. But even though these students may not have the financial means or in-depth knowledge of college, they are still experiencing high rates of success. Bourdieu's also implies minoritized communities are culturally deprived while predominantly White communities are culturally rich (Patton et al., 2016, p. 254).

Rooted in critical race theory, Yosso examines six forms of cultural capital students of color experience in college. They are (a) aspirational: the ability to remain hopeful in the face of obstacles, (b) linguistic: the intellectual and social skills developed by communicating in more than one language, (c) familial: cultural knowledge that is nurtured by one's family and community, (d) social: one's network of people and community resources, (e) navigational: the ability to maneuver through spaces that were not created for communities of color, and (f) resistance: the knowledge and skills developed through oppositional behavior that challenges inequities (Yosso, 2005). These forms of capital are dynamic and meant to overlap and complement each other to challenge the norm that only predominantly White communities are

culturally rich. Yosso's model remains one of the only frameworks that combats these middle-class norms and highlights the brilliance low-income communities of color bring to higher education.

### **Context**

This study was conducted at the University of San Diego (USD), a Roman Catholic institution in San Diego, California that is tuition-driven and receives endowments. The University of San Diego is a mid-sized university with approximately 9,000 students, 22 percent of which are Hispanic/Latino, according to fall 2020 federal reports (USD, 2020b). I offer a unique perspective to my action research because I hold the identities my co-participants hold. This action research project is very close to me and my life experiences as an LFP student myself. Due to my experience, I believe I had the ability to create a safe space when engaging my co-participants which was important to build morale and collect the most authentic qualitative data.

I believe this study is of great value to USD because the university is on track to becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). I completed my undergraduate degree at an institution that was an HSI. While there, I felt supported as a student but not as a Mexican student. Being an HSI should mean more than the title and funding that comes with it. The purpose of HSIs is to increase educational opportunities and academic attainment for Hispanic students, which means expanding academic offerings and support programs (ED, 2018). My project gives some insight into how support for Hispanic students can be expanded and enhanced at USD for LFP students.

I am currently a Graduate Assistant (GA) in the Center for Health and Wellness (CHWP) Promotion at USD. I am responsible for developing and implementing programs and events on



health and wellness topics, including mental health, alcohol and other drugs, healthy relationships, sexual assault prevention, suicide prevention, and the different dimensions of wellness for the entire USD student population. Through my action research process and my time with CHWP, I have done a lot of self-reflection and personal growth to value and prioritize my holistic wellness as a first-generation Latinx student. I have realized wellness has become a newfound passion. In my culture, mental and emotional health is not seen as a priority or even something that is recognized. It is often thought if you go to therapy, it is probably because you are crazy. When I was younger, I internalized the message that if I talked to people about what I was feeling or going through, I was burdening them. But now, I am beginning to understand the concept of collective and generational trauma. Because my parents were never given space to heal from their trauma, neither was I. I do not blame my parents because they simply did not know better. I know mental health was not a priority for them; they did not have time to dwell on heartbreak or feel sad or angry. Their focus was on figuring out where the next meal would come from. I feel very privileged to be able to see a therapist regularly because now I can name what I am feeling and share strategies of coping with the people that I love to end cycles of trauma and start cycles of healing. My lived experience around mental health and my work in CHWP is relevant to my action research because it was my intention to create a space for LFP students to unpack trauma and start their own healing processes.

### **Project Rationale and Design**

I established a need for this study because the research tells us students from two-parent families stay in school longer and have higher educational aspirations than those from SPF. According to Barajas (2011), “Even when controlling for economic and racial differences of the family, children from two-parent households outperform children from one-parent households

across a variety of measures” (p. 14). However, some students can be quite resilient and successful despite having extra challenges. My research aimed to explore these challenges and this resilience to determine how institutions can better support LFP students, especially in predominantly White institutions like USD. Identifying these specific needs will also inform how I move forward with my career goal to create a non-profit organization to support this population of students and their families to give back to my communities.

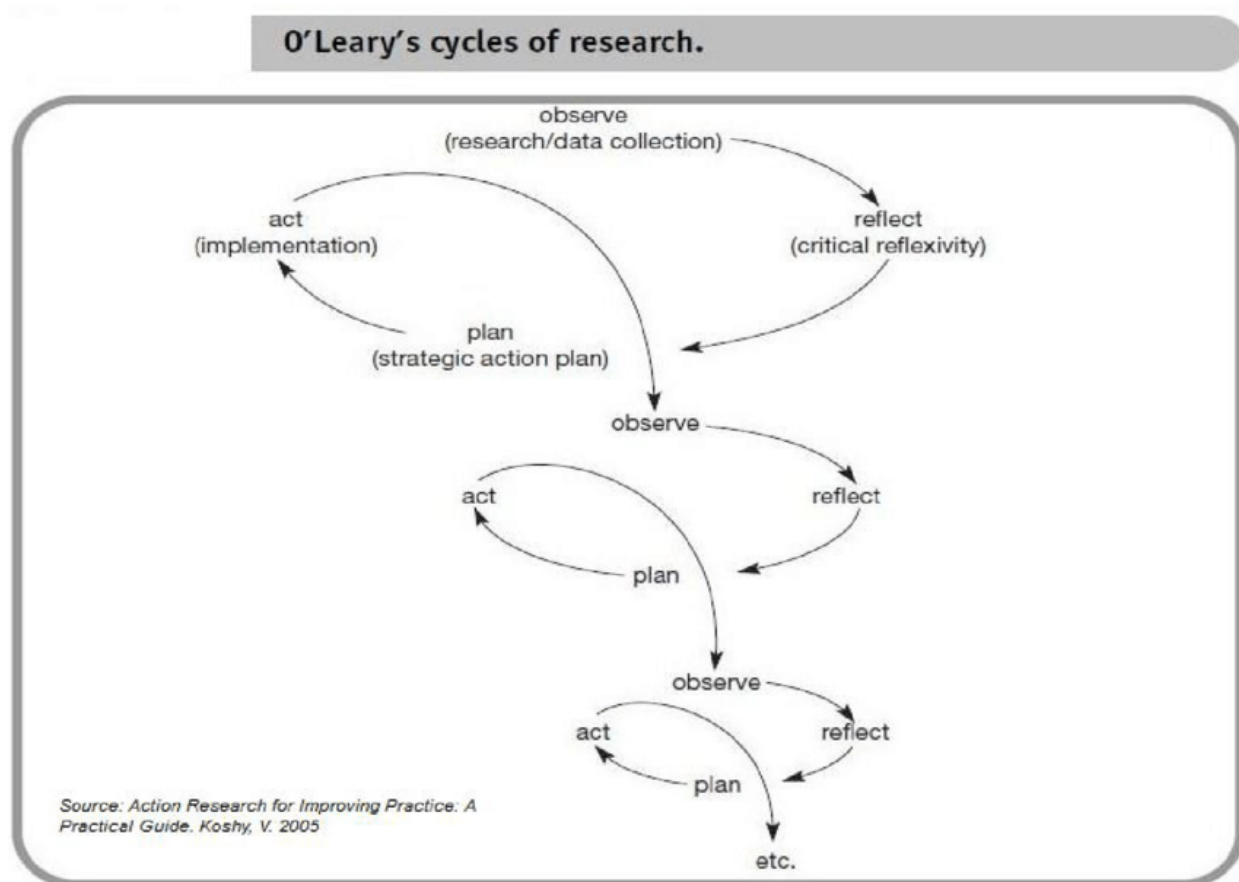
The epistemological stance that will contribute to my action research is subjectivism, which believes what goes on in one’s mental space is one reality. I chose this stance because of something that Dr. Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz said: “everyone has their experience but no one has your experience” (Y. Sealey-Ruiz, personal communication, February 23, 2021). My experience is my reality, and no external factors will change that. For my action research, I want to listen to my co-participants’ realities to learn more about what I can do to support this population of students. For a long time, I have never had the opportunity to share my story related to being raised by a single mother, which may also be the case with my co-participants. I want my action research to create the opportunity for my co-participants to share their stories to start a healing process for their personal growth.

My approach to my action research was based on O’Leary’s Cycles of Action Research (2004) and the spirit of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). As shown in Figure 1, O’Leary’s framework consists of four practices: observation, reflection, planning, and action (Koshy, 2005). This model creates an opportunity to gain new knowledge based on inquiries. It allowed me to be reflective and adaptive as I moved through my cycles. The ultimate goal of O’leary’s framework is to continually refine my methods and data collection after each cycle. I have some flexibility with this model, which is the main reason I chose it. I did not know how every new piece of

information would affect my action research, but I could create and implement mechanisms that helped me reconsider my steps if it was necessary (Koshy, 2010).

**Figure 1**

*O'Leary Cycles*



*Note:* O'Leary Cycles (Koshy, 2005)

Appreciative Inquiry is about shifting perspective. This model encouraged me to view my co-participants and their experiences through a strength-based approach rather than a deficit-based approach (The Appreciative Inquiry Commons, 2016). This is important because most of the literature surrounding my participant population focuses on the disadvantages of coming from a SPF. But these students have many forms of capital to contribute to USD, whether they realize it or not (Yosso, 2005). An AI lens deterred me from viewing a particular

situation as a problem to be solved. Often, we can get caught up in finding a solution to the “problem” and we forget we were the ones who labeled that situation as a problem in the first place. At its core, AI is used to search for the best in people to leverage their strengths to reach their idea of success (Stavros et al., 2015).

### **Data Collection Methods**

For this study, I decided on a two-cycle, mixed-method approach. There were many factors I wanted to consider and to be able to capture them all, I believed this was the best overarching design. In terms of age groups, I focused on collecting data from students between the ages of 18 and 32, which are typical ages for college students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. For folks to participate in my research, they were required to self-identify as LFP students (definitions can be found in the Definitions and Abbreviations section).

My project collected both qualitative and quantitative data. I gathered quantitative information with a questionnaire. To gather qualitative data, I interviewed each co-participant. It was preferred all interviews be conducted in an in-person format. However, all the interviews were conducted using Zoom. I was open to accommodating my co-participants by offering an online option because I recognized we were still living through a pandemic, and my co-participants all had work, class, and other responsibilities prevented an in-person meeting.

The questionnaire (see Appendix E) helped me get to know my co-participants in many ways and gauge where they were before the one-on-one interviews so I could prepare accordingly. The questionnaire gathered general student information such as name, pronouns, contact information, etc. It also consisted of general information, including, students’ identities, the ages of the parent and student, the parent’s education level, the student's educational level and academic program, the student's number of siblings, and the gender of both the parent and

the student. Finally, the questionnaire had Likert scale statements that would allow me to understand how supported students feel at USD as Latinx, first-generation students from SPF.

For the one-on-one interviews, I created an interview guide (see Appendix F) that allowed me to be consistent in terms of the questions I asked my co-participants. However, I gave myself some flexibility to ask follow-up questions when I felt that it was beneficial to explore a particular response further. I also wanted this flexibility to ask for clarification or elaboration on responses as well. This flexibility was important because, in some cases, I had to tailor the questions to the experience of my co-participant, or their response to one question also answered other questions. This is another reason why the questionnaire was helpful; it gave me adequate time and information to prepare for each interview before they took place.

I had initially intended to have three cycles, the third cycle being a *plática* which means talk or conversation. The goal of the *plática* was to finish my action research with a healing circle to allow co-participants to continue to share their stories and connect with others from a similar background and/or experience. I wanted to encourage storytelling because there is so much power in it. Storytelling opens up a space to cultivate relationships and connections between people. Storytelling allows people to convey experiences, culture, and values to ultimately unite people in a meaningful way. However, with COVID-19 restrictions, mask mandates, and my co-participants busy schedules, it did not seem feasible. Although I would have liked to facilitate this *plática*, I was okay with not conducting this cycle because the one-on-one interview remained an opportunity for storytelling.

In terms of data organization and record-keeping, I kept an action research journal to write down my initial reactions, feelings, and thoughts after each interview. Due to the intimate nature of my interviews, I decided not to take notes during the interview to avoid breaking eye

contact or making the interviewee feel uncomfortable in any way. For this same reason, I only audio recorded the one-on-one interview. I thought video recording would have influenced my co-participants' responses. Being video recorded added a layer of anxiety that I did not want my co-participants to feel, especially while sharing their life stories with me. Audio recordings were a good alternative to help with accuracy as well. I wanted to make sure that I had my co-participants' exact words when quoting them because I did not want parts of their story to be misinterpreted in my work.

### **Co-participant Recruitment**

My co-participant recruitment process started with flyer work. According to USD bulletin board guidelines, I hung flyers on campus wherever I was allowed to. Additionally, I also connected with spaces and organizations at USD that have larger populations of Latinx students. For example, Student Support Services (SSS) and Latinx student organizations. My recruitment email script, recruitment announcement script, and recruitment flyer are in Appendices A through C.

### **Trauma-Informed Practices**

To build rapport with each of my co-participants during my interactions with them, I explained what my project was about and why their participation in my action research mattered. I also wanted them to understand what would be asked of them so that any part of my project did not catch them off guard. I made sure they knew I was the only person that would know their real identity and have access to their questionnaire responses, audio recordings, and notes throughout my project. This is also outlined in my consent form (see Appendix D).

I recognized my action research asked that my co-participants be vulnerable with me which is why I emphasized to my co-participants that they had the freedom to choose to opt out

of answering any of my questions if any made them feel uncomfortable or if they simply did not want to answer. I predicted some of my questions would evoke strong emotions, so before anything began, I let my co-participants know that when they were with me, they were in a safe space and that every feeling that was felt was allowed and valid. Creating this safe space and a level of trust with my co-participants required me to be an active participant in my action research. I believed if I was asking my co-participants to be vulnerable with me, I should be willing to do the same and share pieces of my story to connect and empathize with them. To create an additional layer of care and safety when engaging my co-participants, I established a safe word that can be used at any point in case any part of my action research became too overwhelming to continue. This is outlined in my Adult Consent Form (Appendix D) and my Interview Guide (Appendix F).

### **Cycle One Results and Findings**

I worked on recruitment efforts immediately after this study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) in October 2021. Between October and December, I recruited a total of five co-participants through flyer work, email, and word of mouth (see Table 1 for co-participant details). I began Cycle One (questionnaire) in February of 2022, I could have started in December or January, but this did not seem strategic because school was not in session, and I wanted to respect my co-participants' winter break.

Demographic information about the co-participants in this study is in Table 1. Two co-participants were graduate students, while three were undergraduate students. In terms of racial and ethnic identity, the identities listed in Table 1 are all how co-participants self-identified. Although my action research aimed to study the experience of Latinx students broadly, in this study, all co-participants are of Mexican descent.

## Summary of Cycle One

I sent out a Qualtrics questionnaire link via email as soon as I received their signed Adult Consent Form. It took about 3 weeks to receive responses from all participants, which was

**Table 1**

### *Co-participant Details*

| Co-participant Pseudonym | Classification | Academic Program               | Racial/Ethnic Identities |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Sara                     | Graduate       | MA Higher Education Leadership | Mexicana/Latina          |
| Elena                    | Graduate       | MA Social Innovation           | Mexican                  |
| Victoria                 | Undergraduate  | BA Behavioral Neuroscience     | Hispanic/Latinx/Mexican  |
| Gloria                   | Undergraduate  | BA Psychology                  | Latina/Mexican-American  |
| Hannah                   | Undergraduate  | BS Engineering                 | Hispanic/Latinx/Mexican  |

expected, seeing as they all have whole lives outside of this project. I sent co-participants a weekly reminder if I had not received their responses. Immediately after receiving responses, I reached out via their preferred form of contact they indicated on the questionnaire to schedule a one-on-one interview. In summary, the first part of my questionnaire asked for general information about the student, the second part asked about student and single parent demographic information, and the third and final part of the questionnaire was a series of Likert scale statements. The scale was in a strongly agree to strongly disagree format. The general information section informed me about the ways that my co-participants would like to be addressed throughout this study. For example, I asked for pronouns and a preferred name just if they go by a different name or a shortened version of their name. It seems like an insignificant



detail, but I wanted to make sure I did everything in my power to make my participants feel comfortable and seen. In the second section, the questions I asked were based on the literature I reviewed. The literature indicated these factors were important to consider when exploring why TPF students outperform SPF students on a variety of measures and why TPF students have an overall higher educational attainment (Ziol-Guest et al., 2020). The Likert scale section acted as an attitude gauge to allow me to get more insight into how they feel about institutional support and how they perceive themselves.

### **Observation**

Based on the responses I received, I made a few initial observations. The first was all co-participants and their single parent identified as women, which was predictable because approximately 60 percent of the student population identified as women (USD, 2020a). Additionally, most single parents in the country are women (DeBell, 2008, as cited in Barajas, 2011). Another observation was all of my co-participants indicated they were U.S. citizens, meaning they did not face legal barriers when entering higher education. On the other hand, only Elena's and Victoria's single parents were U.S citizens.

In terms of the level of schooling completed by the single parents, the highest level of education was by Hannah's mother, who completed some college credits, but did not earn a degree. When asked if they planned on pursuing another degree, all my co-participants said yes, except for Heather. My initial assumption was that she indicated "maybe" because she is earning her degree in engineering, and typically you do not need a master's or doctorate degree to get a good job in engineering.

When it came to the ages of the single parents, most are very close in age: Sara's mother is 57, Victoria's mother is 54, Gloria's mother is 55, and Hannah's mother is 56. The only outlier

was Elena's mother, who is 41. Elena was also an outlier for the question about how many siblings my co-participants have because she did not have any, while the rest of my co-participants had 2 to 5 siblings.

### ***Likert Scale***

In the Likert scale section of the questionnaire, I asked students to rate their agreement with the statement; in Table 2 the statements and responses are outlined. In this table the "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" options were converted to numbers. For instance, 5 is strongly agree, 4 is somewhat agree, 3 is neither agree nor disagree, 2 is somewhat disagree and 1 is strongly disagree. The best response to all of these statements is strongly agree (5). If students are able to respond strongly agree to all of the statements, which would be a total score of 35, it would mean that the institution is doing its job in supporting LFP students.

What stood out to me initially about the total scores is that it seems as though undergraduate students overall felt more supported than graduate students. Additionally, I noticed that only six responses were labeled "strongly agree." Based on the responses from statements 1 and 2, it seemed that students felt relatively more supported as first-generation students than supported as Latinx students. Responses for statement 3 were a bit difficult to make an inference on. My assumption is students have varying degrees of comfort when disclosing that they are a product of a single-parent family.

For statement 4, only Victoria indicated that she strongly agreed to feeling comfortable asking for help. Sometimes, as first-generation students, it is difficult to know what to ask or even have the courage to ask due to a general lack of understanding and imposter syndrome. First-generation students do not know what they do not know, and it becomes hard to ask questions or ask for help because they fear that this will confirm that they are an imposter.

**Table 2***Likert Scale Responses: Institutional Support*

|                                                                                                                                   | Sara | Elena | Victoria | Gloria | Hannah |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|----------|--------|--------|
| 1) I feel supported as a Latinx student at my institution.                                                                        | 2    | 2     | 3        | 4      | 4      |
| 2) I feel supported as a first-generation student at my institution.                                                              | 3    | 3     | 4        | 5      | 5      |
| 3) I feel like I can openly share that I am a product of a single-parent family with no judgment in spaces within my institution. | 2    | 4     | 4        | 5      | 3      |
| 4) I am comfortable asking for help or resources when I need them at my institution.                                              | 2    | 4     | 5        | 3      | 4      |
| 5) I have a good relationship with a faculty or staff member at my institution.                                                   | 4    | 4     | 5        | 4      | 5      |
| 6) I feel like I belong at my institution.                                                                                        | 2    | 3     | 4        | 4      | 4      |
| 7) I feel like my culture, background, and lived experiences are valued at my institution.                                        | 2    | 2     | 3        | 4      | 4      |
| <b>Total Score:</b>                                                                                                               | 17   | 22    | 28       | 29     | 29     |

But perhaps this fear can be alleviated by having a good relationship with staff and/or faculty.

Responses to statement 5 had the highest scores over every other statement. The students who strongly agreed to having a good relationship with faculty or staff also indicated a higher agreement level and felt comfortable asking for help.

For statements 6 and 7, I observed there were no “strongly agree” responses. I suppose it is good that none of the responses for statements 6 and 7 were “strongly disagree,” but this is simply not where we want students to be. I believe that institutions need to create an environment where students not only feel like they belong and are valued, and it is not enough to feel like they belong. Students need to know they belong and are valued at their institutions.

In the second part of my Likert scale section, I included two statements that allowed me to get more insights into how my co-participants perceive themselves in terms of their resilience and their brilliance. In Table 3, the statements and responses are outlined. Without question, all my co-participants are both very resilient and brilliant for getting to higher education while being a LFP student and being in a position to even be in my study in the first place. However, I wanted to explore if and how my co-participants see resilience and brilliance in themselves. All of my co-participants responded strongly to the resilience statement, but only two felt the same about their brilliance.

**Table 3**

*Likert Scale Responses: Resilience & Brilliance Self-Perception*

|                                          | Sara | Elena | Victoria | Gloria | Hannah |
|------------------------------------------|------|-------|----------|--------|--------|
| 1) I would describe myself as resilient. | 5    | 5     | 5        | 5      | 5      |
| 2) I would describe myself as brilliant. | 5    | 2     | 4        | 5      | 3      |
| <b>Total Score:</b>                      | 10   | 7     | 9        | 10     | 8      |

## Reflection

Reflecting on my co-participants’ responses, I wanted to know more about particular responses. When analyzing responses in Table 2, with Sara I wanted to learn more about why her

responses were the lowest of all of my participants. Looking at Elena's responses, I wanted her to elaborate on why she does not feel supported holding the identities she holds and why she was unsure about statement 6. Most undergraduate students' responses were either somewhat agree or strongly agree. I was interested in learning more about their neither agree nor disagree responses.

Based on responses in Table 3, I was curious about why students were confident about their resilience but not as confident about their brilliance. It seems students are very aware of how much they have overcome to get to where they are but do not recognize the brilliance it took to do that as well. Sara and Gloria were the only students who responded strongly agree to being brilliant. I was also curious about these responses because part of my research is about leveraging capital. Students have to know they have capital to be able to leverage it. Looking back at my two research questions, I felt that I did not have enough information to answer any part of them at this point in my action research.

### **Planning and Action**

After reflecting on the data, I planned to ask follow-up questions about co-participants' responses during my one-on-one interviews. This is why I intentionally left space in my interview guide to have the flexibility to ask follow-up questions about what seemed important to explore. I created a copy of my interview guide for each of my participants and added questions specific to each of my co-participant's questionnaire responses.

### **Cycle Two Results and Findings**

In my second cycle, I conduct one-on-one interviews with each of my co-participants for 1 hour between March 1st and March 5th, 2022. It was difficult for me to figure out dates and times that worked with my schedule and the schedules of my co-participants. I believe it would have been helpful to schedule interviews earlier on in my action research timeline. For instance,

scheduling interviews would have been easier if I had scheduled them as soon as I received my co-participants' consent form rather than waiting until after they submitted their questionnaire responses. Regardless of this difficulty, I was able to conduct five successful interviews that were healing and insightful for both my participants and me.

### **Summary of Cycle Two**

At the start of each interview, I reminded each participant of the safe word. I reiterated that if at any point the discussion became too much to handle, they were free to turn off their cameras and do whatever they needed to do to take care of themselves. I emphasized they were not required to answer my questions if they did not want to. To break the ice and make my participants feel more comfortable, I share about myself and the similarities in the identities that my co-participants and I hold. Then, I allowed my co-participants to tell me about who they were. As I was going through my questions, I noticed that my co-participants processed their feelings as they were speaking at one point or another. In one interview, a student apologized for not being able to articulate what she wanted to say because she had not talked it before. In three of my interviews, my co-participants got very emotional and cried while answering some questions. It was tough for my co-participants to answer the 5th question in my interview guide: "how did you feel about your parents' separation? Or how did it feel to only have one parent?" However, when the interviews ended, each of my co-participants thanked me for different reasons. They thanked me for including them in my study, creating a safe space, listening, and validating and affirming their experiences.

Conducting these interviews was a truly rewarding experience. I was happy that I could give my co-participants space to simply talk about the experiences that they may have never really talked about if it was not for their participation in my study.

## **Observation**

The first research questions I asked my co-participants were follow-up questions based on their responses to my questionnaire. Then I went through the rest of my interview and pieced together the common themes.

### ***Follow-up Questions***

Beginning with Sara, I asked her to elaborate on why she responded somewhat disagree with most of the Likert scale statements. She said she felt unsupported because her academic program was marketed as being tailored toward working professionals, and she felt like that has not been the case. She also shared that a lot of information was never given to her. For example, she did not know there were so many academic modifications that she could have done to fit her coursework in her full-time senior academic advisor position. She was also misadvised, and if she had not begun asking questions, then it was quite possible that she would not be graduating on time. Additionally, she went on to say that because of her job, it was difficult to immerse herself in the campus community or take advantage of graduate student life events like the first-generation dialogues, Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month events, or other opportunities for community building. She also mentioned it was “difficult to feel a sense of belonging when half of your program was online.” When asked to elaborate on a strongly agree response to the brilliant statement, she said, “Well...I’ve made it this far, right?” implying she did not achieve what she has with sheer luck.

I asked Essence to elaborate on why she felt a lack of support holding her identities and feeling a sense of belonging. Similar to Sara, she is not able to be on campus often because she is a commuter student, which makes it hard for her to attend community-building events as well. Although she feels that she has faculty and administrator that Elena can go to for help and

support, she said, “I kind of feel sad to say this, but I haven't really made like a group of friends in my program.” When asked to elaborate on her somewhat disagree response to the brilliance statement, she responded by saying, “I felt like a lot of people always had an easier pathway toward education. In high school, others had resources to pay for tutors and help with entrance exams. I always felt like I didn't know enough. I was very much aware of my shortcomings and the fact that I have so much to learn” Opposite to how Sara felt, Elena correlated her brilliance to a lack of resources. Because she feels she has a lot to learn, she still did not feel comfortable referring to herself as brilliant.

With Victoria's responses, I was curious about the statements she indicated neither “agree” nor “disagree” as a response. She stated at a predominantly White institution, “they just don't get it.” She explained there is a lack of understanding when it comes to how Latinx students show up. Regarding the brilliance statement, she said she responded “somewhat agree” because she wants to enter college, there were so many expectations, and she does not feel like she has met them just yet. She said, “I don't think that I've like reached the point to where I'm like deeply proud of what I've done because I know that I've struggled, and I know I can always do better.”

Similar to Victoria's first point, Gloria said she responded neither “agree” nor “disagree” to feeling comfortable asking for help because she does not feel like university faculty and staff understand the Latinx experience. Gloria said, “they're kinda supporting us, but there's still a disconnect because some people are not culturally aware of some of the things that Latinx students have to go through.” For example, “family expectations or family obligations that they have to deal with. Especially because a lot of the students live in the area, within 15 minutes to an hour commutes, and some are still living at home where, you know, some of their parents



might be single parents or they might just require more help because of language barriers.”

Gloria also mentioned she does not ask for help often because she is scared of “looking dumb” or making her professors think that she is not qualified. She tries to figure out most things on her own, before asking for help. It is usually a last resort for her which is probably the same reason she was one or two students that responded strongly agree to the brilliance statement. She said “I think I have a lot of potential.” Gloria believes brilliance is all about mindset, considering what she has learned in her psychology program. “Like do you have a growth mindset or a fixed mindset? I suck at math, but that doesn't mean I can't sit here and learn it. Obviously, it will take a lot of work and patience but it can be done.”

Hannah responded neither “agree” nor “disagree” on being able to share she is a product of a single-parent family. She said this was because it is not a detail about herself that she shares openly. When it came to the brilliance statement, Hannah responded neither “agree” nor “disagree” because, during her first year of her undergraduate career, she had a life-threatening car accident that affected the way she perceived her intelligence. When she was younger, she was always intellectually advanced for her age. By second grade, is new her multiplication fact up to 15 and was reading at a sixth-grade level. Hannah said, “That whole experience was so like detrimental to my brain” she said, “I felt like I had to take steps back, and now I need accommodations for exams and stuff. I also had to repeat multiple classes. The car accident definitely changed the way that I think about my intelligence.”

### ***Childhood***

In one way or another, all co-participants felt like they had to grow up fast or had to deal with things they should not have been dealing with as children. All co-participants also remember their mothers constantly working to provide for them. In fact, Hannah mentioned she

remembers going to work with her mother every day over the summer when she was not in school. Sara and Victoria remember a lot of their childhood consisting of getting dropped off at school early and picked up from school after-school programs late in the afternoon because of their mothers' work schedules. Gloria says she had a decent childhood when her parents were together. She remembers playing with her siblings, but she also remembers getting corporal forms of punishment for things like not cleaning. Elena remembers living with her grandparents. Her mother had her at a young age, and she was not able to care for Elena on her own, so she had to rely on her parents (Elena's grandparents). Similar to other participants, Elena remembers her mother being absent a lot of the time because she was constantly working.

Regardless of co-participants' mothers being away at work for a lot of their childhood and adolescence, they were always there to support them in the ways they knew how. Their mothers always showed up when it mattered, even if they did not understand the sport or did not know exactly what the awards were for. Sara said that her mom never really understood what being in higher education meant, but her mother would find ways to support Sara in ways that she did not know she needed. For example, Sara's mother would meal prep for her while in undergrad, so she did not have to worry about not having something to eat in between classes.

### ***Single-Parent Family Structure***

My co-participants all began living in a single-parent family structure at different times in their life. Sara's parents were off and on for most of her childhood and adolescence. But they were officially split up for good in her junior year of high school. Hannah's father was gone a lot due to the nature of his job, but her parents separated during her senior year of high school. For Gloria, it was 7th grade. For Victoria, it was around the time she was in kindergarten or first grade. Elena has never met her biological father.

When asked how they felt about having only one parent, all of my co-participants became very emotional. Sara said, “I feel sad knowing that I don’t have someone that I thought I would to celebrate all of my accomplishments.” Elena said, “now that I’m thinking about it, in elementary school, I could still distinctly remember a father-daughter dance that I missed out on.” She apologizes and says, “I didn’t think this was going to bring up so much emotion.” Victoria’s father was gone for 4 years after her parents separated due to a prison sentence. For Victoria, “it was really hard acknowledging that my dad did those things and it was really hard understanding as a little kid that there was no father figure anymore.”

Shortly after Gloria’s parents separated, her father falsely accused her mother of domestic violence, and she was deported. For a whole year, Gloria lived with her father until her mother was able to return to the United States. She said, “I can honestly say it was the worst year of my life.” After many family court hearings, Gloria was able to return with her mother.

Hannah said “I was almost used to my dad being gone most of the time because his job made him travel.” in the same breath she said it hit her hard because she was her father’s only daughter. She said, “so like those days that my dad was home as a child, I was like, daddy’s little girl. But then, as I got older, I was just like another one of the kids.” It hit her harder when she would be invited over to friends’ houses and saw how incredible their fathers were.

All in expectation to Elena, remember their parents fighting or arguing growing up. Some even experienced verbal and physical abuse from their fathers or witnessed it toward their mothers. This is the main reason they described feelings of sadness coupled with a sense of relief when they began living in a single-parent family structure. Today, Sara, Elena, and Hannah do not have a relationship with their fathers. Gloria said that she does not have the relationship she would like to have with her father. Anytime she sees him, it’s because she makes that effort;

otherwise, he would not be in her life. Victoria said if she or her siblings need money or something for school, her father gives it to them, but that is the extent he is involved in her life.

### ***Journey to Higher Education***

For all of my co-participants, school and/or extracurricular activities was an escape from everything they had going on at home. School was also heavily encouraged in their households by their mothers. Sara's mother always emphasized the importance of education because she believed that your education and knowledge are things that can never be taken from you. Heather's mother emphasized education because she got a bit of the college experience in Mexico but was unable to complete a degree. Victoria's mother believed in education so profoundly she did everything in her power to get Victoria into private college preparatory schools that were nowhere near where they lived. For Elena, college was an opportunity to live independently and do something that her mother and grandparents never could. Gloria always knew she wanted to go to college because it was not common for people to go off to college where she is from. She was also very aware she could not afford college, so she knew she needed to be as involved as she could to get as many scholarships as possible.

Although all my co-participants had different motivations for going to college; the process was not simple for most of them. Fortunately, Victoria went to college preparatory school, so the college application process was something that was discussed in her coursework since middle school. Victoria's journey to higher education was relatively simpler for her than it was for most other LFP students because she is in an 11-year college program that supported her through the entire college application process; now, they provide her with scholarships and resources she might need. This program will continue to support her until she graduates from

USD. Victoria expressed her gratitude for this program because she knew things about college that most students do not figure out until much later in their undergraduate careers.

For the rest of my co-participants, college and FAFSA applications were very difficult to complete because they had minimal parent involvement due to language barriers and lack of knowledge about the higher education system. While Sara's parents were going through the legal processes of a divorce, Sara was beginning her college and FAFSA applications. Sara was not 18 at this time and had no idea how to complete her FAFSA application with divorced parents. She was also embarrassed to ask for help because she did not want to explain her situation to random people. She said, "when we talk about non-traditional students, we only assume like transfer students, but I'd say, I was definitely not a traditional student." Sara was able to maneuver through the complicated process and began her undergraduate career at a UC. But when the time came, Sara attended her university orientation alone because there was no Spanish session available, and her mother did not speak English. She explained she would have had a lot more familial support when she was an undergraduate student if her father had been around because he was the parent who spoke English.

Essence really wanted to go to school out of state because she had never been anywhere besides California and her family's hometown in Mexico. She said, "I wanted to go out of state, and I found the school I wanted to apply to. So, I figured it out, and I applied, and I got in. But then I realized that I could not afford it, so I had to go to community college." She figured she should complete general education and any prerequisites at community college and then transfer to a school out of state. But even then, she still could not afford to leave the state. Fortunately, she had a great community college counselor that connected her to the TRIO program and helped her apply for the Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan, which guaranteed that she would not have to

pay tuition if she transferred to a UC. She got it and transferred to a UC. For both Sara and Essence, applying to graduate school was an entirely different and simpler process because they already had experience in higher education that allowed them to know more about what opportunities were possible and/or available to them.

Gloria knew she could not get help at home with college applications, so she relied heavily on her high school AVID teacher to help her with applications and proofreading personal statements, and scholarship prompts. If not for this teacher's support, she does not know if she would have made it to college. This teacher believed in Gloria so much that he encouraged her to apply to an Ivy League school. This initially interested Gloria, but she knew her mother would never be on board with her moving across the country. Gloria had narrowed down her decision to two schools; she ended up choosing USD because it was the closest university to home, and her mother had told her that she would not be able to support her or visit her at the other school because it was too far. Gloria liked the other school, but she could not imagine not having her family's support, so she decided not to go.

Hannah always knew college was something that she wanted to do because school was something that she enjoyed and came very naturally to her. But she described the application process as "super stressful." Although her mother had gone to college in Mexico, she was not able to help because Mexico's Higher system was completely different from the United States' higher education system. Like Gloria, Hannah had to rely heavily on her Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program teacher in high school. She still had to do most of the process independently, but he was there for any questions that she had along the way until she made it to college.

Something three co-participants said that surprised me was their fathers discouraged them from going to college. Because her FAFSA application process was difficult, Sara's father told her to "just not go." Hannah and Victoria were both told going to college was not for them because they were women. Hannah said, "according to my dad, I was supposed to clean the house, have kids and like to cook. And I was like, no."

### ***Biggest Motivations***

All my co-participants mentioned that their biggest motivation for perceiving is their mothers and families. They also emphasized they are committed to accomplishing all they can so that their mother's sacrifices are worth it. Most also mentioned that they are determined to succeed out of spite and prove themselves to their absent fathers and the people who doubted them or thought they would not amount to much. All participants are also very driven to give back to their communities and help others in need.

Sara is an academic advisor; in her work, she believes she contributes a lot. She said I bring my lived experience and a sense of realness and authenticity. I also bring a willingness to learn. She says that she wants to provide something that was never provided to her. Sara strives to be like the people who really cared and wanted the best for her in her college career. For example, when she was applying to study abroad, the time to buy a plane ticket came along. She had not told her mother that she applied because Sara was sure she would not approve. She was explaining this to her study abroad advisor, and a Spanish-speaking study abroad advisor overheard Sara's dilemma and offered to speak with her mother. Once the idea of studying abroad was explained to Sara's mother in her language, she was able to book the flight with her mother's approval that same day. Sara said, "this other advisor did not have to do that for me, but he did because is understood exactly what I was going through." Sara wants to offer this same level of

support and advising to the students she sees every day, especially those from minoritized communities like herself.

In her program right now, Elena is working with her professors and her local community to provide a revenue-sharing crowdfunding platform. She said “what is impactful about it is that this debt that would be raised would be for Black, Indigenous, and Women of Color entrepreneurs so that they can more readily and easily access fair capital for their small businesses. A lot of entrepreneurs of color and women have difficulty accessing capital because of traditional financial systems.” She explains the traditional financial system requires small business owners to have a good credit score and be able to offer collateral and personal guarantees. “In many cases, folks from communities of color cannot offer these because of systematic racism, preventing them from being able to build generational wealth, so they end up taking out predatory loans that bury them.” This crowd-funding platform would be a pathway for them to bypass all some of the usual steps to gain fair capital. Once borrowers are able to pay the money back, it helps show credibility and bankability, so they increase their credit scores and can be approved for bigger loans through banks for their small businesses.

Victoria is currently on a nursing pathway. In the long run, it is her dream to give back to her community by funding her own low-income clinic to provide free or affordable healthcare to low-income families. She wants to work at the San Diego Family Health Centers to gain experience, and then she wants to fund one on her own. She said, “I know the importance of these clinics and people who really care to be at these clinics because this is where my family had to go for healthcare.”

Gloria wants to eventually own a private practice and be a marriage and family therapist to promote healthy communication and emotional health to put an end to cycles of trauma. She



knew this was her calling because she experienced a lot of transmitted trauma from her parents and grandparents. When she was disciplined, it was very authoritarian, which is an extremely strict parenting style. Gloria said, “don’t get me wrong, my mom is a great mom; she just mimicked the way that her parents raised her, which focused a lot on obedience instead of nurturing.” She lists some of the common things her mother would say, like “because I said so” or “because I’m your mother.” She strives to end trauma by being an authoritative parent for her future children. This way, there are clear lines of communication between her and her child; she is being strict but fair and always gives good reasons for discipline. Another reason why Gloria wants to be a marriage and family therapist is because she knows the experience of being in a custody battle firsthand. She said, “I remember that the first person who asked me how I was and how I was feeling about my parents separating was the court mediator.” Gloria felt she should have been able to talk about this with her parents, but her parents did not have the emotional intelligence to be there for her like she needed, which is why she believes her passions and work are crucial for everyone, especially those in the Latinx community.

As an aspiring engineer, Heather wants to figure out ways to make drinking water more accessible in rural and developing regions of the world. She explains that she recently learned that seagulls are the only bird on the planet that can drink freshwater and saltwater. “They can only do it because they have a little self-filter in their eyeball that is called a subpoena gland. So, when you go to the beach and you see them shaking their heads, that’s them getting rid of the salt.” Hannah wants to keep learning and keep going to school to hopefully be able to mimic the subpoena gland and create a way to filter water to make it drinkable. Hannah goes on to express her gratitude for being privileged enough to not have to worry about not having drinkable water.

Unfortunately, this is not the case in some countries, which is why she wants to share her knowledge to make an impactful difference.

### ***Resilience***

At the end of each of my interviews, I asked each participant for their definitions of resilience; those definitions are outlined in Table 4. It is important that students be able to acknowledge and see resilience in themselves because it is a form of navigational capital and resistance capital (Yosso, 2005). Framing students' lived experiences and resilience as strengths encourages them to be more confident in their abilities. This confidence, in turn, allows students to ask for help with no shame and to know how to advocate for themselves.

**Table 4**

#### *Definitions of Resilience*

| Co-participant | Responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sara           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "It's being able to overcome all the things that I didn't think I could"</li> <li>● "Being able to take what was given to me, navigate it, and make it great"</li> <li>● "I don't think you have to necessarily be in the face of adversity every time"</li> <li>● "It's from what you experience and moving forward."</li> </ul> |
| Elena          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "I think resilience is being able to work through barriers that have been intentionally or unintentionally put before you or in your path"</li> <li>● "Being able to move through barriers, whether or not it feels like you're doing so successfully"</li> </ul>                                                                 |
| Victoria       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "I think it's not just the motivation to keep going, it's the strength to just overcome obstacles"</li> <li>● "I think that it's also just having those experiences and going through all kind of challenges and being able to reflect on them and grow from them"</li> </ul>                                                     |
| Gloria         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● "Being able to go through all these things that are out of your control and still come out the other side"</li> <li>● "Being able to overcome all of those things and learning from them"</li> </ul>                                                                                                                              |

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|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hannah | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Being able to go through life or just do anything with all these obstacles thrown at you and still being able to continue. Whether it's being sick, whether it's not having a parent present, whether it's just a cultural shock, a natural disaster, anything left and right.”</li> <li>• “It is being able to continuously push through, to reach your biggest goals”</li> </ul> |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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## Reflection

Based on Sara's and Elena's responses, it seemed as though not being able to be on campus as much affected their sense of belonging. They are rarely on campus because Sara has a full-time job and Elena is a commuter student. The COVID-19 pandemic also limited their access to be on campus. Due to the pandemic, we live in a new “normal,” meaning people have realized that a lot of things are more effective and efficient to facilitate online or over a Zoom call. This limits in-person interactions and the ability to cultivate meaningful connections and relationships that create a sense of belonging. The pandemic has simply changed the way that we interact with each other, so the big question is, how do institutions foster a sense of belonging for students who are not able to make it onto campus as much?

As co-participants were explaining their stories, I found myself relating to almost everything they shared, and it made me feel less alone in my experience. I felt honored my co-participants trusted me enough to share their life experiences and realities with me. Listening to everything that my participants have overcome made me reflect on everything I have overcome. My co-participants and I hold so much brilliance within us. Sometimes it is hard to see or recognize because we have been socialized to believe that we are less than or inferior because of the barriers we have had to overcome. The truth is no matter who you are, what identities you hold, or where you come from, everyone is worthy of being in academia. Everyone is unique and has different perspectives and strengths to contribute to professional and academic spaces.

Conducting these interviews also made me think about how the plática would have gone if I had been able to facilitate it. I think facilitating this plática would have allowed my co- participants to meet others who hold their same identities and leave the space with a new community. I believe this in itself would have created a sense of belonging. Sharing space with like-minded people or people who have similar experiences as you does something uniquely healing to the mind and soul.

### **Planning and Action**

Now that I know what I know and have more insight into what LFP students need outside of my own experience, I have many valuable recommendations to offer faculty, staff, and administrators at the USD. These recommendations will contribute ideas to the different ways that USD can implement more forms of support for LFP students. My recommendations are also centered around the university's goal of becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution. I felt like this study also gave me a starting point for the non-profit organization I would like to create to support LFP students and their families.

### **Honoring Co-Participant Experience**

After my co-participants shared their stories with me, I was inspired to create something that honored our lived and labored experiences. With the help of a friend and artist from my hometown, Mary Scanlan, I was able to adapt a lotería card to convey the LFP experience through art (see Appendix G). Lotería is a game of chance similar to bingo that holds cultural significance in Mexican culture. The lotería card I chose to adapt is the “el mundo” (the world) card. On this card, there is a man holding up the world. I asked the artist to replace the man with a woman who is a student and instead on holding up one world, she is holding two worlds. The countries highlighted within these worlds in red are the United States and Mexico. Holding up

and navigating through these two world is mine and my co-participants experience at LFP student.

We had to be the first ones to assimilate into this country. The first ones to understand the culture, financial system, educational system, and corporate system because our parents and grandparents immigrated from Mexico. We had to figure out these systems despite them all being designed to make us fail. We are also supposed to be the first ones to get educated, get degrees, and get good jobs so we can start creating generational wealth; so we can also be the first ones that can truly invest in ourselves and go to therapy. This way we can be the first ones to have a healthy relationship with ourselves and pursue to have a healthy relationship with a significant other. And now it has become our duty to give back to our communities to mentor others in their careers and personal life journeys because we are the few that will understand this experience because we have lived through it.

I printed this artwork with the dimensions of a real lotería card to give to each of my participants. I also wrote an individualized thank you card to go along with the lotería card. I wanted the lotería card to be a reminder that they are brilliant and resilient. Being the firsts in their families to navigate this country and academia means that they have changed the trajectory of their entire lineage and that is an accomplishment that means the world to us, our families, our ancestors and our future generations.

### **Limitations**

I believe that my biggest limitation was having a large number of factors to consider, but not a representative number of participants to produce significant results or correlations. For example, it was hard to determine if the parents' age was a significant because my co-participants' mothers were so close in age. Although this study produced valuable qualitative

data on the LFP experience, academia suggests that a significant sample size in qualitative would be approximately 30 participants (Mason, 2010). I believe this data is valuable because although the data on first-generation students may be saturated, the experience of LFP students is not.

One reason it was difficult to recruit participants for my study was the COVID-19 pandemic. Students seem to be experiencing a lot of Zoom fatigue. It is hard to have classes and meet online all day and still have the energy to add another Zoom meeting to your calendar for something not required, like this study. Given the opportunity to conduct this research again, I would try to offer incentives like a gift card, for example. I originally had six participants; however, one of them only filled out the questionnaire and did not respond to my email asking them for their availability for a one-on-one interview. Perhaps this student did not respond to my email because they did not see a mutual gain, or they were too busy, or maybe they were just not comfortable disclosing their life experiences with a stranger. The pandemic also made it difficult to conduct a third cycle and schedule my one-on-one interviews with my participants.

Another limitation was the lack of representation. Although I feel like there were many types of students represented, considering I had a variety of academic programs and both graduate and undergraduate students. The types of students that were missing were male identifying students and undocumented students. Additionally, although I aimed to study Latinx students broadly, all of my co-participants were of Mexican descent.

### **Recommendations**

This entire action research project has been very insightful and put me in a position to offer recommendations to the University of San Diego to support my communities and LFP students. To answer my first research question, the factors that contributed to LFP students' resilience are all their barriers and the Latinx-specific dilemmas that they face in the U.S. higher

education system. What keeps them motivated to continue being resilient and accomplishing their goals are their mothers' sacrifices, proving people wrong, and putting themselves in a position to give back to their communities. My second research question attempted to explore what institutions can implement for LFP students that will allow them to foster resilience and leverage their capital.

### **Celebrating Students**

My first recommendation is there should be intentional student celebrations to remind students of the value they hold and feel valued by the institution. For example, having campus-wide programming that are put on by faculty, staff, or administrators during Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month or Latinx Affinity Graduations. Currently, this work is put on by Latinx student organizations. The problem with this is that it is almost expected that Latinx students will always take on this type of programming so that the university does not have to. But if the entire institution committed to creating an annual Latinx event during Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month it would make a huge difference and show the university's commitment to being an HSI.

### **Community Building for Graduate Students**

Based on graduate student responses, it seemed that they feel overall less supported than undergraduate students because they do not feel a sense of belonging. They have not been able to feel like they belong because they are rarely on campus to take advantage of community-building opportunities. My recommendation is Graduate Student Life offers some of the same events they put together in-person to also be offered in an online or Zoom format as well. For example, perhaps the monthly First-Generation Dialogues can be hosted virtually every other month. I also believe that it would be beneficial for Graduate Student Life to gauge student availability every

semester. This could be a Google Form every semester that is used to ask students what types of events they would like to see and what times they would be most likely to attend. This way the university would be creating a sense of belonging for all types of students.

### **Cultural Awareness**

I am recommending professional development opportunities centers around cultural awareness be offered to faculty, staff, and administrators. Some co-participants expressed they do not feel supported or valued as Latinx students sometimes because faculty, staff, and administrators are not aware or sensitive to the additional complexities that they have to deal with. On a larger scale, I believe that the university can do a better job of creating opportunities for learning for all members of the USD community. For example, sending out a campus-wide email reminding students of the meaning and historical significance of May 5th instead of hanging culturally insensitive decorations that encourage stereotypes about the Latinx community.

### **Mental Health Resources**

The University of San Diego Student Wellness team offers over ten support groups for specific groups to come together and talk about their experiences. I am very surprised that USD student wellness has not offered a Latinx support group. In Latinx communities, mental health and wellbeing are not acknowledged or recognized as something that should be prioritized, which is why I am recommending a Latinx Support group be added to the list of existing support groups. Additionally, being a product of a single-parent household brings feelings of anger and sadness, some things for a lifetime. For example, I feel this way every time I think about what I have missed out on and what my future children will miss out on because my father I not in my life. Latinx students need a space to be in the community and talk about these feelings to heal.



### **Financial Aid Workshops**

Applying to FAFSA is a difficult process when you do not come from a traditional family structure. This is why I recommend that USD OneStop offer FAFSA workshops focusing on how students should fill out their applications if they do not come from a traditional family structure. This is a proactive way of supporting the products of SPF students. USD OneStop should also offer financial literacy workshops for LFP students. This will allow students to be more aware of how to manage money and start building good credit scores to put students in a position to start creating generational wealth.

### **Spanish/Bilingual Orientation**

My final recommendation is for USD Student Onboarding. I believe it is crucial for USD to offer Spanish/bilingual orientation sessions for Latinx students and their families. Investing in Latinx students also means investing in their families (Covarrubias, 2021). Having Spanish orientation allows families to be more involved in their students' higher education journey. I believe that Spanish sessions would give families a better understanding of what college is like in their preferred language, which would make the experience more insightful. These sessions would also alleviate the worries that Latinx parents feel when their children move away from home to school. Offering Spanish/bilingual orientation, should be a priority because the United States has witnessed a dramatic growth in people identifying as Latinx. This shift is mirrored in today's higher education student demography (Covarrubias, 2021).

### **Conclusion**

The main reason for this action research was to explore resilience and suggest ways predominantly White institutions can do a better job supporting LFP students. I found students would benefit from intentional celebratory events, more opportunities for commuter students to

build community, Latinx support groups, financial aid workshops, and Spanish orientation sessions. I also wanted to create an opportunity for storytelling. When people read the stories of my co-participants and I, other LFP students will be able to relate to anonymous strangers because they will know exactly what it is like to hold these identities. To conclude this research, I asked students what advice they would give their younger selves. Sara said, “I wish that my younger self would know that it was all going to be okay. I wish somebody would have told me that it was okay to be a teen, that it was okay to be a kid, and that it was okay to make mistakes.” Elena said she would tell her younger self “To believe in her abilities and her worth.” Victoria said, “I would say, cut myself some slack, especially when you fail. I feel like I put so much pressure on myself, and it's kind of caused me to like, kind of be a little burnt out.” Gloria said, “Don't be scared to ask for help; it's literally people's job in the university setting to help you. I'm still learning that asking for help is not a sign of weakness.” Hannah would tell her younger self that “everything's going to be okay. The universe has a plan for you. What is meant to be for you will be for you.” I leave this study with a final piece of advice to my co-participants and other LFP student: Be unapologetically you. If people don't like you or spaces don't make you feel welcomed, then maybe that's not for you, but never make yourself small just to fit in those spaces. You are worthy, you are brilliant, and you are resilient.

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## Appendix A

### Recruitment Email

Greetings,

My name is Alejandra González-Zúñiga, and I student in the Higher Education Leadership program at the University of San Diego. I am the principal investigator of this study. I would like to invite you to participate in a study titled, **Nuestra Fuerza: Understanding the Resilience of Latinx First-Generation Students from Single-Parent Families**. The purpose of this study is to understand the resilience of first-generation, Latinx, students that are also products of single-parent families. If we are able to understand how these students become resilient, institutions can implement specific resources for these students that foster and encourage it, to ultimately improve educational attainment among this population.

Participants will be asked to complete the following:

- an online questionnaire (20 minutes)
- an in-person or online individual interview (60 minutes)

Your participation in this study will take a total of 80 minutes.

There is minimal risk involved in this action research. Please understand that this study is voluntary, and you may opt-out at any point if you feel discomfort related to the process.

Benefits for participants include an opportunity for healing and story-telling that may have been long overdue. It is also an opportunity to connect and build relationships with others who hold the same or similar identities to you. While there may be few direct benefits to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will be knowing that you helped action researchers better understand how current first-generation, Latinx, students are products of single-parent families navigate higher education.

If you are interested in participating or are unsure if you meet the specification, please contact me via email [agonzalezzuniga@sandiego](mailto:agonzalezzuniga@sandiego). You may also contact my faculty advisor for the study, Dr. Kecia Brown by email: [keciabrown@sandiego.edu](mailto:keciabrown@sandiego.edu) for more information.

Best,

Alejandra González-Zúñiga  
Master of Arts Higher Education Leadership Candidate  
University of San Diego  
School of Education and Leadership Studies  
Email: [agonzalezzuniga@sandiego](mailto:agonzalezzuniga@sandiego)

## Appendix B

### Recruitment Announcement

Hi, My name is Alejandra González-Zúñiga, and I am a student in the Higher Education Leadership program at the University of San Diego. I am the principal investigator of this study. I would like to invite you to participate in a study titled, **Nuestra Fuerza: Understanding the Resilience of Latinx First-Generation Students from Single-Parent Families.**

I am looking for first-generation undergraduate and graduate students who are Latinx, first-generation, and are also a product of a single-parent household for this study. We hope to examine which factors contributed to their resilience in higher education. If we are able to understand how these students become resilient, institutions can implement specific resources for these students that foster and encourage it, to ultimately improve educational attainment among this population.

Participants will be asked to complete the following:

- an online questionnaire (20 minutes)
- an in-person or online individual interview (60 minutes)

Your participation in this study will take a total of 80 minutes.

There is minimal risk involved in this action research. Please understand that this study is voluntary, and you may opt-out at any point if you feel discomfort related to the process.

Benefits for participants include an opportunity for healing and story-telling that may have been long overdue. It is also an opportunity to connect and build relationships with others who hold the same or similar identities to you. While there may be few direct benefits to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will be knowing that you helped action researchers better understand how current first-generation, Latinx, students are products of single-parent families navigate higher education.

If you are interested in participating or are unsure if you meet the specification, please contact me via email at [agonzalezuniga@sandiego.edu](mailto:agonzalezuniga@sandiego.edu). Thank you for your time.



## Appendix C

### Recruitment Flyer

**Nuestra Fuerza: Understanding the Resilience of Latinx First-Generation Students from Single-Parent Families**

# SEEKING PARTICIPANTS!



## YOUR EXPERIENCE MATTERS!

Being a product of a **Single-Parent Family** while holding other identities such as **Latinx & First-Generation**, poses many academic, financial, and social challenges for students. Some students are able to be quite successful regardless. This study aims to pinpoint the factors that contribute to this population's **resilience** to encourage it through programming, events, and/or initiatives in higher education.

FOR MORE DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR  
AT AGONZALEZZUNIGA@SANDIEGO.EDU OR SCAN QR CODE!



## **Appendix D**

### Adult Consent Form

#### **University of San Diego Institutional Review Board Research Participant Consent Form**

For the action research study entitled:  
Nuestra Fuerza: Understanding the Resilience of Latinx First-Generation Students from  
Single-Parent Families

#### **I. Purpose of the action research study**

Alejandra González-Zúñiga, the principal investigator of this study, is a student in the Higher Education Leadership program at the University of San Diego. You are invited to participate in a research study that she is conducting. The purpose of this study is to understand the resilience of first-generation, Latinx, students that are also products of single-parent families. If we are able to understand how these students become resilient, institutions can implement specific resources for these students that foster and encourage it, to ultimately improve educational attainment among this population.

#### **II. What you will be asked to do**

##### **Questionnaire**

Complete a 20-minute online questionnaire that asks you questions about your contact information, demographic information relating to your identities, and the types of support you receive from USD while holding your specific identity. The purpose of this questionnaire is to get to know participants in a variety of ways to gauge where they are at before the one-on-one interviews to prepare accordingly.

##### **Interview**

Participate in a 60-minute, one-on-one interview (in-person or online) between the Principal Investigator and Student Participant (you). Interview questions will discuss experiences in your single-parent family, barriers, points of access to higher education, and success in your educational journey. You will also be asked to elaborate on your questionnaire responses if applicable.

You will be audio recorded during the interview.

The principal investigator will be taking notes.

#### **III. Foreseeable risks or discomforts**

Sometimes when people are asked to think about their past experiences or feelings, they feel

sad, angry, anxious and/or overwhelmed. For this study, the safe word is “RED.” At any point, if you feel too overwhelmed to continue, say the safe word and the study will come to an immediate halt.

If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings at any time, you can call toll-free, 24 hours a day:

**San Diego Mental Health Hotline at 1-800-479-3339**

**For helpful resources at the University of San Diego use the following link or scan this QR Code:**

<https://sites.sandiego.edu/youareusd/>



#### **IV. Benefits**

Benefits for participants include an opportunity for healing and story-telling that may have been long overdue. It is also an opportunity to connect and build relationships with others who hold the same or similar identities to you. While there may be few direct benefits to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will be knowing that you helped action researchers better understand how current Latinx, first-generation, students are products of single-parent families navigate higher education.

#### **V. Confidentiality**

Any information provided and/or identifying records will remain confidential and kept in a locked file and/or password-protected computer file in the action researcher’s office for a minimum of five years. All data collected from you will be coded with a number or pseudonym (fake name). Your real name will not be used. The results of this action research project may be made public and information quoted in professional journals and meetings, but information from this study will only be reported as a group, and not individually.

The information or materials you provide **may** be cleansed of all identifiers (like your name) and used in future action research.

#### **VI. Compensation**

**a) You will receive no compensation for your participation in the study.**

#### **VII. Voluntary Nature of this Action Research**

**Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to do this,** and you can refuse to answer any question or quit at any time. Deciding not to participate or not answering any of the questions will not affect any benefits you’re entitled to, like your health care, your employment, or grades. **You can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or retaliation.**

#### **VIII. Contact Information**

**If you have any questions about this action research, you may contact either:**

**1) Alejandra González-Zúñiga**  
**Email:** [agonzalezzuniga@sandiego.edu](mailto:agonzalezzuniga@sandiego.edu)

**2) Kecia Brown**  
**Email:** [keciabrown@sandiego.edu](mailto:keciabrown@sandiego.edu)

**I have read and understood this form, and consent to the action research as it has been described to me. I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.**

**Print Name:**

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**Participant Signature:** **Date:**

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**Principal Investigator:** **Date:**

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## **Appendix E**

### **Online Questionnaire**

Thank you so much for choosing to be a part of my action research project entitled:  
Nuestra Fuerza: Understanding the Resilience of First-Generation, Latinx, Single-Parent Family  
Students

I want to preface this questionnaire by saying that you do not have to answer anything that you are uncomfortable answering. Most questions are under the "required" function on this form but if you do come across a question you would rather not answer, feel free to type in "N/A" or select the "Prefer not to answer" option. This questionnaire should take no more than 20 minutes.

If you have any questions while filling this out, please feel free to text/call me at 530-859-3943 or email me at [agonzalezzuniga@sandiego.edu](mailto:agonzalezzuniga@sandiego.edu).

#### **Contact Information**

- Full Name
- Preferred Name or Nickname
- Preferred Pronouns
- Email
- Phone Number
- Preferred Form of Contact

#### **Student Demographic Information**

- How do you identify racially and/or ethnically?
- Would you consider yourself or have you ever considered yourself low-income?
- Were you born in the United States?

- Was either of your parents born in the United States?
- What is your gender identity?
- What is your single parent's gender identity?
- What is the highest degree or level of schooling your single parent has completed? If currently enrolled, highest degree received.
- What type of degree are you currently completing (i.e. bachelors, masters) and what is your academic program?
- Do you plan on pursuing another degree?
- What is your single parent's age?
- Do you have any siblings? If so, how many?

### **Likert Scale Statements**

Please answer the following questions

- I feel supported as a Latinx student at my institution.
- I feel supported as a first-generation student at my institution.
- I feel like I can openly share that I am a product of a single-parent family with no judgment in spaces within my institution.
- I am comfortable asking for help or resources when I need them at my institution.
- I have a good relationship with a faculty or staff member at my institution.
- I feel like I belong at my institution.
- I feel like my culture, background, and lived experiences are valued at my institution.
- I would describe myself as resilient.
- I would describe myself as brilliant.

## **Appendix F**

### **Interview Guide**

Thank you so much for choosing to be a part of my action research project. I want to preface this questionnaire by saying that you do not have to answer anything that you are uncomfortable answering. If at any point you don't feel comfortable answering any of the questions please feel free to let me know and we will skip over those questions. At any point, if you feel too overwhelmed to continue, say the safe word and the study will come to an immediate halt. As a reminder, the safe word is "RED." Before we get started, I want to emphasize that this is a safe space. Some of what we discuss here today may be heavy stuff. Please do what you need to do to take care of yourself. I also wanted to let you know that you are being audio recorded. I will be the only person that will have access to listen to the audio. This interview should take about 60 minutes. The purpose of this interview is to get to know you and your journey to higher education as a Latinx, first-generation student from a single-parent family. Do you have any questions?

1. Tell me about you! Who are you?
2. Follow-up question from online questionnaire if applicable
3. What was your childhood like?
4. When did your parents split up? Or when did you start living in a single-parent family structure?
5. How did you feel about your parents' separation? Or how did it feel to only have one parent?
6. Do you have a relationship with your other parent? Or do you have a relationship with

your biological parent?

7. What was your journey like to get to higher education?
8. How involved were your parents in your school and application process for college? How involved are they now?
9. What has been the biggest motivation in your higher education career?
10. What are your biggest successes and/or accomplishments? What has been the biggest contribution to your success?
11. What resources have been most helpful in your college career?
12. What type of resources would've been more helpful?
13. Who are your people? Who do you turn to when you need help? And why?
14. Do you believe you have something to contribute to your academic/professional spaces?  
If so, what? If not, why?
15. What advice would you give your younger self if you could?
16. What is your definition of resilience?



## Appendix G

## Nuestra Fuerza Lotería Card

