2019

Reducing the Attainment Gap for Low Socio Economic Status Students: Concurrent Enrollment Program Evaluation Colorado Mountain College

Jeremiah Fernandez Johnson
University of Denver, jjohnson@coloradomtn.edu

Reducing the Attainment Gap for Low Socio Economic Status Students: Concurrent Enrollment Program Evaluation Colorado Mountain College

Abstract

A gap in college degree attainment is growing in the United States as college tuition and fees have drastically increased creating many barriers for students in low socio economic status (SES) families. These barriers are just the beginning in the many hurdles low SES students face in entering a college pathway and persisting to completing certificates or bachelor's degrees. The state of Colorado has addressed this equity gap in higher education by creating a state wide initiative they have called Colorado Rises. This initiative is centered on increasing college completion statewide to 66% by 2025. In order to achieve this goal many initiatives have been created. One such initiative that was passed into law was the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (CEPA). This law allows for Title I funding to be allotted for qualifying high school students to enroll in college courses simultaneously during their high school tenure. A more common term is used in the High School system as Duel Enrollment or DE. Both are the same program with different names.

Colorado Mountain College (CMC) is a multi-campus community college based in the Rocky Mountains. The campus located in Edwards, Colorado has one of the largest CEPA programs in its system and also in the state of Colorado. The CMC in Edwards has created streamlined processes to utilize high school teachers that are credentialed through their higher education accrediting body in order to supplant college faculty into the high school schedule. This along with using CMC faculty to supplement the offerings to expand options for students has allowed for a rapid increase in enrollment. This program evaluation is modeled from the Utilization Focused Evaluation method to improve upon the CEPA program at CMC in helping low SES students' aspirations, completion and transfer rates.

Document Type

Doctoral Research Paper

Degree Name

Ed.D.

Department

Higher Education

First Advisor

Ryan Evely Gildersleeve, Ph.D.

Second Advisor

Judy M. Kiyama, Ph.D.

Third Advisor

Christine Nelson, Ph.D.

Keywords

Attainment, Low socio economic, Concurrent enrollment program

Subject Categories

Community College Leadership | Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research | Higher Education

Reducing the Attainment Gap for low Socio Economic Status Students: Concurrent Enrollment Program Evaluation Colorado Mountain College

_____

A Doctoral Research Project

Presented to

The Morgridge College of Education

University of Denver

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

_____

by

Jeremiah Fernandez Johnson

May 2019

Advisor: Dr. Ryan Evely-Gildersleeve

Author: Jeremiah Fernandez Johnson
Title: R Reducing the Attainment Gap for low Socio Economic Status Students: Concurrent
Enrollment Program Evaluation Colorado Mountain College
Advisor: Dr. Ryan Evely-Gildersleeve
Degree Date: March 2018

Abstract

A gap in college degree attainment is growing in the United States as college tuition and fees have drastically increased creating many barriers for students in low socio economic status (SES) families. These barriers are just the beginning in the many hurdles low SES students face in entering a college pathway and persisting to completing certificates or bachelor's degrees. The state of Colorado has addressed this equity gap in higher education by creating a state wide initiative they have called Colorado Rises. This initiative is centered on increasing college completion statewide to 66% by 2025. In order to achieve this goal many initiatives have been created. One such initiative that was passed into law was the Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (CEPA). This law allows for Title I funding to be allotted for qualifying high school students to enroll in college courses simultaneously during their high school tenure. A more common term is used in the High School system as Duel Enrollment or DE. Both are the same program with different names.

Colorado Mountain College (CMC) is a multi-campus community college based in the Rocky Mountains. The campus located in Edwards, Colorado has one of the largest CEPA programs in its system and also in the state of Colorado. The CMC in Edwards has created streamlined processes to utilize high school teachers that are credentialed through their higher education accrediting body in order to supplant college faculty into the high school schedule. This along with using CMC faculty to supplement the offerings to

expand options for students has allowed for a rapid increase in enrolment. This program evaluation is modeled from the Utilization Focused Evaluation method to improve upon the CEPA program at CMC in helping low SES students' aspirations, completion and transfer rates.

Acknowledgements

Writing this section seems to be the most difficult and most gratifying. There are many people that have helped me along this journey to completing my Doctorate at the University of Denver. Before I go into the list of the amazing faculty and my most amazing friends and cohort, I must first address my family. They are the earth beneath my feet, the sun above my head, and the stars I sleep to at night. They are my world.

This degree is completely dedicated to my Mother, Serina Bicharo Johnson and my Father, Kenneth Ross Johnson. Both never went to college and worked tirelessly to provide for our family in the best ways they could. They both were passionate, loving, and supportive parents that wanted only but the very best for us. My mother passed away of cancer when I was eighteen and my last memory made with her was sitting on her bed amidst a tangle of plastic oxygen tubing, as she asked me about my life and what I wanted to do with it. We grew up poor and there was no one in our immediate or extended family that went to college. I told her my dream of finishing a bachelor's degree. This made her smile. Tears slowly collected in her eyelids. She was happy. She passed soon after. My father was such a supportive force during my undergraduate years and into my Master's program. Without his love and support I would have never made it through my first month of graduate school. He too passed away soon after I graduated with my Master's degree.

I would also like to dedicate this degree to my daughter Isabella. You are my light, and my heart. Your smiles and laughter bring me so much joy and hope that I feel like anything is possible. I love you with all my heart and am eternally grateful to have you in my life forever. As time moves ahead and I think back on the struggles of writing and researching, I will always remember our deep conversations we shared about education, and your doodles you drew on my research papers that said “I love you dad”. Isabella, I love you to the moon and back again, and as infinitely as the expanding universe. Thank you! Thank you to my sister. She is and will always be my rock. Her unending support and love gave me such great confidence. She has carried me in some of the hardest moments of my life without hesitation. I am truly grateful. You are one of the strongest people I know and am so happy that we are close. I learned what true strength is from you and the importance of family. I love you and thank you.

Next, I would like to thank the faculty at DU. Thank you so much Dr. Ryan Evely-Gildersleeve. Your patience and wisdom has led me to new ways of thinking, better ways of thinking. I am forever in your gratitude for shepherding our cohort across the stage, when it was not too long ago that I ever could see the light at the end of the tunnel. Also, such a big thank you to Dr. Chris Nelson, and Dr. Judy Marquez Kiyama who have served as my committee members. The both of you have been and will always be sources of inspiration for me. Your guidance and knowledge transformed my life. Thank you. Also, thank you to Dr. Cecelia Orphan. You raised the bar in so many ways for me and introduced me to the world of critical literature and history. Thank you. Thank you also to all the wonderful adjuncts who fill the gaps and make the program truly cohesive.

I would also like to thank the executive leadership at Colorado Mountain College. Thank you to Dr. Carrie Hauser, Matt Gianneschi, and the board of trustees. There are rare moments when a person's career is truly cared for and respected. Never in my life have I ever experienced such great leadership then I have working for you both. You have made it possible for me to achieve a lifelong dream that I would have never been able to do on my own. Both Carrie and Matt, thank you from the bottom of my heart. You both have been the most inspiring leaders I have ever had the honor of working for.

Lastly, thank you to the cohort. You made it possible for me to see this through. All of you. Your shoulders that have provided sturdy supports kept me standing up in times of exhaustion and doubt. The tears and joy we all shared together will be forever in my memories. Creating this bond with each and every one of you will last a lifetime and I am truly grateful to know you all.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

Statement of the Problem. The United States is experiencing a growing gap in postsecondary credential attainment. This paucity is reflected in technical certificates, associates degrees, or bachelor's degrees. Statistically, students of low socio economic status (SES) fare far worse than their counterparts from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Closing the College Gap, 2016). Low SES are defined as students receiving free or reduced lunch through Title I funding or Pell grant eligible.

The Colorado Department of Education, School Nutrition outline the criteria for Title I funding for Free or Reduced Lunch. On average, a household of 4 will qualify for free lunch when the annual household income reaches $32,630. Reduced lunch qualifications for a family of 4 is $46,435. The income qualification is outlined for family size from 1-8 family members with accompanying yearly incomes (Colorado Free and Reduced, 2019).

CMC in Edwards, CO has developed the largest CEPA program within its system. The CEPA enrollment with CMC in Edwards has been increasing dramatically since its inception in 2009, however students enrolled in CEPA are not matriculating into CMC at similar rates. There are many low SES students enrolled at the partnering CEPA high schools, however not identifiable due to current laws in place, CMC has had an average student head count of 35 students that are Pell eligible from 2013-2017. This program evaluation was designed to understand more fully the college aspirations of low SES students that participate in the CEPA program.

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, prices for college tuition, fees, room and board for one year undergraduate students at public universities increased

34% from 2005-2006 and 2015-2016. The increase rose by 26% for private institutions with the same variables. Both increases have been adjusted for inflation (Tuition, n.d.). The total average cost in 2015-2016 to attend public institutions, including 2-year and 4-year colleges is estimated to be $16, 757 per year. The total average cost to attend private institutions in 2015-2016 is estimated to cost $43,065 at private nonprofits, and $23,776 at private for-profit institutions for one academic year. According to the U.S. Department of Education, college tuition and fees have rapidly outpaced the rate of inflation. College tuition has increased at a rate of 1,020% in the United States since 1978 (Courtney, 2013).

Given these statistics, the cost to attend college has created and continues to create barriers for low socio-economic status (SES) students. Studies indicate that a smaller percentage of low SES students (14%) are graduating with bachelor's degrees within 8 years of graduating high school compared to those of middle SES (29%), reflecting an even larger gap with those in high SES (60%) (Postsecondary Attainment, 2015). I have conducted a program evaluation to understand more deeply how the CEPA at CMC affects college aspirations for low SES students.

The CEPA program at CMC utilizes Title I funding to pay for college tuition for qualified high school students during their high school tenure. The CEPA bill was passed in Colorado in May of 2009 (Concurrent Enrollment, 2017). Colorado Mountain College in Edwards, CO has the highest CEPA enrollments within the CMC system of 11 sites and shares in the top ten rankings in the state of CO (Colorado Mountain College, n.d.). The CMC campus at Edwards has witnessed increasing enrollment since the inception of CEPA in 2009. The college serves a diverse group of students. The campus is located in a

tourist area of Colorado. The cost of living in the Edwards area is extremely high and there is a large disparity in income distribution. CMC in Edwards, CO has removed barriers for CEPA students by focusing on offering increased number of classes for CEPA qualified students, which allows these students to complete college credits without incurring debt. Although the CEPA program at CMC has focused on increased class offerings, the college has not focused on college aspirations for low SES students to understand how they matriculate into CMC, transfer to other 4 year institutions, or stop out.

Purpose of Study. The attainment gap disparity for low SES students according to the presented data are likely to continue or perhaps increase in the future. Many factors contribute to the growing attainment gap between high and low SES students. Factors such as the increase of college tuition, decrease of state based aid, academic preparation all play roles in affecting the attainment gap between the low SES students and those in the high SES quartile (Sirin, 2005). This fact coincides the increased participation in college enrollment. To address this attainment gap, many states have either implemented state wide initiatives or duel enrollment programs.

The two main actions the state of Colorado has pursued are the Concurrent Enrollment Programs (CEPA) and Colorado Rises Initiative. Duel enrollment programs such as CEPA have become more popular in recent history. There are 46 states in the US that have implemented statewide policy for duel enrollment programs (Duel Enrollment, n.d.). One of the more successful programs is being implemented at Colorado Mountain College (CMC) in Edwards, CO. CMC is a community college with 11 satellite campuses in the rural Rocky Mountains spanning over 1,200 square feet of north-central Colorado.

The CMC campus in Edwards, CO has the highest CEPA enrollment rates of all the other campuses (Colorado Mountain College, n.d.). The state of Colorado has also adopted a state wide initiative to address the attainment gap.

The Colorado Rises initiative was created to increase postsecondary credential attainment in the state of Colorado to 66% by 2025 (Colorado Rises, n.d.). The initiative has encouraged policy makers to create programs to reinforce the tenants of the initiative. Since 2016 there has been 2,017 students that have earned some type of postsecondary credential while still in high school. This reflects a 35% increase of postsecondary completion from the previous year. These statistics support the viability of the program to enhance the completion rates of Colorado citizens pursuing credential achievement (Concurrent Enrollment, 2017).

This utilization focused evaluation (U-FE) will look at the efficacy of the CEPA program at CMC in Edwards, CO at affecting the college aspirations of low SES students. Disadvantaged students are defined as students receiving free and reduced lunch as reported in accordance with Title I funding under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title I, n.d.). Using Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital (1986) as the theoretical framework for my evaluation, this U-FE investigated how the CEPA program at CMC affects college aspirations in fostering a ladder of opportunity for participating, low SES students. The concept and theory of cultural capital will be discussed more in the literature review.

Significance of the Study. The CEPA program at the Colorado Mountain College in Edwards, CO. was designed to address a multitude of issues including affordability, the equity gap, access, and aligning high school and post-secondary standards and

assessments. This U-FE will focus mainly the experience of low SES students in the CEPA program at CMC and how the college has affected their college aspirations. This will provide a richer and deeper understanding of possible relationships to low SES students in the CEPA program. Therefore, the following research question was utilized to accomplish the goals of the program evaluation:

Research Question

1) How does the Concurrent Enrollment Program (CEPA) program at Colorado Mountain College (CMC) affect students' experiences and aspirations towards post-secondary credential completion?

The purpose of this U-FE is to evaluate the success of the CEPA program at CMC. For example, those involved in programming and developing the program will be able to utilize the information to increase the efficacy of preparing, and advancing low SES students into postsecondary completion tracks by better understanding their perceptions and college aspirations towards college attendance. The evaluation will serve as an indicator of performance to the affect that CMC has on the aspirations of low SES students in the CEPA program through the theoretical framework of cultural capital.

I chose this topic because it addresses directly the equity gap for students to achieve post-secondary credentials. The cost of post-secondary education in the United States has increased due to the current economic model in the United States, this unintended consequence has also increased the pressure on students to have higher debt burdens (Olssen, Peters, 2005). The United States has seen an increase in tuition for higher education institutions by 1,020% since the 1980's ("Bureau of Labor Statistics", n.d.). The CEPA program serves as an attempt to intervene in the growing equity gap for low

SES students in the state of Colorado. The equity gap that is most prevalent for credential completion in the state of Colorado is with lower college enrollment rates for low-income populations. According to the 2018 legislative report on post-secondary progress and success of high school graduates, 35% of students receiving free or reduced lunch enroll with in-state two year colleges. These students were significantly less likely to enroll with out-of-state, four year institutions. (The Post, n.d.). The CEPA program was designed to mitigate this phenomenon by broadening access and to improve the quality of Concurrent Enrollment Programs within the state of Colorado.

Chapter Two: Literature Review/Theoretical Framework

Influences on College Aspirations

College aspirations and the expectations students develop over time are largely manifested by habitus. The aspirations are created by a collection of experiences developed social class structures, and observations. Bohon, Johnson, & Gorman (2006) define college aspirations as "an adolescent's desire to achieve high levels of education" (p.208). Many aspects of a student's habitus or their collective experiences and dispositions, affect how they view the value of college and how they choose to go, where to go, and how to go. This habitus or disposition that this particular program evaluation focuses on is cultural capital. The idea that cultural capital is linked to college aspiration and school success is explored in much of the following literature.

DiMaggio (1987) posits that prestige has a relationship to cultural capital and social status. He hypothesizes that cultural capital is positively related to school success and grades (DiMaggio, 1987). This idea that cultural capital has a correlation with school success is further explored as a relation to upward social mobility. DiMaggio's findings show that the educational system in the United States has a propensity to reward those with more cultural capital (DiMaggio, 1987). This reward system and access to upward social mobility could affect the perceptions of the value of college and the investment of a postsecondary certificate. These beliefs of college and the development of one's value systems is a component of one's social structure. Habitus is an internalized system of outlooks and perceptions of the world that people have learned from their family, friends, and those in similar social strata. This notion explains the attitudes and perceptions of

different people about what is reasonable or sensible in relation to college choice, debt, and worth. (McDonough, 1997).

The decision to take on debt for a college degree is based in value perception that varies in different social classes. Low SES students have a natural tendency to be more apprehensive towards taking on debt for college certifications or degrees. This economic barrier affects college aspirations for low SES students since economic capital is dominant over cultural capital (Swartz, 1997). Further analysis of Bourdieu finds that his views are that economic capital is the most stable and central to all other forms of capital. It requires money to acquire cultural capital in the form of educational attainment (Bourdieu, 1986). The economic barrier is the most obvious in terms of college aspirations.

College Aspirations and Economic Capital

Despite an increase in federal financial aid allotments in the past decade, there still remains a gap between college enrollment for low SES and their high SES counterparts. The federal allocation of student loans in 2006 reached around $135 billion, this was double than a decade prior (Baum, 2007). Although these efforts were made along with supplemental Pell awards, the achievement and attainment gap persists. The average student loan debt between 2004 and 2014 rose by 56%, which is twice the rate of inflation (25%) during this time period (Herzog, 2018). The total average outstanding student loan balance for the past 12 years rose to $1.3 trillion dollars in the United States (Herzog, 2018). There is a national average if almost $26,000 per student, and the data suggests that low SES students are borrowing more than their counterparts (Williams et al., 2012). The college aspirations of low SES students on college value and incurring

student loan debt is relational to their social dispositions or habitus as explained by Pierre Bourdieu.

Understanding the economic barrier is helpful to contextualize need for a deeper understanding of college aspirations for low SES students. Cultural capital that comes in the form of internalized behavior reflect in the way low SES students engage in the application process, admissions, and other student support services.

Application and Admissions

The corporatization of higher education as a fundamental change in the institutional habitus of a college has created unintended consequences towards college aspirations for low SES students. McDonough (1994), discusses the impact of social construction of the college applicant. She discussed the advancement in marketing initiatives led by major universities, the decreasing of college counselors, and the raised competition for college spots has created new practices for middle and upper class students to gain acceptance into their first choice schools. The use of economic capital is now leveraged more often to increase their cultural capital while maximizing their socioeconomic advantages (McDonough, 1994).

The rise of private college counselors comes into play as an attribute of the cultural capital derived by economic capital from the middle and upper class. McDonough (1994) claims that these advantages come in the forms of specialized knowledge and assistance, focused time with a counseling professional, organization and management of the college choice process, and contributing to alternate and personalized perspectives. Students in lower SES classes may find this to be an immense barrier when going through the college

application process as they do not have the economic capital that can translate to the access to specialized assistance.

Socioeconomic status has been shown to affect how students engage in the processes involved to enroll and persist in college. McDonough (1997) found differences in the engagement of low SES students with college admissions in relation to their socioeconomic background. Students that came from more privileged backgrounds were more comfortable asking for information from colleges that would help them succeed in application processes, and enrolling. This notion of cultural capital affecting how students engage in the college application process is reflected in works by Swartz (1997) that a student's aspirations of college, and career are structurally determined by parental and cultural life. Many students come to the college experience with a different set of tools that either hinder or enhance their experience in schools that exert a dominant paradigm. For example, many first-generation, low SES students do not utilize their cultural capital as they have a lessened sense of entitlement for college as their non-first generation peers (Swartz, 1997). This non utilization of cultural capital for low SES students reflects in their college aspirations. Keeping in mind there is a dominant social class that higher education was designed for and by to replicate social strata and continue a social reproduction of sorts (Bourdieu, 1987).

Institutional Habitus

Low SES college aspirations are also examined in the form of institutional habitus. Thomas (2002), explores the notion of institutional habitus that is derived from Bourdieu's notion of habitus and cultural capital. College institutions have a particular social construct that creates normative expectations of its students (Thomas, 2002). This

idea is expanded upon in the works of McDonough (1996) as institutional habitus functioning as an impact of a cultural group. This notion is also applied to social strata and may affect a person's behavior. This affect is mediated through an organizations culture, policy, and curriculum offerings (Thomas, 2002).

As Bourdieu (1998) claims, the dominant class controls the output of the educational system in order to socially reproduce the particular stratifications of social class. This extends all the way into curriculum design, test formats, and language involved in mission statements. This relates to retention as McDonough (1996) discusses in that lower classes do not have the cultural capital means in which to adapt and participate in the institutional habitus of what is socially considered elite schools. The student's experience is then subjugated by the dominant class and their perceptions of belonging are diminished, therefore retention and persistence are negatively affected.

College Readiness

Another aspect of inputs involves college readiness of students and first year retention. One of the most consistent findings in research surrounding retention and low SES students is that of status and retention rates. DeAngelo and Franke (2016) found a strong relationship with family income and the retention rates for low SES students in their first year of college. Academic readiness is an important factor in first year retention. This input eliminates the differences in retention for low SES students (DeAngelo, Franke, 2016). As DeAngelo and Franke (2016) discuss, the findings are not so clear, however less college ready students in the low SES are most at risk of dropping out of college within the first year.

> Low-income and first-generation students who begin college academically prepared for success have as strong a chance of continuing past their first year as their equally prepared higher income and continuing generation peers. On the other hand, results show higher income and continuing generation students who are less ready for college have an advantage over similarly less-ready, lower income, and first-generation students. It is clear from these data that college readiness moderates retention for low-income and first-generation students. (p. 22)

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (Postsecondary, n.d.), "A smaller percentage of students of low socioeconomic status (SES) than students of middle SES attained a bachelor's or higher degree within 8 years of high school completion (14 vs. 29 percent), and percentages for both groups were smaller than the percentage of high-SES students who attained this level of education (60 percent)" (p. 1). Earning a postsecondary credential is deemed in today's market as important in increased earnings over time and the decreasing of unemployment rates. The data that the National Center for Education Statistics provides, shows the highest percentage for low SES students is accounted for in having some postsecondary education but not completing (Postsecondary, n.d.). This leads to the question of persistence for these particular students and why they stop out or drop out.

The good news is that duel enrollees such as students in the CEPA program are 12% more likely to take college level courses in 7 months of graduating high school (An, 2013). There is also strong evidence from research that students involved in concurrent enrollment programs are more likely to persist in college to earn post-secondary credentials. Swanson estimates (2008) "that duel enrollees are 16%-20% more likely to obtain a bachelor's degree than those who do not participate in duel credit or concurrent enrollment programs" (p. 13). The odds of attaining an associate's degree for concurrent enrollment participants increases to 61% (Swanson, 2008). This of course is limited by

estimating without SES as a variable for degree completion. Having this data which reflects completion rates for low SES students encourages policy makers to look at concurrent enrollment programs to function as a transition for students in high school to increase college aspirations.

The United States has one of the highest college participation rates in the world however large gaps exists in regards to access, retention, and persistence for students. Retention and persistence as it relates to low SES students is a growing concern in the higher education field. Studies have shown that 63% of low SES students express the desire to pursue a bachelor's degree, however only 5% actually earn the degree within 6 years (Engle & Tinto, 2008). These statistics are attributed to a multitude of factors surrounding the students' college preparedness, family background, and high school culture. There are approximately 4.5 million low income students enrolled in higher education, however their path to post-secondary credentials or a bachelor's degree is not direct. Low income students are four times more likely to stop out or drop out of college within their first year, and 43% leave college without their degrees within 6 years (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016). Much of this is due to the lack of academic and social engagement in college that fosters student success and persistence which is directly related to college retention rates.

Student involvement in college is a key indicator and strategy for student persistence or increased aspirations for achieving higher education credentials. This notion is of involvement relates to the transitional period that low SES CEPA students at CMC experience. These students are enrolled in college, however are also simultaneously transitioning into college.

Alexander Astin created a theory surrounding student engagement and persistence which is relatable to college aspirations for low SES students and their psychology of belonging. Astin incorporates his background in psychology with student involvement through the exploration of Freud's concept of cathexis (Astin, 1984). Cathexis is a notion of psychological investment from people onto an object. The object in this context would be student involvement or engagement. This concept is analogous to the learning theorists' views on vigilance (Astin, 1984). Carefully examining all the aspects of a student's life and how the student engages in academic activities is an important factor in better understanding how to increase factors that positively affect a student's persistence in college and to improve college aspirations (LeGree, 2015).

Higher education institutions also play a role in the negotiating, and valuing of students' time and commitment to school activities according to their institutional habitus in relation to how the institution places itself in the hierarchy of the dominant paradigm. Often times disregarding the important cultural capital that include work and family as being less important. This more complete picture of the temporal aspects of the individual student's approach to college aspirations as it relates to cultural capital allow educators to understand the effects of the lack of economic capital and the need for low SES students to work off campus and take classes part time which limits the amount of time they can spend on campus (Wolf, Perkins, Butler-Barnes, & Walker, 2017).

Another aspect of college aspirations is the sense of belonging a student experiences during their participation in higher education. Social belonging is a central human need that can affect a person's physical health, and mental fortitude (Begen, Turner-Cobb, 2012). Social belonging interventions have been proven to heighten persistence in college

and raise grade point averages (Silver Wolf, Perkins, Butler-Barnes, & Walker Jr., 2017). These psychological factors are part of the student's social construct and have psychological implications of non-cognitive influences that affect a college student's psychology. The non-cognitive inputs also show a link between the environment of the student and the outcomes the student experiences (Bowman, et. al, 2017). What a student brings with them in the forms of non-cognitive attributes has a direct effect on their persistence and the college's rates of retention. Attributes such as self-efficacy, grit, self-discipline, time management, all contribute to the subsequent outcomes for the student (Bowman, et. al, 2017).

Introduction and examination of Colorado initiatives. Colorado has taken actions to address the post-secondary credential attainment throughout the state. The Colorado Commission on Higher Education created a master plan called Colorado Rises: Advancing Education and Talent Development. This master plan outlines 4 strategic goals in order to achieve 66% post-secondary credential attainment by 2025. The strategic goals included in the master plan are to increase credential completion, erase equity gaps, improve student success, and invest in affordability and innovation (Colorado Rises, n.d.). This initiative was spurred on by the fiscal reality of supporting an undereducated citizenry in the state of Colorado. The Colorado Department of Higher Education stated that by 2020, three in four jobs will require post-secondary credentials or some education beyond high school (Colorado Rises, n.d.).

The Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act was passed in May of 2009 in the state of Colorado as House Bill 09-1319 and Senate Bill 09-285. The Concurrent Enrollment Programs Act (CEPA) was created to mitigate the push for increasing post-secondary

credential attainment by the state. The act, according to the Colorado Department of Education (n.d.) is "the simultaneous enrollment of a qualified student in a local education provider and in one or more postsecondary courses, including academic or career and technical education courses, which may include course work related to apprenticeship programs or internship programs, at an institution of higher education." (p. 1). The CEPA bill also allows for appropriations from federal level funds to pay for fees associated with student enrollments created in section 22-35-108 in pursuant to section 14002 of title XIV of the federal "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009" (Concurrent Enrollment Act, n.d.). The main goal of the CEPA program is to improve high school retention, and to accelerate a student's progress to a postsecondary credential.

The state of Colorado has recognized the need to increase the number of post-secondary degrees and lower the number of high school dropouts. CEPA was created in part to address a statewide goal of reaching 66% post-secondary degree attainment by 2025. The Colorado Rises initiative outlines the strategic goals of the state in order to achieve their goal by 2025. These strategic goals are: to increase credential completion, erase equity gaps, improve student success, and invest in affordability and innovation. ("Colorado Rises", n.d.). CEPA addresses these strategic goals and contributes to the advancement of the Colorado Rises initiative by creating pathways between high schools and institutions of higher education ("Concurrent Enrollment Act", n.d.).

Colorado Mountain College and its role in CEPA. Colorado Mountain College is comprised of 11 campuses which are spread throughout the Rocky Mountains from Breckenridge to Aspen, Colorado. CMC's service area spans over 12,000 square miles. The college serves over 20,000 students that enroll in various modalities across 11

locations and online (“Colorado Mountain College”, n.d.). Colorado Mountain College in Edwards, CO has been participating in Concurrent Enrollment Programs since its inception in 2009. The Edwards campus partnered with 4 eagle county schools: Battle Mountain High School located in Edwards, CO, Eagle Valley High School located in Gypsum, CO, Vail Ski and Snowboard Academy located in Minturn, CO, and Red Canyon High School located in Gypsum, CO. The number of Concurrent Enrollment courses made accessible since 2009 grew from 1,041 classes to 1,634 in 2017. The number of students participating in the CEPA program at CMC in Edwards has grown from 347 students in 2009 to 552 students in 2017.

Theoretical framework. To understand the college aspirations in relation to low SES students participating in the CEPA program at CMC Edwards campus, Bourdieu’s theory on habitus and more specifically, cultural capital will be used as the theoretical framework for this program evaluation. Cultural capital manifests itself in the resources an individual uses during their engagement in society and its spaces or subspaces, which may be referred to as fields (Bourdieu, 1986). These fields can be defined as school, family, friends, or work. The individual utilizes their resources in the forms of economic, social, and cultural capital in order to leverage their position and place in society’s objective social systems.

Pierre Bourdieu postulates the formation of various types of capital in which he refers to as *habitus.* Habitus is a term coined by Bourdieu to mean the embodiment of cultural capital; the actions, tastes, behaviors, and possessions of a person that reflects their cultural and social status in society reflective of access to opportunity. Cultural capital, according to Bourdieu (1986) is defined as:

> "Cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the *embodied* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the *institutionalized* state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee." (p. 84).

This manifestation of cultural capital is an extension of the philosophical tenants of Karl Marx, which can affect the ways in which students from low SES classes may view the potential attributes of earning a post-secondary certificate. This perspective is analogous to the commodity transformation theory introduced by Marx in that commodity transforms to money, which is then transformed into commodity (Marx, 1887). The increased development of cultural capital can translate into social capital (status), which can then be translated into economic capital or money (Bourdieu, 1986). The psychological barrier that could develop for low SES students to pursue post-secondary certificates or degrees is the financial debt that one could incur while pursuing such efforts. Students from higher SES status have a safety net developed through the accumulation of economic and social capital of their parents. Wealthy parents can afford more academic services and reduce the psychological pressures of incurring student debt.

Cultural capital according to Bourdieu exists in three forms: the embodied state, the objectified state, and the institutionalized state. Each one contributing to the overall cultural capital of the individual. The embodied state refers to how an individual behaves according to the attainment level of cultural capital, whether that is speech patterns or how one carries themselves. The objectified state refers to tangible items an individual accrues throughout their lifetime. Finally, the institutionalized state relates to the educational attainment level of an individual (Bourdieu, 1986). Cultural capital is then

viewed as not only an economic function of an individual in their society, but also a social function that is too often paradoxically ignored in educational success.

The theoretical framework of the evaluation pertaining to Bourdieu's cultural capital theory will be integrated by use of a constructivist epistemology into the UFE methods. The notion that the nature of learning is created by the human experience will help stakeholders to identify the psychological implications of how college aspirations develop among low SES students involved in the CEPA program at CMC Edwards. The data collection methods will include interviews and focus groups to gather qualitative data to search for themes of attitudes, perceptions, and family contributions that relate to cultural capital according to Bourdieu.

Chapter Three: Methodology/Methods

Methodology: Program Evaluation

The research approach that is most appropriate for this program evaluation is Michael Patton's Utilization Focus Evaluation (U-FE) to evaluate the success of the CEPA program at CMC. The process for U-FE can be found in Appendix A (Evaluation Checklist Project, 2013). This model allows the evaluator to become part of the management team of the program to work with the intended users to accomplish the goals set out by the evaluation (Stufflebeam, 2007). The goals of the program evaluation are to measure the efficacy of the CEPA program at CMC at reducing the attainment gap for low socio-economic students using cultural capital as a theoretical framework while utilizing quantitative and qualitative analysis. As stated above and to reiterate, in order to accomplish the intellectual and practical goals of this program evaluation, the following are the research question:

1) How does the CEPA program at CMC affect students' experiences and aspirations towards post-secondary credential completion?

Utilization-focused evaluation (UFE). The UFE model allows the evaluator and the evaluand to work closely to improve upon an existing program. In order to effectively execute the UFE model, the evaluand must have working systems in place for primary functioning of the program. These functionalities include accounting practices, learning management systems, and qualified faculty, improvement processes for staff and faculty, training systems, hiring practices, facilities, office supplies, defined educational outcomes, and articulated policies concerning all aspects of the program (Patton, 2011). The aim of the UFE model is to contribute to the advancement of the program. Since the

CEPA program has been in existence for almost a decade, the advancement of the program is paramount for the stakeholders involved. The five major steps to Patton's method are (Patton, 2011):

1. **Identifying the stakeholders**. Stakeholders were defined as primary intended users such as high school principals, participating college vice president at the CMC in Edwards, CO, and assistant deans at CMC. There were also secondary users which consisted of high school and college counselors, faculty, and students. I also created a criteria to leave out certain stakeholders as to not broaden the scope of the evaluation. This list included any person or group not directly engaged in the CEPA program at CMC, and parents of the students taking CEPA courses.

2. **Develop with stakeholders the focus of the evaluation and how it will be used**. I called an early initial meeting with the primary stakeholders to discuss the intended goals of the evaluation. They will be given an executive summary of the problem statement and methodology. I facilitated a thorough conversation to reach a consensus on how the evaluation will be used for further advancement of the program.

3. **Involve stakeholders in process of evaluation**. To maintain involvement of the stakeholders throughout the evaluation I sent informative updates as to the progress and scheduled events of the evaluation. These came in three forms; email updates, video conferences, and face to face meetings. Stakeholders were divided into groups that have specific fields pertaining to CEPA at CMC. There was a clear process of involvement for each stakeholder group that is in accordance to their capacity and scope of involvement with CEPA at CMC. Stakeholders both primary and secondary were also part of focus groups and interviews.

4. **Have stakeholders engaged in the findings**. Stakeholders were involved throughout the process of the evaluation, and have personal investment in the advancement of the program's outcomes. To ensure stakeholder engagement, I fostered and developed buy in through the presentation of the problem statement, and theoretical framework. Stakeholders were also given opportunities to speak at the scheduled CEPA meetings for CMC to inform the larger group of data points gleaned, and progress made.

5. **Making decisions on how to move forward.** I facilitated a follow up meeting to present the findings of the data and discuss a plan to move forward. This proposed plan was open for modifications by the group and a consensus for a final product will be proposed. In order to stay on the timeline of the Doctoral Research Project, I created a plan with achievable action items for the intended users. This may be in the form of a best practices manual, or a policy implementation.

Demographics of partner high schools. Eagle Valley High School is located in Gypsum, Colorado. The school serves 929 students. The total number of participating CEPA students at Eagle Valley High School in 2018 were 391 students. There were 1,128 classes that were built and active in this year, and students earned a total of 3,093 credits. The demographics for the district is 44.6% white, 51.7% Hispanic, 0.9% Asian, 0.5% Native American, and 0.5% Black. The total number of students defined as economically disadvantaged are 34%. The principles and school counselors will be identified as primary users of the evaluation and therefor included in the process. Student representatives will be utilized in the evaluation process as well (Eagle County Schools, n.d.).

Battle Mountain High School is located in Edwards, Colorado. The school serves 954 students. The total number of participating CEPA students at Battle Mountain High School in 2018 were 275 students that were taking 755 classes and earning a total of 2,590 credits. The demographics for the district is 44.6% white, 51.7% Hispanic, 0.9% Asian, 0.5% Native American, and 0.5% Black. There are a total of 39% of students classified as economically disadvantaged. The principles and school counselors will be identified as primary users of the evaluation and therefor included in the process. Student representatives will be utilized in the evaluation process as well (Eagle County Schools, n.d.).

Vail Ski and snowboard academy is located in Minturn, Colorado. The school is designed to serve a population of students who are in training for competitive winter sports in the valley. The school has a total of 94 students. The total number of CEPA students are 61 that take 133 classes to earn a total of 312 credits in 2018. The demographics for the district is 90% white, 3% Hispanic, 0% Asian, 1% Native American, and 0% Black. Only 2% of the school population is classified as economically disadvantaged. The principal, student representatives, and counselors will be involved in the evaluation process (Eagle Schools Fact Sheet, n.d.).

Red Canyon High School is located in Eagle, Colorado. It is an alternative high school that serves 168 students. The school has a total of 19 students participating in the CEPA program that are taking 34 classes and earning 109 credits. The demographics for the district is 27% white, 71% Hispanic, 0% Asian, 1% Native American, and 1% Black. The principle, student representatives, and

counselors will be involved in the evaluation process. The total percentage of economically disadvantaged students is 61%, with 47% receiving free lunch, and 15% receiving reduced-price lunch (Eagle Schools Fact Sheet, n.d.).

The total graduation rate for all the high schools combined reached 79% in 2016/17 academic year. The total completion rate reached 88% in 2016/17 academic year. The completion rate is combining all graduates with students that received a certificate, a designation of high school completion, or a GED certificate (Eagle Schools Fact Sheet, n.d.). Individually, the graduation rate for each high school varies. Eagle Valley High School has a graduation rate of 91% in 2018, Battle Mountain High School has a graduation rate of 87%, Vail Ski and Snowboard academy has a graduation rate of 91%, and Red Canyon High School has a graduation rate of 40% (Eagle Schools Fact Sheet, n.d.).

Data Collected from Institutional Research. To better understand the experience of a CEPA student participating in college courses I collected data from the Institutional Research Department at CMC. I focused on looking at headcounts, full time equivalency, Pell eligibility, free and reduced lunch eligibility, and student matriculation. The data collected contextualizes the experience of the student by reflecting trends in behavior as it relates to socio economic status.

Below in Table 1 the data reflects increasing student enrollment in the CEPA program. FTE stands for full time equivalency and is defined by students taking 15 credit hours per term. This can be distributed among one or multiple students as long as the aggregate number of credits equals 15 which represents 1 FTE.

Table 1
Basic CEPA Headcount and FTE trends

Term Reporting Year	Students	FTE
2013	1278	15.4
2014	1069	126.03
2015	1631	161.13
2016	1486	151.96
2017	2042	205.86

Table 1 shows the increase in CEPA enrollment at CMC, while Table 2 shows the number of students who participated in CEPA that completed a Free Application for Student Aid (FAFSA) and qualified for Pell grants.

Table 2
CEPA students eligible for Pell grants (CMC)

Year	Head Count
2013	35
2014	28
2015	53
2016	42
2017	18

Table 2 in comparison to Table 3 reflects the drastic gap in low SES students in CEPA and their matriculation into CMC. Table 2 shows the reduction of Pell eligible students for 2017. To be Pell eligible, a student must meet a certain financial qualification. One of these includes receiving Free and Reduced Lunch. The numbers captured by IR in Table 2 are only those CEPA students who completed a FAFSA and applied to CMC. Although there are gaps in this data which will be discussed more in limitations and pertain to a lack of an identification system, there still is a sense that more students should be qualifying for Pell grants and applying to CMC. Free and reduced lunch numbers at each school are as follows in 2018:

Table 3
Free and Reduced Lunch Eagle County Schools

School Name	Total students	Free and Reduced Count	% Free and Reduced
Vail Ski and Snowboard Academy (VSSA)	181	N/A	N/A
Battle Mountain High School	961	320	33%
Eagle Valley High School	974	279	29%
Red Canyon High School	188	79	42%
TOTALS	2,304	678	29%

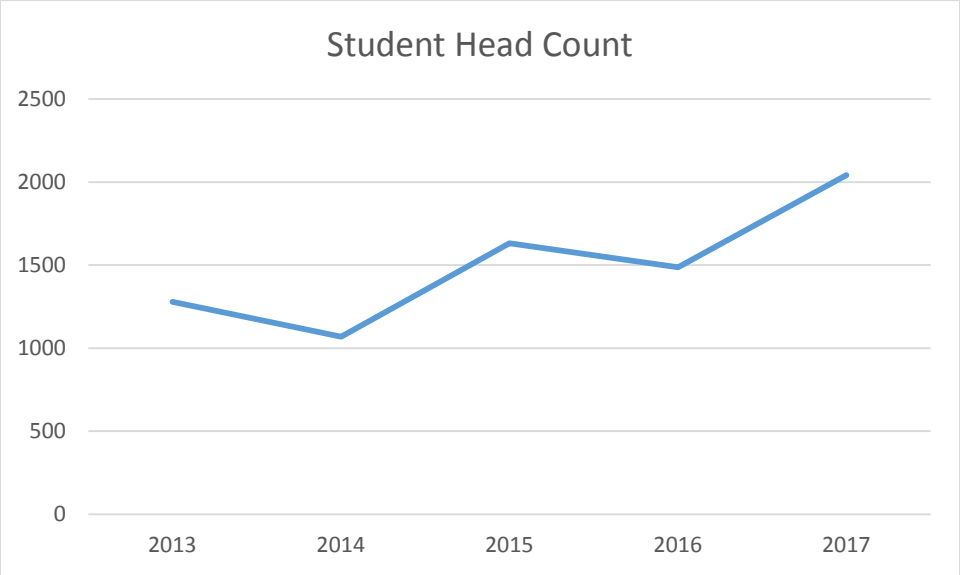

Figure 1. Student Head Count in CEPA CMC

As can be seen in Figure 1 CEPA participation has increased by 62% since 2013. The number increased from 1,278 students to 2,042 in 2018. Keep in mind that this is total head count and not calculated by cohort as the following graph displays. This fact compared with the number of students matriculating to CMC or completing certificates or associates degrees is telling of the gap in achievement.

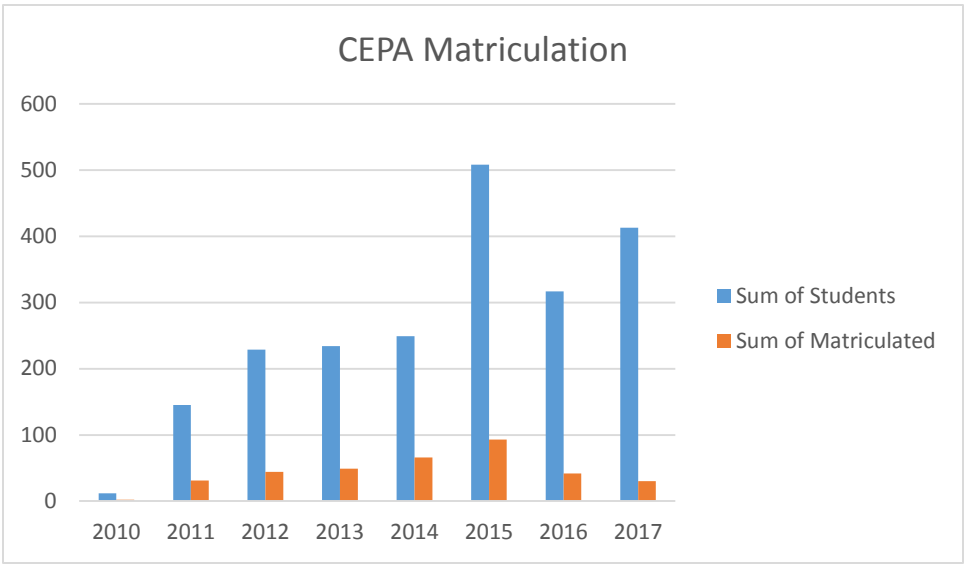

Figure 2. CEPA Matriculation to CMC

The graph above in Figure 2 shows the number of CEPA students as assigned into a cohort according to their first enrolled class with CEPA at CMC and the actual amount of students that matriculated into CMC after their final enrolled CEPA class. The average matriculation rate is 14%. This shows a large gap in the number of students who apply for classes at CMC after CEPA. To address this gap in matriculation into CMC, a theme emerged during the interview from both faculty, staff, and students of more intentional programming in the form of guided pathways, and meta-majors.

The data that was collected through the IR department through CMC reflects a paucity in completion, and transfer rates into CMC. The data is again organized by cohort. The cohorts are defined as a student's first enrolled class in CEPA. This attaches them to the cohort year. The acronyms for degrees conferred are as follows: Associate of Arts (AA), Associate Arts in Science (AAS), Associates in General Studies (AGS),

Associates in Science (AS), and Bachelor in Arts (BA), Bachelor of Arts and Science (BAS), and Certificate of Proficiency (COP).

Table 4
Post-CEPA Degree Conferrals by CEPA First-Time Cohort Year

Cohort Year	AA	AAS	AGS	AS	BA	BAS	COP	Grand Total
2010	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2011	17	0	1	0	1	0	6	25
2012	17	0	0	3	0	0	21	41
2013	18	0	0	7	0	0	10	35
2014	18	0	1	1	0	0	22	42
2015	13	1	0	1	0	2	29	46
2016	2	0	0	0	0	0	18	20
2017	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	15
Grand Total	86	1	2	12	1	2	121	225

The grand total over the seven year trend for completion is 225 students. The majority received certificates of completion. This reflects 53% of the grand total over the seven year trend.

Stakeholders. The primary group of stakeholders will consist of the executive teams at the partnering high schools and the CMC in Edwards. I brought together the principles of the high schools, vice president and assistant deans of the CMC campus in Edwards, CO. This group will consist of 8 individuals that all work on similar levels on the organizational hierarchy of both the high school and the college. These stakeholders make decisions on program implementation, funding appropriations, curriculum design, course sequences, guided pathways, and faculty training. The primary group of stakeholders will be involved in the nascent and developmental stages of the program evaluation design.

The secondary group of stakeholders included the faculty, counselors, and students. This group although labeled secondary is not meant to be less important in function. This group was created because they are closer to the actual operations than the primary group. Less impactful decisions are to be made for this level of stakeholders, however they are the most involved on a day to day operations standpoint. Students of course are the main users of the program and have the most to gain for its enhancement, however, this group was deemed as the operational group. The focus groups will only include the faculty and counselors, while the interviews will remain solely with the student population. This is to separate the programmatic policy debate from staff, with the experiences of the students.

Methods

The methods that I utilized for my program evaluation was a multiple methods approach. I collected qualitative data in the form of interviews and focus groups with students who are defined as low SES and that have participated or are participating in the CEPA program and participants from the stakeholder groups. I used this data along with raw data collected from CMC and the partnering high schools. This quantitative data will be in the form of enrollment counts in CEPA, graduation, transfer, and post-secondary completion rates for low SES students in the program. Both methods were analyzed separately and compared to evaluate the efficacy of the CEPA program at CMC at reducing the achievement gap for low SES students. To help with the understanding of the execution of my program evaluation, I have provided a timeline in the Appendix (Appendix D).

Data collection-qualitative. I conducted interviews with secondary users that included low SES students participating in the CEPA program that was held in December and May of 2018/2019 respectively, to cover all students. The sample came from 7 current students enrolled in the 2018 cohort that are low SES status and receive Title I funding in the form of free and reduced lunch and 8 students with the same criteria that have graduated within 2 years. Invitations were sent to selected students in a confidential manner through the students' emails. A brief explanation of the program evaluation was included in the email. Students that agreed to participate in the study were sent a confirmation email with an attached consent form (Appendix B).

An email message was sent to the participants of the focus group by the start of November, 2019. The target number for participants for each focus groups was 6-8. There were 3 different focus groups that discussed topics surrounding the CEPA program at CMC. The participants were asked to confirm by email of their attendance. Focus groups met at the CMC Edwards campus for three 50-minute sessions at the start of December, 2019.

Data analysis-qualitative. The interview questions were semi structured. I focused my questions for the interview to better understand the student's experience in the CEPA program. This related to the initial research question of the evaluation to uncover the beliefs and perceptions of the student to gain a post-secondary credential. I looked for general themes to code for positive and negative experiences in the CEPA program. The coding became more specific to understand environmental factors (family educational level, exposure to arts, etc.), and inputs from the students (preconceptions of

college, knowledge of resources for admissions, and personal values). These interviews were collected on a secure, password protected flash drive to be transcribed and coded.

I also conducted focus groups for primary and secondary users including vice presidents, principals, counselors, assistant deans, and faculty. The focus groups were designed to look at specific practices including scheduling, advising, and alternative modalities. The focus groups were used to create recommendations for the intended users for implementation of new initiatives within the program. I structured the focus groups to discuss a topic and encourage diverse answers. The focus group was not meant to reach consensus, rather to expose different ideas and to build synergy. The focus group conversation was recorded on a secure digital device and transcribed for coding and thematic development. The focus group conversation included at the most 3 questions that the group was allowed the appropriate time and space to discuss openly.

Data collection-quantitative. The quantitative data was used to contextualize the findings from the qualitative data. Quantitative data was gathered for low SES CEPA students on whether or not they graduated with a certificate or an associate's upon completion of high school. The data was collected from CMC's Institutional Research office to calculate the number of students that have completed post-secondary credentials. I also gathered data from Eagle County School District central offices to help identify Title I funded students. I collected information from current students for this academic year of 2018, and 2 years prior. This is to catch the data from current student progress and two years following to allow the time for degree completion at CMC. The data was presented in tables for ease of use.

Data analysis-quantitative. Using the data that is gathered from both Institutional Research and Eagle County School's central office I contextualized the qualitative data to support the findings. This data was analyzed to find out how low SES students perform in the CEPA program. The data was organized in three categories: 1. participated in CEPA without earning a certificate or degree, 2. earned a certificate of completion, and 3. earned an associate's degree in the CEPA program. I employed descriptive statistics to show the tendencies of how low SES students perform in the CEPA program in relation to attainment of a post-secondary credential. The data was analyzed using descriptive analysis to explain the trajectory of low SES CEPA students at CMC. The quantitative data coincided with the timeframe of the qualitative data in order to cross reference the numerical findings with the findings from the interviews in the forms of codes and themes.

Validity and reliability. To ensure validity I used the methods from Creswell (2012). I will employ triangulation to bring together the different data sources of my evaluation to build a cogent justification for themes. This was accomplished by examining the qualitative data gained from the interviews and focus groups to compare with the quantitative data from CMC Institutional Research, and Eagle County Schools. By doing so I added to the validity of the study (Creswell, 2012). I also used peer debriefing during the course of the evaluation by utilizing the stakeholder group to provide feedback on the usefulness of the evaluation as it progressed. To ensure reliability I checked the transcripts of the interviews and focus groups to make sure there are no errors. I also examined the codes thoroughly to make sure there is consistent definitions throughout. This was accomplished by comparing the data with the codes on a

regular basis to look for inconsistencies or anomalies which can then be corrected for peer evaluation.

Positionality. The factors and conditions that stabilize and define my position in this program evaluation involve my personal paradigm, and the capacity in which I serve at the college through the engagement with the CEPA program. I am a first generation student who struggled in college both financially, and academically. None of my immediate family completed college degrees or certificates. I look at the Concurrent Enrollment program as a personal mission to enhance the opportunities of higher education while avoiding student loan debt or family encumbrances. Lessening the attainment gap for low SES students has always been important to me in my philosophical stance in life.

Working as an Assistant Dean of Instruction (ADI) at CMC in Edwards, CO I have direct engagement with the CEPA program and all the intended users. Working in close proximity with the stakeholders enhances the meaning of the program for all those involved. The CEPA program at CMC in Edwards, CO has been looked at as exemplary to other CEPA programs within the CMC system. I serve on the CEPA committee that meets three times per college academic year in order to discuss strengths, weaknesses, new program additions, and state wide policy shifts. This access allows me to be affective in change for the program at CMC in Edwards, CO. I chose the Patton method because it is designed for program enhancement and advancement and focuses on the use by the intended users.

Limitations. The limitations of the program evaluation for CEPA involve temporal factors that include career trajectory for CEPA graduates, and changes of income over

time. These limitations will function to focus the evaluation on the formative assessment of the efficacy of the CEPA program at CMC in Edwards, CO. These limitations serve as boundaries for the evaluation to understand primarily how the CEPA program functions, and how effective is the program at affecting college aspirations for low SES students that participate in CEPA for long term purposes. This evaluation will serve as a preliminary attempt to understand the process of how CEPA at CMC performs for low SES students. Later evaluations will need to be conducted to identify and assess the evaluation limitations of this particular study in order to gain a more broad understanding of what is happening to low SES students involved in the CEPA program at CMC after they finish with CMC or a four year institution. The program evaluation will not be able to ascertain if the students continue to finish bachelors, masters or PhDs throughout their college career.

There are more limitations related to my methods. Collecting more quantitative data that would allow me to differentiate between particular courses low SES CEPA students were taking whether that be career technical or academic. This limitation would extend the study to a greater depth. Also, tracking students' matriculation through their college career to understand which specific colleges they have transferred to and the reasons they chose those particular schools. There also exists a limit of stakeholders in which I include such as parents or community members. Parental status, perceptions on college, and education level would have insight into the levels of cultural capital the student experiences in their lives.

Strategies

The Concurrent Enrollment program along with the Colorado Rises initiative share common goals for the state for Colorado in increasing the number of students who graduate with post-secondary credentials and advanced labor market placement. Colorado Mountain College in Edwards, CO is one of the top ten participants in the Concurrent Enrollment program. Colorado Mountain College Concurrent Enrollment program serves a diverse population, both economically and ethnically. The UFE model will help in the furthering of the objectives of the larger stakeholders of the program, that being the outcomes written in the bill, and the efficacy of Colorado Mountain College's Concurrent Enrollment program. CMC in Edwards can utilize this data in tandem with the participating high schools in adjusting practices to maximize retention and post-secondary credential attainment for low SES students at the partner high schools.

The evaluation will serve as a useful tool for the CEPA program at CMC to understand more substantively the attitudes and behaviors of the CEPA students who are low SES. By understanding the major themes of low SES CEPA students' on their experience of the program, stakeholders can enhance certain areas to advance the programs outcomes. The experience of the student is imperative in gaining an insight into the students' levels of cultural capital and how they may or may not be leveraging in order to establish a ladder of opportunity and experience upward social mobility. This too will be enhanced by the use of descriptive analysis of the quantitative data gathered to support rationales of the findings. By cross referencing the qualitative data with the quantitative, the program evaluation will function as a guidelines for future implementation.

The findings from my program evaluation will be used as a resource for other CEPA CMC programs throughout the districts. Although demographics may change, this evaluation focuses on the income disparity which is quite common in all the CMC service areas as they are located in resort communities. The program evaluation can function as a best practices guide for administrators and principles to start or enhance preexisting CEPA programs. There are several CMC campuses out of the 11 that have very little to no participation in the CEPA program as many high schools are favoring Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate programs for duel enrollment alternatives. This program evaluation could serve intended users as a handbook to stay competitive in the realm of duel enrollment options.

Findings from this evaluation that are proposed to be published or presented will first be discussed with the primary stakeholders. It is important that none of the student information is shared as the information is sensitive in nature as it reflects SES. It will be beneficial for the evaluation to be shared with those that work in similar programs to increase the credibility of the evaluation and the programs in which it serves. Collaboration with other researchers in the field of educational access may help to grow the findings of the evaluation in order to broaden its scope to serve a larger constituency. This may also help in the furthering of this evaluation to other aspects of college access and affordability.

Using Bourdieu's cultural capital theory as a framework for my program evaluation deepens the understanding of the critical issues surrounding college access and equity for marginalized communities. The sociological understanding of the behaviors of the students in the CEPA program at CMC will help users identify how cultural capital is or

is not fostered in order to overcome generational impacts of social reproduction according to Bourdieu, that those born in a particular social class remain in that social class due to societal constructs that individuals engage in and cultivate as their reality (Bourdieu, 1982). While simply offering courses is not enough, the CEPA program can be most effective by understanding the student experience. Cultural capital of the students can be a powerful tool in the use of upward social mobility and closing the attainment gap for low SES students.

This program evaluation will also serve as an opportunity for me to grow professionally. I work very closely and in depth with the CEPA programs at CMC and the evaluation will benefit me professionally as it will hone my skills as an evaluator. I will be more apt to organize and execute meaningful evaluations on program implementations for CMC and CEPA programs throughout the CMC system. I will be able to use the findings to advance my career into higher leadership roles that understand higher levels of function than operations and tactics. As our CEPA programs grow at CMC, so does the opportunity to become the most inclusive, innovative, and diverse CEPA program in the state of Colorado. This opportunity will allow me to align myself professionally with the mission of the Colorado Mountain College and Concurrent Enrollment Programs.

Chapter Four: Findings

Report of the research findings

Chapter 4 includes a discussion of the findings discovered by the U-FE of the CEPA program at the CMC in Edwards, CO at answering the research question: How does the CEPA program at CMC affect students' experiences and aspirations towards post-secondary credential completion?

To determine the efficacy of the CEPA program at CMC in Edwards, CO of reducing the attainment gap for low SES students to foster a ladder of opportunity, data were collected from one focus group, ten student interviews, and Institutional Research (IR) data. The structure and design of the evaluation was created according to Michael Patton's 12 steps for U-FE and included primary user groups to act as participatory members to achieve a common goal for the intended use of the evaluation (Patton, 2011). The primary user group was identified early on in the evaluation process in order to gain feedback from members on structuring the focus groups and interviewees. Once the situational analysis was completed, primary users were identified and included, and the interviews and focus groups commenced.

The interviews and focus groups were recorded on secured devices following the protocol method designed for the evaluation and approved by the primary users. The Interviews and focus groups were transcribed and coded for themes. The results are organized into six major themes that emerged during the analysis of the focus groups, and interviews. These themes are the basis of the findings and recommendations that will be discussed in the following chapters.

Description of participants. The primary intended users were identified by having direct, identifiable engagement in the evaluation and how it will be used. The group consisted of executive leadership at the CMC in Edwards, partnering high school principals, both CMC and high school counselors, and assistant deans of instruction for CMC. This group met regularly throughout the evaluation process to provide feedback to help align the evaluation to achieve actionable goals that will be utilized to improve the program at CMC in Edwards, CO and with all partnering high schools.

The focus group had an attendance of 10 people comprised of 3 college staff, and 7 CEPA faculty. The focus group interview was 1.5 hours long. The prompting questions were open ended, however allowed space for divergences. The focus group interview was recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed for emerging themes. Although many themes emerged, these were later compared with the student interviews to become one master list of emergent themes.The student interviews were comprised of high school students and CEPA graduates that transferred into CMC. They were selected through a qualification system that required eligibility for free and reduced lunch, or Pell Grant. The student interviews were conducted confidentially and accounted for 10, one hour long sessions. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed for emerging themes. These themes were then compared with those from the focus group to become the final list of themes used to inform the major findings.

Data collection and analysis. Two distinct tables were created to organize the data from the qualitative interviews and from the focus groups. These tables can be found in the Appendix E of the evaluation. The tables allowed for the differentiation of three general categories, which were labeled: major, unique, and leftover. The major category

was defined as events that are larger in scope that affected the student's college aspirations in the CEPA program and CMC such as larger scope policy initiatives, or programs implemented by the college. The unique category focused more on the cultural capital aspects of the students and families. The leftover category contained anything ancillary that was relatable to college aspiration but not directly influential such as transportation. These initial general categories allowed me to then create codes that I was able to assign to the texts. These codes appeared in constellations that were then organized into major themes. The themes were then consolidated to help define the most relevant topics to inform the evaluation's findings and recommendations. I then systematically mapped out the code groupings and identified 6 major themes which I named according to my conceptualization (1) faculty training; (2) addressing barriers; (3) family inputs and cultural capital; (4) guided pathways and meta majors; (5) student services; (6) Mentorship and engagement

These major themes are a culmination of both the focus group and student interviews. Larger themes emerged from combining the two. The data are then disaggregated into their component parts following the headings pertaining to each major theme and the findings will be summarized. The findings emerged from focusing on aspects of cultural capital that affects low SES students' college aspirations in the CEPA program. The findings were contextualized surrounding aspirations specifically. Aspirations may represent the objectified representation for success in college, however differ from expectations. Aspirations are more abstract and reflect a degree of hopefulness, student values, and a recognition of the social and economic importance of college.

Discussion of findings

Faculty training. The finding surrounding faculty training began by understanding the cultural capital of the faculty in their fields of career and social strata. The social strata of high school faculty affected their perceptions on student poverty. Many of the faculty recognized as living in poverty themselves. “It’s hard to live here. Cost of living is so high and teacher’s salaries are not enough to cover rent or even consider buying a home”, commented a one faculty member in the CEPA program, which was mirrored by others. The hierarchies of academic values is reflected here as educated professionals are diverted from achieving aspirations in other fields of money and power creating symbolic capital that reinforces social reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). This symbolic structure in cultural capital represents the limits and abstractions of college aspirations for low SES students as opposed to more objective expectations when viewed through the lens of faculty’s perceptions on poverty (Pierro, 2018).

One of the main barriers for faculty is the identification systems in place for low SES students. As the system exists currently, the state of Colorado does not allow Title I funded students to be identified by faculty or principles in the high school. Under section 9 paragraph 1 of the Richard Russel National School Lunch Act, “No physical segregation of or other discrimination against any child eligible for a free lunch or a reduced price lunch under this subsection shall be made by the school nor shall there be any overt identification of any child by special tokens or tickets, announced or published list of names, or by other means.” (n.d.). This law disallows faculty teaching high school CEPA students from differentiating the various levels of SES students in their classroom

and thereby decreasing their effectiveness to implement support services, and appropriate differences in pedagogical delivery.

Faculty and staff in the high school CEPA program used various techniques to informally identify students that were low SES. These techniques varied in design and implementation. Some faculty could identify students by the student's request for financial help to purchase the books, while others used observational assessment such as dress, or wakefulness in the classroom. This aspect of dispositions or habitus of cultural capital relate to college aspirations through cultural capital in its objectified state and its internalized state. The objectified state is represented through possessions such as clothes that symbolically represent the student's status within the dominant culture. The internalized state is the student's posture and overall demeanor (Swartz, 1997). Although effective for the short term, these strategies are by no means concrete and reliable. A statement made by a faculty member from the focus group pertaining to identification systems was as follows:

> Yeah, that's the same with me. I do the exact same thing. If you can't afford the textbooks let me know and we'll find a way to get you them, and the kids often will self-identify who can't afford the books and there's also just casual conversation like a comment about a living situation or socioeconomic status or lack of resources.

This example of an informal method of identifying low SES students was mirrored by other faculty in the focus group. Many faculty are left to use inference or assumptions according to the student's objectified and internalized cultural capital. The majority of the faculty are not trained to identify aspects of cultural capital and are therefore not as effective to identify low SES students. Keeping in mind this is in the context of the field

of education which has been normalized through institutional habitus as setting particular norms of behavior (Thomas, 2002).

The interview process with the faculty and staff also revealed the importance of using technology in the classroom to address the achievement gap. There were concerns of access to the internet, however a more weighted concern was using CMC's Learning Management System (LMS) to enhance student outcomes and success. The normalization of the student's behavior with the institutional habitus of the CEPA program at CMC in engaging with technology, and more specifically LMS software for college courses was also discussed as highly important to building necessary tools for enhancing their college aspirations (Sansing & Yu, 2004). One quote from a CMC faculty member described the value of the LMS software:

> Another thing that I think would be good idea is to have the kids use the things in canvas like smart tutoring. I don't know if you guys do that but it's just a tab in canvas and you literally submit a paper there and in 24 hours they edit it for you and return it with a lot of suggestions, and you can say please particularly look at my APA format or something like that, and it's free. I encourage them to use the CMC resources because they are their resources too.

Faculty all agreed that utilizing the LMS software would improve low SES students' aspirations to go to college through the fostering of skill building and the reinforcement of tools that have been incorporated into the dominant college paradigm. This normalization act is an important aspect in developing these skills that foster new opportunities for students. Students that come from low SES backgrounds often reported the lack of a technological presence at home other than their phones. Rather the cultural capital for low SES students focused more on the fields of family and caring for siblings, as one student commented: "I spend most of my time after school helping around the house. My little brothers and sisters need me. My mom needs me to help take care of

them. I don’t get a lot of time on technology or my phone.” This finding showed the differences of cultural capital that are valued in different fields. Values and perceptions of college are strengthened through the incentivizing of technological familiarity, however family values and commitment were lessened.

The surprising reoccurring comment surrounding faculty perceptions on poverty, was the notion that all students have the same needs and student support should be equal across the board. This misconception is one of equality vs. equity. The research clearly shows a large gap between the low SES and high SES student in regards to college retention and persistence in the United States. Faculty expressed concerns that they lacked the knowledge or training on how or what to implement in their classrooms to help low SES students improve learning outcomes and success. This is illustrated in the following quote from a CEPA faculty: “I don't feel as a teacher I would address specifically the low SES kids because I feel like even wealthier kids could have the same learning issues as low SES kids. I think like everyone else I go with a variety of instructional strategies.”

This echoed across the board with faculty and staff in the focus group, however some did talk about differentiation methods used in their class. Some key aspects that were overlooked during the focus group and were very much prevalent in the student interviews were the cultural and social capital aspects that students from low SES backgrounds come to college with. More specifically their first generation aspirations for going to college, their goals after college, and their different family inputs that focus more on family values, and work ethic than college completion. Many of the aspects that were derived from the student interviews about different needs for low SES students

pertained to the student's cultural and social capital infrastructure. The familial and social connections for low SES students were more present in other fields such as friends and family rather than focused on the institutional habitus of the college where this type of cultural capital is less valued by the institution. Aspiration is connected to the students' values of college and these discrepancies could have an effect on low SES college aspirations.

One key element that CEPA faculty employed was the role of the social service or psychological counselors for all students they identified as in need of such services. This role of college faculty vs social service provider becomes conflated and causes burnout among CEPA faculty. The major strategies implemented by the high school CEPA faculty, often attributed to the frequency in which they see their students, and the cultural norms of high school teachers, is to talk to their students extensively, and get to know their families. This related to low SES students' college aspirations as most of these students had highly developed cultural capital in the fields of family. Their experience of the symbolic gesture of human connections reinforced their values on education. One student commented, "My favorite teachers made such a difference. They were always there for me when I was feeling stressed out. I remember my Science teacher told me that I could be a scientist one day….she helped me feel like it was possible, so I decided to take some college classes at CMC."

Addressing barriers. Another important theme that emerged through the discussions with faculty and staff were the identifying and addressing of barriers for low SES students. Many of these barriers were financial in nature, however, through deeper discussion, other more nuanced themes emerged. The barriers that many of the low SES

CEPA students experienced were financial, placement, study skills, and study space. Each of these barriers are pivotal moments that have the potential to stop a low SES student from continuing on to completion.

The financial barriers for low SES students often materialized in the lack of economic capital to purchase books. Since students are not identified as free and reduced lunch or receiving Title I funding, there are no mechanisms in place to identify their financial needs in the high school CEPA program. This issue is not as evident with CEPA students who have transferred into CMC as the college has implemented a book rental program that is financially covered by Pell grants or student loans. Tuition cost was not part of this discussion as the tuition is covered by CEPA funding. One faculty member mentioned,

> "CMC makes it so affordable. It's awesome what the college does for our students. Tuition is never in the conversation for our kids. We as teachers do see other things though. Not having the financial means at home really shows sometimes. Kids come to school without breakfast, or can only use the computer at school….It's hard to know how to talk to those kids about money".

Other financial barriers appeared as affording quality breakfast, owning technology or the access to the internet at home. Many of the students did not recognize these as barriers as their cultural capital was more developed and focused on in the field of family. Often times, the students said they never felt poor, "We are happy and have plenty of things. My mom and dad take care of us pretty good." These comments were in relation to perceptions and attitudes on poverty and not barriers to college access in the CEPA program at CMC since the tuition is at no cost to the family. It was not until there were questions about transferring or continuing towards higher degrees did the conversation shift to a more apprehensive take on college value and aspiration as it relates to economic value.

The economic barriers that relate to the student experiences as discussed before were not necessarily related to tuition and fees as these are expenses covered by the CEPA programming. The economic barriers were more in relation to the low SES student's need to work for the family in order to help pay bills and cover other ancillary expenses for the house, perceptions on student loan debt, and proper nutrition. The information gleaned through the student interviews was that the cultural capital that was most enhanced belonged in the internalized state through the strong family ties that are developed and the strong work ethics that the parents taught their children through example setting. One unintended consequence of the student's economic situation is a focus on family responsibilities. According to one interviewee:

> After my parents got a divorce-- I'm the oldest out of the three sisters. I felt like it was almost my job to try to make some income. Since my parents divorced, I've been super independent with my money and so, because I'm the oldest I felt like I have this responsibility. I would also help my sisters out. I love to spoil them, so they would ask for something and I can't say no. So I'd be okay, and so I was always with them. I would go shopping. I would go grocery shopping and I would try to use my money unless I didn't have any, but all my high school money went to food and just trying to help my mom. Because that's-- but she never asked me to-- I felt like I had to almost.

Having this extra economic pressure affected the college aspirations of many of the students' college choices and perceptions about student loans. Growing up with the cultural capital inherited by their parents who were primarily working class, and in all cases from poverty themselves, the low SES students treated work and money with a functional intention. Another interviewee spoke about their views on college debt and college choice:

> For example my brother had to get loans since he went to a university and it's really expensive but my parents told him that they were not going to pay for his loans. That if he compromises to get loans that he was going to pay them. That's why I decided to stay at CMC because it's really cheap compared to other

> universities and I have completed a lot of scholarship applications so that I don't have to pay anything. So this is my second year and I have not paid anything for my education.

Another economic barrier that affects low SES CEPA student's persistence is having access to quality meals throughout their day. Many of the faculty see this first hand in the classroom through observational assessment. One faculty talked about a breakfast program during the focus group: "We started to offer breakfast in the morning for free and reduced lunch. Again, I don't know how many kids sign up for that or if they go but just thinking about Maslow's hierarchy, eating breakfast, I think that affects their learning."

Family inputs and cultural capital. Family inputs and cultural capital refer to the inherited environmental situations and dispositions that students from low SES families inherently have. The inputs that the family contributes to the rate of success of their children rely upon the parent's developed cultural capital and the knowledge around leveraging it in order to create upward social mobility. This evaluation found that often time's students from low SES families had more developed cultural capital as it related to family. Many of the low SES students had strong work ethics, and familial commitments, often citing their long days of working jobs after school or taking care of siblings to help the family out. The cultural capital inherent in the institutional habitus of the college system was much different from what the students' from low SES backgrounds were prepared with. Family inputs towards economic stability though hard work, and collectively raising the family as a unit were different values than the college system had normalized. This observation is objective in the view that cultural capital can be utilized for social mobility depending on which field one is focusing their capital on and the

dominant paradigm of that field. College aspirations are linked to values on attending and are often abstract as opposed to expectations. The family inputs and cultural capital of the students according to interview data showed stronger aspirations than expectations. This reflected in other studies with African American students and college aspirations (Bohon, & Gorman, 2006)

The focus group revealed the need for a physical place to study. The objectified cultural capital of low SES students relating to living space often reflected small quarters with many family members to take care of. Taking care of siblings in these physical spaces was more valued than creating quiet study spaces. Many faculty talked about opening their classrooms afterschool to allow students to use to complete homework where there are no distractions. The following faculty quote sheds more light on this:

> I just left a student who was in my room until 5:00 because I think it's the only place he could study. They are still there grinding away and they're recognizing that this is the place, this is a space that I can do this and when I leave here I'm going to have to look after a sibling or it's noisy and it's difficult. So they stay in the classroom and I ask them to lock the door behind them when they leave.

This theme also emerged multiple time in the student interviews of having family responsibilities when they would go home such as taking care of siblings while parents worked second jobs. Also, many of these students are responsible for cooking, cleaning, and working a night job to supplement the family income, again reflecting the different cultural capital development for low SES students. For example, one student interviewee stated that her mother would ask, "can I borrow money just to pay the bills, I'll pay you back" the student felt an obligation to help the family with bills, "no, don't pay me back. This is why I got into working". These deficits in economic and cultural capital affect students from low SES backgrounds college aspirations and persistence.

CEPA students from low SES backgrounds also struggle with study skills, and a physical place to study. Both of these attributes come from their family inputs and inherited cultural capital. Often times, the low SES students have a family background with little to no higher education experience rather, a strong work ethic as developed through their inherited cultural capital and social reproduction of maintaining the working class status. Parents from low SES backgrounds are ill equipped to teach their children how to manage their time in college, how to take notes effectively, and how to study in general. Many of these often overlooked skills are lost on the student from a low SES background. Suggestions were made to increase tutoring at the high school, and create study skills seminars for CEPA students.

The majority of the student participants were first generation. The sample was n=7 of this 6 were first generation students making it 84% of the total sample. Therefore the transmission of knowledge surrounding study skills, completion of paperwork, college selection, and how to pay for school affected college aspiration. For one interviewee an obstacle they faced was developing study skills, as her parents had more developed cultural capital in other fields as they had not participated in the dominant paradigm of higher education and lacked the cultural capital of the institutional habitus of understanding how to prepare for exams, and write papers.

> I wouldn't know how to study. I think that was one of the obstacles, and the tests. I mean studying and tests because most of the time I wasn't prepared for the test just because I didn't know how to study. I would tell my mom, Mom, I don't know how to study, and she's like "well, you can always just repeat it". I would ask my peers, too, as how to study. I guess that improved, but that was one of the main obstacles that I had.

More obstacles were encountered for many of the interview subjects when it came to application paperwork, and college choice. Their college aspiration was limited by ease

of path, and affordability which skewed their views on the values of going to college. For instance, one interviewee spoke of the rational for choosing CMC in the following quote.

> Instead of 22 grand, it would be 15 grand, and that was in state. So, yes, it's a lot. 15 grand is a lot. My mom was like, you know, it's early college high school program. You wouldn't have to pay a dime until you're done with your Associate of Arts. Why don't you do that? And we start saving money now with your job and we'll help support you. So, you can try and go to Mesa in the following year.

Another student elaborated on the barrier from the lack of cultural capital from their family inputs in relation to filling out paperwork for college applications.

> I-- because I had to do a CMC application for that and I didn't know how to fill that, a college application. My parents didn't know how to so I had to struggle a lot and visit my counselors so they could help me fill it out and then a lot of paper work and things that I needed. So that was an obstacle on how to do the application and to introduce me to all the paper work that I needed to fill out.

The same interviewee reflected on their feelings toward college debt by stating, "I wouldn't want to do a loan because you got to pay that back interest and all that. So, right now, our plan is finish my Associate of Arts right now." These statements emerged as themes in all the interviewees. Another statement from the student interview pertaining to the barriers about understanding the paperwork and process of filling out the FAFSA paperwork was reflected:

> My mom was very for it, but I remember it was my senior year and we had this whole thing were like, "Oh, we'll help you and just bring your taxes." They had it here at CMC, I don't know if they still do that. But because my mom worked a lot she wasn't here, I had my boyfriend come help and be my support system. I don't think they really understood, or they really cared about it. They were just like, "If it's going to help you, let it help you," and I'm like, "Okay." I didn't really understand it either, I was like, "This is supposed to help me," so then I just went in there. But there wasn't really a big deal about it, they were just like, "Whatever it takes for you to get where you have to go."

The lack of parental cultural capital in understanding the student loan process and the perceptions that it is an investment negatively affected the students from low SES background's college aspirations.

Beyond the more obvious family supports towards academic success were financial constraints and the use of the families' economic capital. Many of the participants were strongly encouraged by their parents, or by themselves to work to help contribute to the family income. This added pressure to the student to create a work life balance and to mature more quickly as their responsibilities were extended to take care of siblings. Basic needs were fulfilled first, and education was always 2nd in the accounts of the interview participants. This created barriers for students to purchase books before the first day of class, and to provide basic transportation for students to attend tutoring sessions held off site from their high school campus.

Guided pathways and Meta majors. The growth of the CMC CEPA program in Edwards, CO was rapid and did not take into account intentional programming. Although there was a massive increase in course offerings within a 7 year trend, there were no explorations into selective programming. These themes emerged as students discussed wanting a clear path towards a career, or the ability to try out different majors before committing to one. This was reflected in the student interviews and focus groups. Ont faculty member stated, "It's about getting these kids into better jobs than their parents, getting them to see the potential." A student commented that, "I want to be a scientist or an engineer. I love doing these kinds of things. Right now I'm just taking classes that are offered but I would love to get more."

The average matriculation rate of CEPA students into CMC courses separate from the program and only college courses is 14%. This matriculation gap was discussed in the focus groups and talks of career pathways emerged. Career pathways also was a recurring theme amongst the students as their aspirations relied on the value of college and many students wanted to focus on how education “could get them high paying jobs to help their families” quoted from a student participant. Guided pathways are a set of courses that leave little choice for the student in electives, however, the classes in which to take are clearly programmed in a sequential manner. Guided pathways eliminates the scheduling of redundant classes and attributes to the acceleration of the students towards completion (For instance one particular faculty commented on the importance of a pathway for students:

> If the kids can see a pathway-if they're just taking classes just for the sake of taking classes then there's no direction. I know for example we now have the culinary program at our school which is fantastic. We're seeing kids in these classes that traditionally don't take CEPA classes but taking the classes and growing it and eventually having them come to CMC and then finding a job for them in the valley and the kitchen will be fantastic. The same thing with Health Sciences. We have such a shortage for Health Sciences and we have a new health science classroom starting this semester in our school to be able to have a viable pathway so if you take these CEPA classes you'll be on a career path.

Many of the students reflected this in their interviews by commenting on their family perceptions of college opening doors for better jobs. Many parents operated with different cultural and social capital which incentivized joining the work force rather than college, and in turn had different tools at helping their children be successful. The dominant paradigm that the low SES CEPA students at CMC are experiencing is a higher expectation for them to go to college and complete a certificate or degree. Most parents of low SES students were encouraging to complete college in order to break the cycle of

poverty that their parents experienced growing up without the cultural capital opportunities their children have. One student commented about their parental support, "Do all your work from your classes so you can one day be better than us; have a career and then you can have a good job." This was a quote that emerged in different iterations supporting the theme of college serving as a leverage for upward social mobility by increasing cultural capital.

Another theme that emerged was creating a cluster of classes for students to experience a field to see if it is of interest without taking extra or redundant courses. Meta-majors are a grouping of majors in fields of study that have relatable courses. These majors cluster groups of similar majors that fit inside a career field. One student interview told a story about how the culinary collection of classes helped her college aspirations to persist and complete a degree:

> Culinary was offered. So, I took food and nutrition to be able to take culinary. I was telling my friend, I was like, "Oh, we should do that. That sounds fun." And that's when I was pastry, pastry sounds fun. And that's when Whitney said, "Oh, they're offer baking classes during the summer. You guys should take those." And we were like, "Okay." And so from there, she told us that since we were already in the culinary program we should finish, so now we are full time students at CMC.

Having this option to explore a program allowed for many students to feel and experience success in earning college credentials. Although there are not as many, some programs with CEPA at CMC have been developed for students to try. This has proven to positively affect their college aspirations to completion of a certificate or transfer into CMC. The feelings they experienced was that of the accruing of cultural capital in the form of institutional capital (college credentials) in order to advance in their pursuance of a college degree.

Student services.

The low SES students in the CEPA program at CMC had a different experience in college admissions tests. Many experienced high anxiety to take the tests as their background outside of the institutional habitus did not incentivize test scores. "One element of support that would be nice would be some sort of Accuplacer study program". These ideas emerged many time in different iterations from faculty as they explained that many low SES students had the cultural capital of strong family support and encouragement however needed more support to develop strong study habits that are normalized behaviors in the dominant college culture. Students had also reflected on the inability to know how to study from their parent's perspective, "I don't know how to study, and she's like "well, you can always just repeat it". Parental support was always strong and encouraging, and most parents offered some advice, their experience was much different than their children's surrounding the value of test scores and grades.

Advising was another theme that emerged during the student interviews. Many students felt that they needed more, and clearer communication from their advisors. The difficulty with the CEPA program at CMC is that students interface with highs school advisors, who are not trained in college programs and curriculum. One student commented on the problem with the advising at the high school said, "With us for the culinary program it kind of got all mixed up because of the other counselors." The institutional habitus of the high school differed from that of the college. The high school students were given less support in relation to economic capital that the high school budgets per student for student advising.

Embedded tutors in the classroom emerged both with the focus group and the student interviews as being highly important in the aspirations and completion rates for low SES students. This practice that has been implemented at the CMC in Edwards for 3 years and continues on into the future, budget permitting. Teaching assistants became available to CEPA faculty when their class sizes began to increase. Due to the difficult nature of being a CEPA faculty at the same time one serves as a high school teacher, CMC decided to pay for extra classroom supports. It began as teaching assistants but evolved into credentialed tutors in the programs that were being taught. For instance, history courses had a history credentialed teaching assistant that served as a tutor for students as well as clerical support for the faculty. The theme that emerged was an underutilization of the teaching assistance. For instance one faculty member commented on a common theme,

> The challenge is getting my kids to connect with the teaching assistant. To go over my classroom over here with a CEPA problem and sit down with somebody and start to put together a plan. I don't know if it's a feeling of mine or the institution but somehow there's not enough kids utilizing it.

The students also discussed the accessibility issues for teaching assistance and tutors had on their success towards completion. One student brought up that, “having college tutors more available would help.”, although the CEPA program with CMC does embed teaching assistance in some classes, this is not a uniform practice among all CEPA classes. Another student went on to comment that “The tutors were only available at the college and it was hard to meet with them.” Although measures were taken to get the teaching assistance in front of the students more the effort is clearly not widespread enough to make an impact.

Mentorship and engagement. The last emerging theme to be discussed was by far the most personally impactful. This was having the human connection through faculty

mentorship and engagement. This theme was the strongest and most resonant from both the faculty, and the student's perspectives. Once student emotionally discussed the power of having the teacher engagement to inspire her to continue,

> Yeah, it was mostly coming from the teachers. I remember my first year in college, I still had that struggle with time management, and seeking out help. Because it was really frustrating for me to be like, wow these other kids have their parents to be like, red pen their whole paper. Whereas for me I'd be, okay so I have to drive down from Gypsum all the way to Edwards and have a teacher do that. So it was really difficult. Sorry, my first year was super tough for me. I'm reminiscing, but [inaudible] was really helpful, he became almost my mentor that first year. It was really cool. Sorry, I don't even know why I'm crying.

The human connection that faculty were able to provide enhanced the college aspirations of students by reinforcing the sense of belonging into the dominant college culture and into the institutional habitus of the college and the CEPA program. The faculty in the CEPA program worked tirelessly to serve as mentors for the students, often working past their last class to engage with students that were on the periphery of success. Faculty talked deeply about functioning as social workers often, "It comes with the territory of being a teacher". This noble gesture has been repeated by literally all of the CEPA faculty in the focus group. This mentorship from faculty can also lead to burnout and exhaustion and needs to be addressed to alleviate some of the pressures that are put onto teachers in the high schools.

Summary of Findings

The findings that emerged from the themes and raw data were organized into 6 major themes which I named accordingly to contextualize the affect that CMC has on low SES student's college aspirations (1) faculty training; (2) addressing barriers; (3) family inputs and cultural capital; (4) guided pathways and meta-majors; (5) student services; (6)

Mentorship and engagement. These themes led to multiple findings under each category. These findings all address the ways in which the CEPA program at CMC can improve the aspirations for low SES students in order to increase retention and persistence for these students. The goal of this U-FE is to address the ways in which the CMC CEPA program can better understand the experiences of the low SES student and their college aspirations as they transition into the dominant college culture and the institutional habitus of the program and beyond.

Chapter Five: Recommendations, Implications, Summary, and Conclusion

This section will contextualize the recommendations within the literature review and findings. All the findings relate back to the research question for this particular program evaluation. The research question is as follows:

1) How does the CEPA program at CMC affect students' experiences and aspirations towards post-secondary credential completion?

The findings that emerged from the themes and raw data were organized into 6 major themes which I named according to my conceptualization (1) faculty training; (2) addressing barriers; (3) family inputs and cultural capital; (4) guided pathways and meta-majors; (5) student services; (6) Mentorship and engagement. Each of these themes has major findings within them that facilitated the recommendations that follow.

Recommendations and Implications

The list of recommendations and implications are primarily aimed to answer the research question of the U-FE and to be shaped and guided by the primary intended users of the CEPA program at CMC. Each recommendation will be discussed at length and according to Michael Patton's steps towards a successful U-FE, one of the recommendations has been simulated for use and will be discussed at the appropriate time during the recommendations section. Below I have outlined the recommendations according to the findings of the U-FE. The executive handout for college leadership is provided in Appendix F. The list is not meant to be ordered in levels of priority, rather a culmination of gaps to be addressed by the CEPA program and the primary intended users. The recommendation and implications list is as follows:

Recommendation #1

Implementation of faculty training to include pedagogical differentiation on the classroom to support low SES needs, and the implementation and use of LMS training.

Their seemed to be a misconception among some faculty in the CEPA program about the different needs for low SES students. A multitude of differences have been studied and documented on how poverty affects classroom engagement. Students not in Title I funded programs have higher levels of engagement in school than students receiving free or reduced lunch (Pfeffer, 2018).

Although many faculty practice differentiation in the classroom, there are many needs that often go unnoticed due to misunderstandings of equity, and family inputs from low SES students. Recent studies have categorized 7 areas of influence (1) Health and Nutrition, (2) Vocabulary, (3) Effort, (4) Hope and the Growth Mind-Set, (5) Cognition, (6) Relationships, (7) Distress (Jensen, 2013). These areas of influence could be divided into training modules in order to address each individually. A best practices guide could be developed to help train and facilitate initiatives that faculty could incorporate into their classroom.

Children that grow up in low SES families have smaller vocabulary and put them at academic risk in the future. Effort can be misunderstood from low SES students as well and often slumped posture or lack of effort is seen as laziness when it is more typically coming from learned hopelessness. Teachers can positively affect student engagement by teaching a growth mindset in the classroom. Many low SES students struggle with cognitive abilities. This can be intervened by teaching study skills, or notetaking. The last

two points that are made by Jensen apply to relationships and distress. Students from low SES mainly come from broken homes. This affects their developing brain and psychology. This leads to the development of distress for these students. Developing strong faculty relationships is important to alleviating this factor (Jensen, 2013).

Incorporating technology in the classroom has shown benefits in student retention and persistence, especially for low SES students. Utilizing the LMS platforms for CEPA students at CMC, would increase the student's cultural capital in the field of education, for their future engagement in more college or in their careers (Sansing & Yu, 2004). This would also help faculty in the CEPA program to manage their classrooms by taking advantage of the software functions of the LMS platforms. A study completed in 2014 looked into the impact of technology on low SES students and its benefits on academic achievement. According to Du, Harvard, et al (2014),

> These findings present clear evidence in terms of the relationship between socioeconomic factors, equitable distribution and use of computers, teacher technology training, and students' performance. In light of this, it is imperative that "equity" in school computer usage must involve not only equity in access but also equity in consideration of the learning needs of low-income and minority students. It follows, then, that teacher technology training is as important as socioeconomic factors in determining the level of SES achievement by the career graduate. Increased access to computers will only have positive results when the educator has a complete grasp of the role and use of computers, and an understanding of the student's home environment and how their deficiencies must be met in order to realize their full potential, thus enhancing society instead of reducing the average achievement.(p. 8)

Including teacher training for CEPA faculty in LMS usage was reflected as a strong need among the focus group. Concerns for student access to technology for low SES students was also discussed by the focus groups.

Although CEPA faculty are spread thin at the high school level it is imperative for them to reinforce positive relationships with their students. Many faculty expressed the close connection they have with their at risk students and often feel overwhelmed by the social service aspect of their jobs, however, the results are never lauded and rarely discussed that these human relationships function to mitigate distress and improve college aspirations with low SES students (LeGree, 2015).

Recommendation #2

Implement a training for identifying low SES students or a policy to make mandatory the completion of the FAFSA for CEPA students in the CMC program.

Faculty training in identifying income levels for families would help them understand the economic barriers for students from low SES families. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (n.d.), "Information about students certified eligible for free and reduced-price school meals is covered by confidentiality restrictions administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture" (p.1). This makes it difficult for faculty to engage in early alert systems for students from low SES backgrounds.

The identification of low SES students is limited in the high schools as students parents must apply for Title I funding for free or reduced lunch. This information is legally bound to confidentiality by State measures uncles separate waivers are signed to identify students. This limits the ability for faculty and staff at CMC to employ intervention programs for low SES students in the CEPA program. A policy to make it mandatory for CEPA students to complete a FAFSA would allow administrators to identify students who are Pell eligible and therefore low SES as this coincides with Title I

funding and would prove to be an appropriate indicator. Having an improved method for an identification system to be used responsibly by CMC administrators and faculty could help in implementing intervention programs for students in need.

Recommendation #3

Create work study programs or scholarships for students who qualify for Title I funding in order to alleviate economic pressures.

Many student interviewees from low SES families expressed their need to maintain jobs after school to help with the family income. Implement study skills programs for at risk students. This can only be achieved if identification systems were in place such as mandatory FAFSA completion for all CEPA students. Pell eligible students could be identified and promoted to work study programs in order to encourage more college engagement which increases persistence to completion. Also, students that are identified as Pell recipients and low SES could also be encouraged to compete for scholarships to help with cost of living. These scholarships would have academic requirements and incentivize students from low SES families to be more engaged in college curriculum.

Financial and economic capital have a strong effect on college retention. Studies show that low income students are disadvantaged in higher education due to their high intensity work schedules averaging 20 hours per week in comparison to their high income peers (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016). Having economic capital gives students more advantage at completing their first year of college. More research has been concluded about the relationship between social class and schools structuring of college choice. Students from families with solid financial resources will gain access to more prestigious

colleges and universities. Although these conclusions are commonsense more depth was explored into the functions of guidance counselors and college advising (McDonough, 1997). McDonough explores status attainment through organizational theory and educational inequality. Economic capital and creates social status and legitimized cultural capital that needs to be treated carefully while advising especially at the high school level.

Recommendation #4

Create access to support groups in the form of psychological counseling, study groups and test preparations.

CEPA students enrolled through the CMC program are considered first and foremost students of the college. Many health initiatives have been created to support mental health for CMC students by embedding a psychological counselor in the college. Opening access to counseling sessions for low SES students would improve their emotional support. Many of the low SES student interviewees expressed strong emotional connections to the hardships of completing their college work while having to cope with the dynamics of divorced parents, lack of parental support due to the amount parents worked and were not physically present, or the pressure on them to maintain a job to help their parents with bills. These psychological stressors could negatively affect college aspirations for these students.

Creating study groups would involve students more in college engagement which has been shown to increase retention and persistence for low SES students. Study groups would create bonds for students and reinforce their cultural capital by encouraging

behaviors that are needed to be successful in college. Having peer support would allow students to transition into normative college behaviors such as note taking practices, study skills, time management, and moral support.

Having appropriate study skills, and study space was also a significant finding as it relates to retention and persistence among low SES students in the CEPA program. Many of the low SES students lacked the cultural capital of acquiring study skills from parents who completed college degrees as the majority of students interviewed and in relation to the IR data did not have parents that went to college. This along with a quiet study space or the knowledge to seek out these spaces also proved problematic as they adversely affected retention and persistence. Engaging with the institution early by providing test placement study sessions can shape the institutions academic expectations and aid in persistence for the low SES student (Yorke, Thomas, 2003). Developing study spaces, and study groups for students also has shown in research to be an effective contribution to retention and persistence. This relates to the student's involvement in their academics and the correlation with student involvement and persistence (Astin, 1984).

Placement tests have been used in the CEPA program at CMC. The common indicators for college readiness for CEPA students is currently measured with two assessment tools, the Accuplacer, a standardized test from the College Board, or ACT/ SAT scores. Placement becomes a barrier for students from low SES families due to the different forms of cultural capital the student was raised with. Parents often stress family and work commitments, and the knowledge of how to study for these tests or the family encouragement to support the student to do well in order to place into college level

classes is often lacking. Parents with no college experience were far less likely to discuss entrance examinations with their children (Choy, Horn, Nunez, & Chen, 2000).

Recommendation #5

Assess curriculum and adjust where possible to incorporate more culturally diverse subject matter.

As Rendon (1994) describes the concept of validation as the affirmation of cultural values which encourage students from diverse backgrounds to persist, college curriculum could be identified and altered where applicable to include these cultural norms that are meaningful to a more diverse student population and more specifically to low SES students. Assessing curriculum to include more diversity would be achieved through a college wide process and include department chairs and school deans to evaluate gaps in the existing curriculum. This could be replicated college wide and housed in our LMS platforms as module training on topics pertaining to teaching methods, book selection, and understanding intersectionality. Intersectionality is defined as the nature of human experience where race, class, and gender, among others interconnect. Incorporating pedagogical practices that address diversity in this way would improve the validity for low SES students (Rendon, 1995).

Cultural capital can manifest in a variety of forms and also use in a variety of fields. The dominat culture of the institutionalized habitus of college has normalized behavior and therefore a system designed to socially reproduce itself. Much of the college curriculum in the CEPA program has not been thoroughly evaluated to teach to more diverse populations. Bourdieu (1977) writes about “the enterprise of inculcating the

dominant culture and the value of that culture" (p 142). This social definition leads to a hegemony, and a set of academic values that are clearer to the dominant class. Understanding the importance of curriculum content and how it may relate to low SES students, students of color, and students of other religions may help in the enhancement of college aspirations for these students. Higher education institutions need to be sensitive to developing specific supports for low SES students as Rendon terms, validation, where the customs and traditions of higher educational institutions reflect cultural values that are more familiar with students in higher social classes (Rendon, 1994).

Recommendation #6

Create guided pathways into programs with career outcomes.

Guided pathways and meta-majors needs to be more intentionally developed in the curriculum of CEPA offerings at CMC in order to increase retention and persistence, and college aspirations. This finding was mentioned in both the focus groups and student interviews. Studies have investigated the development of institutional investment as students associate a value with their college endeavors to increase persistence (Yorke, Thomas, 2003). Bourdieu also explains that in contemporary education design low SES students were not as successful due to a biased curriculum designed for upper class students that were more familiar with the fields of study (Bourdieu, Passeron, 1977). Creating guided pathways or meta-majors for CEPA students would increase the psychological transformation from being a high school student and being a college student pursuing a degree to enhance college aspirations for low SES students.

An example of guided pathways that is being currently implemented at CMC in the CEPA program is in Appendix G. Also create meta-majors to allow students to explore a suite of classes that would work towards various degrees. This has been piloted as of 2018 at CMC in the CEPA programs to include an Associate of Arts in Psychology, Associate of Arts in Spanish, and an Associate of Arts in Culinary Arts with stacked certificates within the culinary program. There has been many requests from faculty and students to see pathways for students that culminate into career paths. An advising guide was created for high school counselors and CMC advisors to better understand the programming and better advise students of their options for course selection. Students are given the opportunity to get a feel for a particular degree path before completing while not wasting credits on redundant courses by having the foundational courses offered in general electives, and the suite of courses programmed for different Associates degrees.

Talking to the counselors in the focus group the theme emerged that many students are not aware of degree pathways and are taking classes to simply earn transfer credits. One counselor mentioned, “Most of the students I talk to don’t even know there are different degrees they can earn. Most of them earn the certificates in the technical programs because they are built in as stacked certificates.” By creating pathways for students and meta-majors, student’s experiences towards college aspirations may improve as more students may feel the success of earning a degree beyond certificates. This has been brought to the primary users in the U-FE design to begin a test run for the upcoming academic year in offering a guided AA in Spanish, Culinary, and Psychology. This will require more training for high school counselors who work with CEPA students.

In contemporary higher education systems, high socio-economic status students maximize their schooling opportunities and optimize their cultural capital by securing admission into a "good" college (McDonough, 1994). This has brought about the unintended consequence of the commodification of college counseling. Although this is not necessarily a problem with low SES students in the CEPA program at CMC, there is the problem of ill-trained high school counselors who are also drastically outnumbered with student/staff ratios. The hyper utilization of college admissions counselors has created more competition in fields, which Bourdieu claims has changed the ways in which people gain access to college due to the increase of college attendees. This changing of the rules by which students gain access to college has primarily been driven by students in higher socio-economic status (McDonough, 1994). This invariably has an adverse effect on college aspiration for students in low SES families. Student advising needs to be modified for low SES students to allow them access into employable degrees, and transfers that make sense for their career trajectory.

Recommendation #7

Implement a mentorship program for low SES students to be paired with community volunteers.

Mentorship programs could be implemented at the college and opened up for community volunteers. CMC is fortunate to have a supportive community that often times donates with money in the form of scholarships or endowments. A program could be implemented to call on community volunteers to act as mentees to students from low SES backgrounds. This would allow students from low SES backgrounds to gain cultural capital and to inform their habitus or dispositions that will enable them to be more

successful in their college endeavors. The mentorship program could be flexible on time commitments but would need at least one year for students to experience the impact of having a mentor with a background in going to college to help guide them in the decision making process for their college and professional careers.

Mentorship and engagement pertained to having the human connection between faculty, staff, and students may positively affect college aspiration and persistence for the students from low SES backgrounds. Studies indicate that students that are at risk in their first year of college and are disenfranchised are most likely to drop out. Creating human connections via mentorship programs or increased faculty connection proves to reduce this factor and increase retention for low SES students (DeAngelo & Franke, 2016). Student interaction with faculty has also been observed as most strongly related to college satisfaction (Astin, 1999). Findings ways to encourage interaction with faculty or mentors would increase the academic interaction with students and ultimately contribute to persistence and college aspirations for students from low SES backgrounds in the CEPA program at CMC.

Pierre Bourdieu discusses in depth the complex relationships to social structures and educational systems. The objective structures of school produce class habitus or more specifically dispositions and predispositions. This normalization built on the historic structures of attending college are predicated by standardized tests, assessment, paperwork, and processes in which one needs to be successful in college, which in turn translates into habitus of higher class rankings (Bourdieu, Passeron, 1977). This only adds to the problem of non-dominant forms of cultural capital that students from low SES families experience due to their family structures, whether that be from Mexican

traditions of family function and the encouragement of the female to become stay at home mothers, or divorced parents not giving the appropriate emotion support to their children in regards to school, or first generation students not having the inherited understanding of applying for financial aid, for example. Having mentors from the community that have cultural capital from the dominant fields of college may help enhance the college aspirations of low SES students.

Summary

The conclusions for this program evaluation have been shaped by the U-FE method which was employed. The assessment of the program's readiness and all the intended users was completed and formalized into a united agreement during multiple meetings with primary users. These meetings consisted of upper leadership both at the partnering high schools and Colorado Mountain College. Multiple presentations were made to the intended user groups to discuss potential changes to the program evaluation. The methods for data collection and analysis were discussed and approved by the primary intended user groups to answer the research question of the evaluation, which ultimately focused on the efficacy of the CEPA program at CMC at reducing the attainment gap for low SES students and how the program affects college aspirations according to the student's experience.

The process of Michael Patton's U-FE is outlined below to understand how each decision was made while adhering to the methodology prescribed in the methods section:

1. Identify Stakeholders.

Stakeholders are defined as primary intended users such as high school principals,

participating college vice president at the CMC in Edwards, CO, and assistant deans at CMC. There will also be secondary users which will consist of high school and college counselors, faculty, and students.

2. Develop with stakeholders the focus of the evaluation and how it will be used.

I called an early initial meeting with the primary stakeholders to discuss the intended goals of the evaluation. They were given an executive summary of the problem statement and methodology. I facilitated a thorough conversation to reach a consensus on how the evaluation would be used for further improvement of the program.

3. Involve stakeholders in process of evaluation.

To maintain involvement of the stakeholders throughout the evaluation I sent informative updates as to the progress and scheduled events of the evaluation. These came in three forms such as email updates, video conferences, and face to face meetings.

4. Have stakeholders engaged in the findings

I fostered and developed buy in through the presentation of the problem statement, and theoretical framework. Stakeholders were also given opportunities to speak at the scheduled CEPA meetings for CMC to inform the larger group of data points gleaned, and progress made.

5. Making decisions on how to move forward

I created a plan with achievable action items for the intended users. This is in the form of a best practices manual, policy implementations, and supporting programs. These will be discussed further in the recommendations section.

The qualitative interviews and focus generated themes that led to multiple findings on how the program could improve on certain aspects that would address the college aspirations and experiences of low SES students in the CEPA program at CMC. The findings were brought to the primary intended user group meetings to be discussed and vetted for validity. Many of the findings as will be discussed in recommendations have overlaps in multiple themes. The program evaluation was then substantiated by quantitative data provided by the IR department at CMC to show trends in enrollment, matriculation trends, completion data, and transfer rates into CMC pertaining to the CEPA program with the partnering high schools.

The major findings were then organized with sub findings and contextualized with the literature and research pertaining to each category. The major findings categories are as follows: (1) faculty training; (2) addressing barriers; (3) family inputs and cultural capital; (4) guided pathways and meta-majors; (5) student services; (6) Mentorship and engagement. These categories have multiple sub findings. The ultimate list of findings had duplications and serves as an exhaustive list to expose gaps in the CEPA program at CMC in supporting low SES student retention and persistence, and improving college aspirations for this group. Through triangulation with the focus group, student interviews, IR data, and primary intended user feedback, recommendations to the CEPA program at CMC emerged. The last section of this chapter will list the recommendations that have been vetted by the primary user group from this U-FE that is specific to the CEPA program at CMC in Edwards, CO.

Recommendations for Future Study

There have been limitations to this study due to the identification system that is set in place for low SES students in the CEPA program at CMC. The data that is available to school officials is limited to a total number of students at the high school who received Title I funding. This is due primarily to State laws protecting privacy. Individual information is only available if the student voluntarily discloses. If the student is under the age of 18yrs, that student must disclose with parental permission. Because of this barrier, much of the data is difficult to triangulate because of the lack of raw data that reflects actual demographic information on low SES student in the CEPA program at CMC.

The program evaluation design allowed for input from the primary users which allowed for the distribution of disclosure forms to all CEPA students. After distribution with an explanation for parents and disclosure form, there were still a limited amount that agreed to disclose of their Title I status. Compounding the issues of identification, many students, especially in their junior years of high school, and prime age for CEPA participation choose not to apply for Title I funding due to social stigmas. This barrier makes it difficult to obtain complete student information about race, gender, family educational background etc. Having this data of identified students in the CEPA program at CMC could allow for a more statistical analysis of correlations between SES, gender, race, and parents educational background with grade point averages (GPA) in the CEPA program. This could also help ascertain the low SES students' completed courses, completion rates, and transfer rates. This evaluation was limited to only CMC data obtained through their IR. Looking at a 7 year trend, the evaluation was able to identify

CEPA students who completed FAFSA applications after high school and applied to CMC that were Pell eligible, which also identifies them in the low SES quartile. Although this data was helpful in running comparisons it still lacked the validity of more specifics due to the absence of potentially collected data on student who did not complete a FAFSA.

This requires first and foremost a policy implementation that requires all CEPA students participating in the CMC program to complete a FAFSA. This is not an easy nor a quick task to implement as there are political, and procedural hurdles to overcome. Having this data would benefit future studies in being more accurate of the efficacy of the CEPA program at CMC on retention and persistence for low SES students. The qualitative design proved beneficial to explore the student's experiences and measure to the best of our ability the level of college aspiration for low SES students and how the CEPA program at CMC affected that. However more quantitative data is needed and a more statistical analysis would prove beneficial for a future evaluation.

Conclusion

The findings that have been generated were vetted through the U-FE process and many conversations with the primary intended user group. The primary intended user group will meet to discuss implementation in October of 2019. The artifacts that will come of this program evaluation will be in the form of teaching module outlines for our LMS platform at CMC to be used by faculty. A policy proposals submitted to the college's executive leadership, an advising best practices document, and the proposal of a mentorship program. Guided pathways and meta-majors has already begun in Psychology, Spanish, and Culinary Arts. Following a three year trend analysis of how

this implementation has affected retention and persistence for low SES students, a decision on how to move forward will be implemented and possibly replicated to other programs. Investigating the field of cultural capital has been beneficial to understand the nuances of family inputs, and to better understand students' experiences. Although the theory is esoteric, it exists on multiple levels for students and faculty and carries both objective and subjective aims that allows the evaluation to produce actionable tasks to improve the efficacy of the CEPA program at CMC in increasing retention and persistence, and improving college aspirations for low SES students in order to reduce the attainment gap for this program and possibly replicable to other CEPA programs within the CMC system and in the state of Colorado.

References

A Stronger Nation. (2016, April). In *Lumina Foundation*. Retrieved from https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/publications/stronger_nation/2016/colorado-brief-2016.pdf

An, B. (2013). The Impact of Dual Enrollment on College Degree Attainment: Do Low-SES Students Benefit? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 35*(1), 57-75.

Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of college student personnel*, 25(4), 297-308.

Baum, S. (2007). It's Time for Serious Reform of the Student-Aid System. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning, 39*(2), 15-20.

Begen, F., & Turner-Cobb, J. (2012). The need to belong and symptoms of acute physical health in early adolescence. *Journal of Health Psychology,17*(6), 907-916.

Bohon, S., & Gorman, B. (2006). College Aspirations and Expectations among Latino Adolescents in the United States. *Social Problems, 53*(2), 207-225.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (Ed), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education (pp. 83-93)*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre, & Passeron, Jean Claude. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society and culture / Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron ; translated from the French by Richard Nice ; with a foreword by Tom Bottomore.* (Sage studies in social and educational change ; v. 5). London ; Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Brown, W. (2003). Neo-liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy. Theory & Event, 7(1), Theory & Event, 2003, Vol.7(1).

Closing the College Gap: A Roadmap to Postsecondary Readiness and Attainment. (2016, December 7). In *GradNation: America's Promise Alliance*. Retrieved from http://gradnation.americaspromise.org/report/closing-college-gap-roadmap-postsecondary-readiness-and-attainment

Courtney, Clemens. "US Inflation." Bureau of Labor Statistics, Thompson Reuters, 24 July 2013, retrieved from https://sites.ed.gov/ous/2013/07/weighing-the-cost-and-value-of-a-college-decision/. Accessed 10 Mar. 2017.

Colorado Mountain College. (n.d.). In Colorado Mountain College. Retrieved May 15, 2018, retrieved from https://coloradomtn.edu/about-us/

Concurrent Enrollment Act. (n.d.). In *Colorado Department of Education*. Retrieved May 15, 2018, retrieved from https://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/concurrentenrollmentact

Concurrent Enrollment. (2017, January 1). In Colorado Department of Education. Retrieved from https://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/concurrentenrollment

Colorado free and reduced price meal policy for 2018-2019. (n.d.). In Colorado Department of Education. Retrieved from https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/frpublicrelease18-19

Colorado Rises. (n.d.). In *Colorado Department of Higher Education*. Retrieved May 15, 2018, retrieved from http://masterplan.highered.colorado.gov/

Creswell, J. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Dimaggio, P. (1982). Cultural Capital and School Success: The Impact of Status Culture Participation on the Grades of U.S. High School Students. *American Sociological Review*, 47(2), 189-201.

Deangelo, L., & Franke, R. (2016). Social Mobility and Reproduction for Whom? College Readiness and First-Year Retention. *American Educational Research Journal, 53*(6), 1588-1625.

Du, J., Sansing, W., Yu, J., & Association for Educational Communications Technology, Washington, DC. (2004). The Impact of Technology Use on Low-Income and Minority Students' Academic Achievements : Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 / Janxia Du, William Sansing and Chien Yu.

Duel Enrollment. (n.d.). In Education Commission of the States. Retrieved September 18, 2018, retrieved from http://ecs.force.com/mbdata/mbprofgroupall?Rep=DEA

Eagle Schools Fact Sheet. (n.d.). In Eagle County Schools. Retrieved May 23, 2018, retrieved from https://www.eagleschools.net/sites/default/files/website/17530%20ECS_DistrictFactSheet-4Panel-R5.pdf

Engle, J., & Tinto, V. (2008). Moving beyond access: College success for low-income, first-generation students. *The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education. Washington, DC: Author*.

Herzog, Serge. (2018). Financial Aid and College Persistence: Do Student Loans Help or Hurt? *Research in Higher Education, 59*(3), 273-301.

Jensen, E. (2013). How Poverty Affects Classroom Engagement. Educational Leadership, 70(8), 24-30.

Legislative Report on the Postsecondary Progress and Success of High School Graduates. (2018, January 1). In highered.colorado.gov. Retrieved from https://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Legislative/PostSecondary/2018_Postsecondary_Progress_rel20180302.pdf

LeGree, D., Smith, Daryl G., Perkins, Linda, & Thomas, Scott. (2015). *Reframing the Definition of First-Generation Students: The Impact of Nonparent Family Influences on the College Aspirations of First-Generation Students,* ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Marx, K. (2009). *Das kapital : A critique of political economy* (Skeptical reader series). Washington, D.C. : New York: Regnery Pub. ; Distributed to the trade by Perseus Distribution.

McDonough, P. (1997). *Choosing Colleges: How Social Class and Schools Structure Opportunity*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Olssen, Mark, and Michael A. Peters. "Neoliberalism, Higher Education and the Knowledge Economy: From the Free Market to Knowledge Capitalism." Journal of Education Policy 20, no. 3 (2005): 313-45.

Other Federal Laws Affecting Information Privacy in Schools. (n.d.). In National Center for Educational Statistics. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2004/privacy/section_2e.asp

Patton, M.Q. (2011). *Essentials of utilization-focused evaluation.* Sage Publications.

Pfeffer, F. (2018). Growing Wealth Gaps in Education. *Demography, 55*(3), 1033-1068.

Pierro, D., Rodriguez, Gloria M., Grady, Karen, & Quijada, Patricia. (2018). *Making Access Accessible: Rethinking Access through Informality for First-Generation, Low-Income College Students*, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Postsecondary Attainment: Differences by Socioeconomic Status. (2015, May 1). In *National Center for Educational Statistics.* Retrieved July 6, 2018, retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_tva.asp

Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. (n.d.). In *United States Department if Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service*. Retrieved from https://www.fns.usda.gov/richard-b-russell-national-school-lunch-act

Silver Wolf, D., Perkins, J., Butler-Barnes, S., & Walker, T. (2017). Social Belonging and College Retention: Results From a Quasi-Experimental Pilot Study. *Journal of College Student Development, 58*(5), 777-782.

Sirin, Selcuk R. (2005). Socioeconomic Status and Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analytic Review of Research. *Review of Educational Research,* 75(3), 417-453.

Swanson, J., & Hlebowitsh, Peter S. (2008). *An Analysis of the Impact of High School Dual Enrollment Course Participation on Post -secondary Academic Success, Persistence and Degree Completion,* ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Swartz, D. (1997). *Culture & power : The sociology of Pierre Bourdieu / David Swartz.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

COPY THE CITATION TO CLIPBOARD

Thomas, L. (2002). Student retention in higher education: The role of institutional habitus. *Journal of Education Policy, 17*(4), 423-442.

Tuition Costs of Colleges and Universities. (n.d.). In National Center for Educational Statistics. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=76

Williams, K., Hitch, Leslie P., Brown, Ronald, & Louison, Patricia. (2012). *Low-income Students and Expensive, Highly Ranked Private Colleges: An Investigation of the Role of Habitus on College Choice and Debt Tolerance,* ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.

Yorke, M., & Thomas, L. (2003). Improving the Retention of Students from Lower Socio-economic Groups. Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, 25(1), 63-74

Appendix A

Process for Utilization Focused Evaluation (Evaluation Checklist Project, 2013)

1. Assess and build program and organizational readiness for utilization-focused evaluation
2. Assess and enhance evaluator readiness and competence to undertake a utilization-focused evaluation.
3. Identify, organize, and engage primary intended users.
4. Conduct situation analysis with primary intended users.
5. Identify primary intended uses by establishing the evaluation's priority purposes.
6. Consider and build in process uses if appropriate.
7. Focus priority evaluation questions.
8. Check that fundamental areas for evaluation inquiry are being adequately addressed.
9. Determine what intervention model or theory of change is being evaluated.
10. Negotiate appropriate methods to generate credible findings and support intended use by intended users.
11. Make sure intended users understand potential controversies about methods and their implications.
12. Simulate use of findings.
13. Gather data with ongoing attention to use.
14. Organize and present the data for use by primary intended users.
15. Prepare an evaluation report to facilitate use and disseminate significant findings to expand influence.
16. Follow up with primary intended users to facilitate and enhance use.
17. Meta-evaluation of use: Be accountable, learn, and improve.

Appendix B

Statement of Informed Consent

This is a consent form for research participation: It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate.

Your participation is voluntary: Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and will receive a copy of the form.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to investigate students' understanding of the Concurrent Enrollment Program

Procedures: By agreeing to participate in this study, you will take part in an individual interview, lasting no more than 90 minutes. You may be asked to participate in follow-up interviews of approximately 30 minutes each.

Duration: You may leave the study at any time. IF you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Confidentiality: All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released. For example, personal information regarding your participation may be disclosed if required by state law. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications, but the researchers will not identify you. Only Jeremiah Johnson will have access to individual data. All data will be encrypted and stored in a secure location and then destroyed one year after completion of the study.

Risks: Any discomfort you might experience should be more than typically experienced during a small group discussion. If you are not comfortable with the discussion and wish to discontinue participation in the study, you will be free to leave without penalty.

Benefits: The potential benefits of your participation include the opportunity to generate new understandings of the CEPA program and implementations on how to improve it.

Incentives: You will receive a certificate of participation upon completion of the study.

Questions and Contacts: For questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Jeremiah Johnson, jjohnson@coloradomtn.edu,

Signing the Consent Form: I have read this form and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study (Jones, Torres, Armino, 2014).

Participant Name:

Signature: Date:

Appendix C

Sample Questions and Surveys

1. Can you give me an example of a successful moment you had during your CEPA participation?
2. Describe for me an obstacle that you felt while taking CEPA classes?
3. Tell me about your experience after high school graduation?
4. What are your perceptions about the CEPA program that you participated in?
5. Talk about your family background in relation to their ideas on education?
6. What are some examples of positive contributions from your family to support your education?
7. What are some examples of negative contributions from your family to not support your education?

Appendix D

Timeline for the UFE

- October 31st IRB paperwork submitted
- November 5th Email to Stakeholders of upcoming initial meeting request to occur in Early December.
- December 3rd Conduct initial Stakeholder meeting to go over problem statement, purpose and methods/announce focus groups/set dates for focus group sessions
- Email focus groups the requested dates and times of sessions. To be conducted face to face at CMC in Edwards, CO. Week of February 18th
- December 10th Gather student contact information for student interviews. Collected from Eagle County School District
- December 11th begin contacting student participants for interviews by emails or phone. Set up interviews the week of February 4th
- January 30th Confirm student interviews to be conducted February 4th-8th to be conducted face to face at CMC in Edwards, CO
- February 4th Confirm focus groups to be conducted February 18th-22nd to be conducted face to face at CMC in Edwards, CO
- February 18th Begin transcription of interviews
- February 25th Begin transcriptions of focus groups
- March 4th Begin coding and theme development of interviews
- March 11th Begin coding and theme development of focus groups

- March 25th request all pertinent data for quantitative portion of evaluation
- April 15th organize and analyze data from quantitative portion of evaluation
- April 22nd Continue data analysis and writing
- May 9th Full draft to Dr. Gildersleeve
- May 23rd Revised draft to Dr. Gildersleeve
- June 6th Second revised draft to Dr. Gildersleeve
- June 20th Final DRP
- July 11th DRP defense
- July 25th all revisions due
- August 1st Filing and all revisions complete

Appendix E

Memo writing for codes and themes

Part I

Today I coded the focus group in its entirety. However, I am going back to the beginning to clean up the raw data. The focus group consisted of mostly faculty and some administration. The first section of the focus group discussed the perceptions of poverty in the Vail Valley. Some of the codes that I extracted were:

- Teacher Poverty vs. Student Poverty
- Income vs. Cost of living
- Jobs in the Valley
- Misconceptions of living in the Valley
- Teacher Retention
- Language as cultural capital
- Aspiration to go to college or work
- Use of family income
- Size of family
- Poverty is Relative
- Ethnicity and Poverty

What is their story? I am finding that the story or narrative that is being developed is that it is expensive to live in the Vail Valley and there are not enough high paying jobs that are required to survive here. Also, housing is hard to find and expensive. Because of this there is a high rate of turnover in the high schools, and college for educators. Faculty focused on their own poverty at first but later shifted the conversation back to the students. Family size, and use of income in relation to socio economic status was discussed in that some families utilized their incomes different than others depending on SES. Some students are torn between entering the workforce and paying for college.

Part II

The next portion of coding surrounded strategies to identify low SES students in the faculty's class or college system. Codes that emerges are as follows:

- Equity vs. Equality
- Observational Assessment
- Financial Indicators (book affordability)
- Roles as Teacher vs. Role as Faculty
- Mentorship
- Utilizing Scholarships
- Self-Identifying Stigmas
- Tuition as Indicator

The story that is being told by the focus group pertaining to low SES identification is that there is no definitive way to identify students in the system that the College and High School exists. Teacher and Faculty have different symbolic meanings. Teacher denotes

high school, which includes added roles of social services provider. Faculty is related to college instruction, and has some aspects of social services but not as much. College faculty that teach Concurrent Enrollment Programs (CEPA), invent intuitive ways to identify students that are low SES. Some of these involve holistic approaches that include deep conversations, and mentorship to gain a better picture of what is going on in the student's life. Tuition cost is not a factor to determine low SES because of our agreement with the Eagle County Schools, and tuition is paid for through Title I funding.

- First Generation Students
- Study Space
- Study Skills
- Access to a Computer
- Social Emotional Support
- Mentors
- Accuplacer
- Multiple Measures for access

The story that is being told by the focus group is that some do not see any difference in need for students of low SES backgrounds in regards to student support. This is a gap area that needs to be explored and supported by evidence. This to me is a clear misunderstanding of Equity vs. Equality. However, after many stated the equal needs across the board, a conversation developed surrounding access to a quiet study space, development of study skills, and access to technology. All these were mentioned prior in the discussion around defining poverty.

Part III

I have organized the data holistically by creating three categories. The three categories are major, unique, and leftover. I have gone over the focus group transcripts again and extracted the following:

Major	Unique	Leftover
Student Support (SS)	Perceptions of Poverty (PP)	Other Programs (OP)
Teacher Training (TT)	Geographical Location (GL)	
Identification (I)	Demographics (D)	
Pathways (PW)	Use of Economic Capital (EC)	
Persistence (PS)	Language as Cultural Capital (LCC)	
College Choice (CC)	Housing (H)	
Motivation (M)	Access (A)	
	Jobs (J)	
	Family (F)	

I created a table to help organize the data. I formed these topics that were similar and organized these topics into three columns. I then went back to the transcripts and used the

topics as codes. I began writing the abbreviated codes next to appropriate segments of the transcripts. I looked for new emerging categories or codes. By doing this themes emerged, as frequencies of particular constellations of codes appeared. I then systematically mapped out the code groupings and identified 6 themes which I named according to my conceptualization. These are as follows:

- Family and Place,
- Teacher Training on Poverty,
- Identification Systems,
- Addressing Barriers,
- Enhancing Persistence Through Guided Pathways,
- Improving Student Support to Increase Retention and Persistence.

These are in the preliminary stages and will most likely be modified as I continue with the analysis. My next steps for this portion of the data analysis will be to compose findings that are supported by the literature review. This will require me to go back to the canon and expand my literature review accordingly.

Part IV

I began this process by reading interviews individually. I looked for what the interviews were about and made notes in the margin. From these notes I compiled topics and made a comprehensive list. I then found common topics and compiled these together. This task included coding and theming for 10 student interviews. The list of codes that emerged were organized into 3 categories, similar to the process for the focus group. The codes are as follows:

Major	Unique	Leftover
Mentorship (M) 40	Family Inputs (FI)	Transportation (TR)
Peer Support (PS) 7	Cultural Norms (CN)	Desire to Help Family (DHF)
Teacher Support (TS) 10	Cultural Capital (CC)	Sports (SP)
Pathways (P) 12	Economic Use (EU)	Student Loans (SL)
Career (C) 17	Work vs. School (WS)	Scholarships (SC)
Student Services (SS) 24	Maturity (MT)	
College Choice (CC)	Pressures (P)	
Study Skills (SSK)	Civic Engagement (CE)	
Study Space (SSP)	Transitions (T)	
Orientation (O)	Placement Test (PT)	
Confidence (CF)	Motivation (MV)	

I created a table to organize topics. These are labeled as Major, Unique, and Leftover. These topics were then given abbreviations in order to simplify the following step of the analysis. I took these main topics and went back to the interview transcripts to assign them to the texts. This process was to see if more themes emerged.

From this step in the analysis process I found the following findings:

- Family Inputs and Cultural Capital
- Pathways to Career
- Mentorship and Engagement
- Student Services
- Orientation

Appendix F

Executive summary for recommendations for leadership team for CEPA CMC programs

Recommendation #1

Implementation of faculty training to include pedagogical differentiation on the classroom to support low SES needs, and the implementation and use of LMS training.

- Creating a best practice guide and training modules for faculty through professional development platforms will shape an improved culture of an empathetic institution.
  Incorporating more LMS while also being cognizant of creating LMS accessibility and usage.

Recommendation #2

Implement a policy to make mandatory the completion of the FAFSA for CEPA students in the CMC program.

- Work with executive leadership at Colorado Mountain College (CMC) to pursue amendments to bills pertaining to identifying students with low socio economic status (SES). This would be fortified through the implementation of policy for the mandatory completion for all CEPA students to complete FAFSFA applications. This policy change would allow CMC to identify marginalized students to further advance the study of how these students perform and to track their matriculation more clearly.

Recommendation #3

Create work study programs or scholarships for students who qualify for Title I funding in order to alleviate economic pressures.

- To address the economic issues students from low SES families have and to positively contribute to their psychological connection toward their investment in college, CMC will create more work study programs that are aimed at qualifying CEPA students. Scholarships will also be expanded for students in the CEPA programs for future endeavors.

Recommendation #4

Create access to support groups in the form of psychological counseling, and study groups. CEPA students enrolled through the CMC program are considered first and foremost students of the college.

- Expand services for counseling support on our CMC campus to CEPA students. Organize tutoring sessions and study groups that are implanted within the school day for CEPA students.

Recommendation #5

Assess curriculum and adjust where possible to incorporate more culturally diverse subject matter.

- Utilize our academic design to bring in conversations about culturally diverse curriculum college wide. Create training for all CMC faculty that discusses the relationship to retention and cultural identification in curriculum.

Recommendation #6

Create guided pathways into programs with career outcomes. Also create meta-majors to allow students to explore a suite of classes that would work towards various degrees.

- Expand upon the already existing curriculum offered in the CEPA program to include guided pathways to degrees. Create an advising handbook for High School counselors that informs student's clear pathways into degrees and careers trajectories.

Recommendation #7

Implement a mentorship program for low SES students to be paired with community volunteers.

- Create a community based mentorship program to work with targeted low SES students. This will build social and cultural capital for the students that otherwise is nonexistent. This could come in the form of job shadowing, life coaching, moral support, or exposure to new ways of approaching and valuing college.

Appendix G

2-year sequence for A.A. in Psychology for CEPA CMC students. This perpetual schedule is guaranteed to be offered for students to complete the core classes of the degree if they are taking CEPA courses in conjunction with CMC night classes. The general education requirements lists all classes and credits required to finish the degree.

Associate of Arts: Psychology-Two year sequencing VE campus	
Fall (Below classes are offered at CMC)	Spring (Below classes are offered at CMC)
◆ PSY 231 - Positive Psychology (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	◆ PSY 240 - Health Psychology (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits
◆ PSY 235 - Human Growth & Development (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	◆ PSY 235 - Human Growth & Development (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits
◆ PSY 101 - General Psychology I (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	◆ PSY 102 - General Psychology II (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits
A.A. Psychology Pathway CEPA VE (Below classes are offered through CEPA)	**A.A. Psychology Pathway CEPA VE**(Below classes are offered through CEPA)
◆ PSY 101 - General Psychology I (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	◆ PSY 235 - Human Growth & Development (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits
Fall	Spring
◆ PSY 226 - Social Psychology (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	◆ PSY 249 - Abnormal Psychology (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits
◆ PSY 101 - General Psychology I (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	◆ PSY 102 - General Psychology II (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits
◆ PSY 235 - Human Growth & Development (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	◆ PSY 235 - Human Growth & Development (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits
A.A. Psychology Pathway CEPA VE	**A.A. Psychology Pathway CEPA VE**
◆ PSY 102 - General Psychology II (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	◆ PSY 231 - Positive Psychology (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits
NOTE: ALL BELOW CLASSES ARE OFFERED AT THE VE CAMPUS F2F	
General Education Requirements (34-36 credits)	
◆ ENG 121 - English Composition I (GT-CO1) 3.0 Credits	
◆ ENG 122 - English Composition II (GT-CO2) 3.0 Credits	

◆ MAT 135 - Introduction to Statistics (GT-MA1)	
◆ MUS 120 - Music Appreciation (GT-AH1)	
◆ ART 110 - Art Appreciation (GT-AH1)	
◆ PHI 111 - Introduction to Philosophy (GT-AH3)	
◆ PHI 112 - Ethics (GT-AH3)	
◆ PHI 113 - Logic (GT-AH3)	
◆ SPA 211 - Spanish Language III (GT-AH4)	
◆ SPA 212 - Spanish Language IV (GT-AH4)	
◆ HIS 121 - US History to Reconstruction (GT-HI1)	
◆ HIS 122 - US History Since the Civil War (GT-HI1)	
◆ HIS 205 - Women in World History (GT-HI1)	
◆ HIS 207 - American Environmental History (GT-HI1)	
◆ HIS 208 - American Indian History (GT-HI1)	
◆ HIS 215 - Women in U.S. History (GT-HI1)	
◆ HIS 225 - Colorado History (GT-HI1)	
◆ HIS 244 - History of Latin America (GT-HI1)	
◆ BIO 111 - General College Biology With Lab (GT-SC1)	
◆ BIO 112 - General College Biology II With Lab (GT-SC1)	
◆ BIO 201 - Human Anatomy and Physiology I (GT-SC1)	
◆ BIO 202 - Human Anatomy & Physiology II (GT-SC1)	
◆ BIO 204 - Microbiology (GT-SC1)	
◆ CHE 101 - Introduction to Chemistry I (GT-SC1)	
◆ ENV 101 - Introduction to Environmental Science (GT-SC1)	
◆ GEO 111 - Physical Geography: Landforms (GT-SC1)	
◆ GEO 112 - Physical Geography - Weather & Climate (GT-SC1)	
◆ GEY 111 - Physical Geology w/ Lab (GT-SC1)	

Additional Required Courses (18 credits)	
✻ COM 115 - Public Speaking 3.0 Credits	
◆ PSY 101 - General Psychology I (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	
◆ PSY 102 - General Psychology II (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	
And choose three of the following GT-SS3 PSY courses:	
◆ PSY 226 - Social Psychology (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	
◆ PSY 231 - Positive Psychology (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	
◆ PSY 235 - Human Growth & Development (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	
◆ PSY 240 - Health Psychology (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	
◆ PSY 249 - Abnormal Psychology (GT-SS3) 3.0 Credits	
CMC Cultural Competency Requirement (3 credits)	
◆ MUS 125 - History of Jazz (GT-AH1)	
◆ HIS 205 - Women in World History (GT-HI1) 3.0 credits	
◆ HIS 208 - American Indian History (GT-HI1) 3.0 credits	
◆ HIS 244 - History of Latin America (GT-HI1) 3.0 credits	
✻ SPA 111 - Spanish Language I 5.0 credits	
✻ SPA 112 - Spanish Language II 5.0 credits	
◆ SPA 211 - Spanish Language III (GT-AH4) 3.0 credits	
◆ SPA 212 - Spanish Language IV (GT-AH4) 3.0 credits	
Electives (3-5 credits)	
Chosen by student and advisor	