

NOT AMERICA'S NEXT TOP MODEL (MINORITY): THE ADVISING  
EXPERIENCE OF GRADUATING FILIPINO STUDENTS AT A LARGE PUBLIC  
RESEARCH INSTITUTION

A Thesis

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Submitted in partial satisfaction of  
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by

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Graduate and Professional Studies in Education

Abstract  
of  
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*Brief Literature Review*

The literature review includes a history of the Filipino diaspora beginning with the Spanish American War moving through current US immigration trends. The construction of model minority myth is also included, as it informs the development of equity-based resources that impact this student population in higher education spaces, such as 4-year public research institutions. Finally, common advising models are also discussed, as they inform ways in which students may experience academic advising during their undergraduate experience.

*Statement of Problem*

The focus of this study was to examine the academic advising experience of Filipino and Filipino American graduating students at a public 4-year research institution. Specifically, this study determined if a shared cultural experience is a positive variable to the persistence of degree completion for this underserved student population. Academic advisers are one of the primary resources utilized by undergraduate students and can,

therefore, serve as an equitable resource for marginalized student populations. However, the capacity of the academic adviser to serve in a social capital function may not be understood by Filipino or Filipino American students, who must reconcile both dominant American cultural norms and Filipino cultural expectations to understand what it means to be successful at university. Additionally, this study sought to understand if, in the event a shared experience does not already exist, this is a desired variable for the undergraduate experience.

Furthermore, this study sought to understand if higher education praxis is informed by systems of oppression, such as model minority myth. The academic advisers are charged with core values that should enable students the agency to thrive in university spaces. This study investigated from the student perspective if this is the case. In addition, this study determined what types of advisers serve Filipino and Filipino American students, in what ways do they serve those students, if a shared cultural experience impacts culturally sensitive student services, and if the desire to have an academic adviser with shared cultural experiences is important to the success of the student.

### *Methodology*

The qualitative study used semi-structured interviews with six respondents, all of whom identified as Filipino or Filipino American undergraduate students who will graduate in the 2015-2016 academic year. All participants were enrolled as full-time students and were pursuing degrees in STEM, social sciences, and humanities. All

participants were California residents and engaged with academic advisers across their respective disciplines throughout their undergraduate experiences.

*Conclusions Reached*

Based on the data collected, there is a strong desire to have a shared cultural experience with the academic adviser and such an experience positively impacts the success of the student. “Cultural experience” must be defined on a spectrum of identities, which can include multiple social group memberships beyond shared ethnic or cultural identity. The data also showed that students who experienced a shared cultural experience with an adviser reported an overall more positive experience with their undergraduate education, community, and campus engagements. This was especially prevalent for Filipino American identified students pursuing degrees in social sciences or humanities disciplines.

\_\_\_\_\_, Committee Chair  
Virginia L. Dixon, Ed.D.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my sisters: Noelle and Angelica. You are the motivation for all I do and the inspiration to be my most authentic and better self in my work. I am so blessed and proud to have you as my sisters. I love you both to the moon and back.

I would also like to dedicate this work to my kaibigan (friend) and colleague: Joey Y. Almario. Thank you for serving our students as a kind, intentional, and holistic adviser – you are missed every day.



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Audre Lorde, writer, civil rights activist, and feminist, once said: When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.

I feel blessed to know my power and resilience was fostered by the following heroes, visionaries, and mentors:

Mom & Dad – thank you for your unconditional love and support, for always encouraging me that there was no obstacle I couldn't overcome, for being my heroes. Because of you, I know I don't ever have a reason to be afraid. Because of you, I understand that I am resilient. Because of you, I understand that I come from a long line of purpose and power and I am so grateful for the privilege and blessing to be your daughter.

To my faculty: Dr. Geni Cowan and Dr. Jose Chavez – thank you for always challenging me to think critically and to answer the question “so what?” Your expectations of me have empowered me to really understand my vision in higher education and I cannot thank you enough for it.

To my committee: Dr. Virginia Dixon and Dr. Rich Shintaku – thank you so much for your dedication to my research and for holding me accountable through this process. You were there for me when I lost sight of my ability and confidence, and I will always appreciate your holistic support of me and my work. I was not able to produce this without you.

To my mentor: Dr. Rich Shintaku – thank you for taking me under your wing and for seeing in me the potential to do impactful advocacy work. I truly appreciate your guidance all these years, from APASA to now, and cannot thank you enough for all of your guidance and counsel. You’ve always made sure I stayed true to my vision and authentic to my work, and I am very lucky to have a mentor like you.

To my supportive network comprised of family, chosen family, student affairs colleagues, supervisors, and students – thank you so much for your love and support through this entire process, and for not giving up on me. You all were part of the inspiration and motivation to finish this work and I appreciate you. I would especially like to thank Dr. LeAnn Fong-Batkin and Dr. Janine Flathmann Wilson for your guidance and support through this process as part of my extended committee – I could not have done this without you both and I am eternally grateful. I would also like to thank the best editor in the world, Meredith Linden – you gave me life and kept me on track.

My cohort – we started this journey two years ago without a true understanding of what we were about to get ourselves into. I could not ask for a better group of folks to endure this process with because you all are so powerful and inspiring. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to share this experience with you all and look forward to celebrating our next steps together!

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me add to the body of knowledge about our shared histories. We did it, mga kaibigan!

Maraming salamat para sa lahat ng tulong niyo!

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Overview**

Literature suggests that Filipino and Filipino American students experience dissonance toward educational mobility; however, this experience is rarely addressed. Dissonance in higher education is the inability to feel connected, produced by feelings of discomfort or stress (Teranishi, 2010). As an invisible minority, this student population struggles with conflicting definitions of academic achievement because of an assumed educational experience shared with their non-Filipino Asian and Pacific Islander peers. Filipino and Filipino American students are inferred to be part of aggregate data that assume all Asian and Pacific Islander students experience academic success in higher education. Part of this disconnect is that this student population does not utilize the same equity resources as other student groups. For example, the western definition of academic advising aligns with social capital and positive strategic planning. Museus (2013) identified, “educational systems are based on and favor the cultural values, norms, and knowledge of the White middle class” (p. 712), which prevents APIA students from trusting such resources. In addition, collectivist cultural assumptions around the use of counseling and advising are related to signs of weakness and shame; these negative designations are further amplified by social paradigms like model minority myth, which assumes that students who identify as APIA do not require equity resources because they will succeed on their own (Song & Glick, 2004). Lastly, familial expectations suggest

that students who utilize such resources are unintelligent, lazy, or lack the skills to successfully navigate the college experience in general (Bonus, 2010). It is important to note that “parents’ educational expectations [are] a critical factor . . . on positive educational trajectories from an early age” (Museus, 2013, p. 724) and the pressure to meet these expectations causes similar internalized expectations of success and achievement for APIA students. The model minority myth, familial and cultural expectations, and the advising relationship must be explored to determine the basis of dissonance for specific student groups within the APIA umbrella. Additionally, the Asian and Pacific Islander American experience is not a homogenous educational understanding, and the effect of dissonance only impacts certain groups among this population (Tang, 2008).

Since this is not a singular experience, it is important to define the APIA student community because this population comprises distinct cultures that do not have the same educational experiences. This study focuses specifically on the Filipino and Filipino American undergraduate experience, which is that of a minority group within the APIA community itself (Buenavista, Jayakumar, & Misa-Escalante, 2009). Stacey Lee (1994) was able to define the variations in APIA student identities and the impact of model minority myth in research she conducted that explored the layers of this term. Students who identify as East Asian migrated from China, Japan, and Korea and are more likely to identify positively with the model minority myth stereotype and use it as a means to support mobility. East Asian students regard non-East Asian students as “welfare



sponges, and they ridiculed them for wearing ‘tacky’ clothing” (Lee, 1994, p. 416). In addition, East Asian students are more likely to experience cultural appropriation and integrate western norms as part of their own socialization because they have a positive impact on their educational mobility. On the other hand, students who identify as Southeast Asian migrated from countries experiencing refugee status, including but not limited to, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Philippines, and Guam. Southeast Asian students do not identify positively with the model minority myth; in fact, this myth creates mobility barriers for this population because they are historically underrepresented and underserved and do not experience the same levels of achievement as their non-Southeast Asian APIA peers. Lee (1994) explained that these students “did not see school as the key to success in the United States” (p. 422). Instead, social networking and peer affirmation were regarded as the best resources for achieving success overall.

Other student populations that fall under the APIA umbrella include Pacific Islander and Asian-identified international students. Pacific Islander student populations migrated from island nations including Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. Such students may also consider themselves as native or indigenous to colonized lands, such as the Hawaiian Islands. International students may also fall under the umbrella of API but not be APIA since these students have a transnational experience as opposed to a diasporic one. As a result, international students will likely return to their home countries after their undergraduate degrees are completed.

### **Statement of Purpose**

Underrepresented and underserved APIA student populations are generally characterized as Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander students. Correspondingly, the Filipino student population may be considered underserved and underrepresented. They experience the most dissonance toward educational mobility because of factors such as the model minority myth, juxtaposing definitions of mobility, and familial expectations. It is important to focus specifically on underserved and underrepresented APIA student populations because these students have a disproportionately limited achievement level compared to their East Asian peers. Specifically, the model minority myth creates an invisible minority: “it does not describe Southeast Asian and Pacific Islanders who, for the most part, are poorly educated, underemployed, and trapped in low-paying menial jobs” (Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, & Lin, 1998). In addition, they have an even larger achievement gap compared to their White and non-APIA minority peers (Ching & Agbayani, 2012). Since these students are not equipped with the same social capital as their peers, they are most likely to feel disengaged and alienated from the campus community, which negatively impacts their overall academic success. Research shows that Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander students are less likely to utilize resources that, based on western definitions, would assist in overall mobility because education does not validate their experience and they “view schooling as a threat to their oppositional cultures and identities” (Lee, 1994, p. 414). In addition, these students are the ones who should utilize equity resources the most, but who are more likely to avoid them because

of distrust and stigma, resulting in fewer awarded degrees and less investment in the value of educational mobility. In an attempt to understand how existing resources can best serve underrepresented and underserved APIA student populations, it is critical to define what and how social capital is lacking for matriculated students at large public research institutions. The population examined in this study comprised Filipino and Filipino American identified students and their advising experience. Specifically, the researcher examined whether or not a shared cultural experience with the academic adviser empowered these students to persist toward academic success and graduation. In particular, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What type of advisers serve Filipino and Filipino American students?
2. How do academic advisors serve Filipino students?
3. Does a cultural background experience make a difference in helping provide culturally sensitive student services?
4. Is the desire to have an academic adviser with shared cultural experiences important to the success of the student?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is an important tool for creating change to assist underrepresented and underserved student populations in higher education. Based on research conducted by Pliner and Johnson (2010), institutions of higher learning “have traditionally been resistant to change, especially in accommodating the needs of students marked as ‘minorities’ because of race, class, ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, nationality, or

sexual identification or origin” (p. 105). As a result, higher education leadership is impacted because a shift is necessary to address the barriers and ensure educational resources are holistically serving the increasingly diverse student population. This research can support higher education leadership in the development of dedicated programs for underserved student populations. In addition, it may suggest the need to recruit Student Affairs professionals, such as academic advisers, with shared cultural experiences that may continue to endorse the validity of educational mobility, as well as cultural identity, for this student population (Ching & Agbayani, 2012). These types of professionals can add to a more intentional multicultural climate because they can easily “engage, and validate the cultural backgrounds of students of color . . . foster more meaningful connections between these students and their educational institutions and ultimately more positive educational outcomes” (Museus, 2013, p. 712). Professional practice of higher education leadership requires assessment of techniques and services provided to create equity in student learning and mobility. Since the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires higher education institutions to ensure equity access, this must be the case for programs and resources provided to students as the student population continues to change. If these resources are not examined, “the absence of efforts to change the culture or the educational practices in higher education [create] significant barriers to access, retention, and graduation for many students” (Pliner & Johnson, 2010, p. 106). Soliciting feedback from the students is the best way to facilitate change processes and

intentionally provide the adequate resources and effective Student Affairs professionals needed to cultivate the educational mobility students require.

This study also speaks to the current climate of university campuses for APIA students. Specifically, many students experience dissonance because of a false sense of community engagement and multiculturalism. Watson, Terrell, and Wright (2002) described multiculturalism occurring in stages, the second of which “involves coexisting but separate minority subcultures within the dominant campus culture . . . [but] no attempts to integrate students’ cultures or ideas” (p. 10) are truly institutionalized. As a result, APIA communities are left feeling compartmentalized and othered. Although aggregated data exist to reflect that APIA student populations thrive on college campuses, the challenge of this data is that they assume all students thrive. On the other hand, disaggregated data can inform a university to become more holistic as a multicultural serving institution. Programs through the US Department of Education, such as minority-serving institution designations, are avenues by which a university can provide visibility to underrepresented and underserved APIA student communities and ensure that these students are receiving the types of resources and services that will truly allow them to thrive.

### **Definition of Terms**

#### **Academic Adviser**

A student affairs professional who assists undergraduate students with navigating degree requirements, co-curricular opportunities, and career planning and serves

as a general resource for students related to university policies, procedures, and successful persistence toward graduation.

### **Aggregated Data**

Summarized data gathered for the purpose of statistical analysis. In higher education, aggregated data are used to influence resource allocation, policy implementation, and system overviews for student services based on data such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and other identity markers (Tang, 2008).

### **Asian and Pacific Islander/American (API/APIA)**

According to the United States Census, either of these are options to indicate race or ethnicity on the national census. However, both communities are historically grouped together by the US government. Individuals who identify with API/A have roots that range from East Asia, Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. In the United States, these communities are commonly identified as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, Indian, and Hawaiian. More uncommon or less visible are the Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander community members, such as Hmong, Mien, and Polynesians. There may also be a distinction between the API experience compared to the APIA experience, and members of this community may self-select this experience or move between it.

**Cis-gendered**

Defined as a descriptor for individuals who experience gender performance that is aligned with their biologically assigned sex at birth and is a separate identifier from sexual orientation

**Cultural Capital**

Non-monetary or financial wealth or resources that encourage social mobility.

For many API identified students, education and family are the biggest source of such capital (Museus, 2013).

**Disaggregated Data**

Taking summarized data gathered for the purpose of statistical analysis and dividing this data into subcategories based on identity markers. In higher education, categorizing aggregated data into parts can be used to influence resource allocation, policy implementation, and system overviews for more equitable student services (Ching & Agbayani, 2012).

**Dissonance**

Discord resulting in a sense of othering or lack of belonging to a community or organization. In institutions of higher education, this is common amongst underrepresented and underserved students who do not feel invested in the overall college community with which they are affiliated (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010).

**East Asian**

Individuals who identify culturally or ethnically as Chinese, Japanese, or Korean.

This identity may be distinguished between the American diasporic experience, the American assimilated experience, and the immigrant experience.

**Filipino**

Individuals who identify culturally, ethnically, or nationally from the country of the Philippines. This identity may be distinguished between the American diasporic experience, the American assimilated experience, the American commonwealth experience, and the immigrant experience.

**Filipino American**

Individuals who identify nationally as American and also identify culturally and ethnically as descendants from the country of the Philippines. This identity may be distinguished from the Filipino identity in that it assumes a strong social and cultural investment with American cultural norms and social practices as well as Filipino cultural norms and practices. Filipino Americans may also identify as FilAm.

**Hegemony**

The social, political, or cultural influence of the dominant group; usually a coerced form of dominance by one nation or world power over another



**Intersectionality**

The ways in which social group memberships or identities intersect or overlap.

These include but are not limited to: race, ethnicity, gender, class, ability.

**Model Minority Myth**

Refers to the stereotype or assumption that a minority group, historically Asian minorities, is able to achieve social mobility regardless of minority status. This association impacts the entire Asian and Pacific Islander identity group, although most closely refers to the experiences of East Asian immigrant groups in the United States (Li, 2008).

**Multiculturalism**

The intentional advocacy of mutual respect and understanding for racial, ethnic, and cultural difference with the consciousness that these differences are valuable (Watson et al., 2002).

**Resource Literacy**

As it relates to student services, the knowledge and understanding of student resources aimed to provide an equitable and thriving collegiate experience

**Shared Cultural Experience**

A mutual understanding of a set of cultural norms, expectations, and values

**Success**

As it relates to student services, the ability to thrive in an undergraduate setting and achieve persistence toward graduation

**Social capital**

Human or community wealth or resources that encourage social mobility. For many API-identified students, education and family are the biggest source of such capital (Museus, 2013).

**Southeast Asian**

Individuals who identify culturally or ethnically from countries south of China. Historically, these may include, but are not limited to, Burma, Vietnam, Laos, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Singapore. This identity also includes cultures that do not have a politically identified country of origin, such as Hmong or Mien. This identity may be distinguished between the American diasporic experience, the American assimilated experience, the refugee experience, and the immigrant experience.

**STEM**

Science, technology, engineering, or math related fields; in academia, these are also related to as hard sciences and are assumed to lead into pipeline industries post-graduation.

**Success**

As it relates to student services, the ability to thrive in an undergraduate setting and achieve persistence toward graduation

### **Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 2 is a review of historical implications of this topic and why it must be addressed in order to create change processes. It also discusses theoretical frameworks that support the need for this work. Chapter 3 unpacks the research methodology and design. Chapter 4 presents the research data and findings. Chapter 5 summarizes the research and offers recommendations for furthering this work.

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

To understand the complex identity of Filipino and Filipino American undergraduate students, this chapter aims to analyze historical, cultural, and systematic variables that influence the way in which this student population navigates their collegiate experience. In addition, academic advising models most common to advising practice are also introduced as frameworks to inform the research study on how Filipino and Filipino American students may commonly experience advising. Although the research focuses on the student experience with academic advising throughout their undergraduate years, it is also the sum total of the advising approach of the academic adviser. Altogether, these contexts provide a better understanding of the challenges and experiences of Filipino and Filipino American students and academic advising at public 4-year research institutions.

The historical background of the Filipino immigrant experience and its resulting diasporic understanding provides foundational knowledge related to the challenges this student population faces when developing a positive self-perception. It may also provide an understanding of the dissonance this student population feels toward the campus community. The Filipino cultural experience is also addressed because this experience continues to shape the identity development of Filipino and Filipino American students as they work to achieve cultural, familial, and personal goals in their persistence to degree.

Systemic variables, such as institutional oppressions or policies, include a definition of the model minority myth and how this may influence the Filipino and Filipino American student experience. Model minority myth is a socially constructed expectation of academic excellence and upward mobility understood to be experienced by the entire Asian and Pacific Islander diaspora. Systemic variables are important to discuss because they also impact the ways in which this student population navigates student services resources at large research institutions. Since this is an underrepresented and underserved student population, student services resources are one of few variables whereby a student can increase their social capital and identify a strong support person.

Through assumptions and definitions cultivated by western cultural norms regarding academic achievement and education (Teranishi, 2010), it is difficult for Asian and Pacific Islander American, or APIA, students to be transparent about their own educational expectations and experiences. Locks and Winkle-Wagner (2013) regard transition for these students as a difficult process because they “are left to navigate these normative socializing influences and they must decide whether they will change their initial values, aspirations, and goals to fit into the academic and social parts of campus” (p. 59). As part of the transition into adopting dominant cultural norms of seeking help, transparency becomes a challenge, as Filipino and Filipino American students must also accommodate the definitions and assumptions of their non-western cultures and families. Therefore, to best support APIA students in a holistic manner, it is necessary to address the need of providing equity resources through academic advisors with an understanding

of these definitions and assumptions. This attention will foster much needed social capital and empower the self-efficacy of all students who identify as Asian and Pacific Islander American.

In particular, Filipino and Filipino American undergraduate students experience dissonance toward educational mobility based on a multitude of circumstances, which include conflicting definitions of academic achievement and an understanding of what equity resources are. A consequence of this disconnect is that this student population does not utilize the same equity resources as other student groups, APIA or otherwise. For example, the western definition of “academic advising” aligns with social capital and positive strategic planning. On the other hand, “a Filipino American individual may always feel pressure to represent her or his family well while avoiding bringing embarrassment or dishonor to the family” (Nadal, 2013, p. 105). Assumptions around the use of academic advising are generally related to collectivist cultural norms that equate to signs of weakness and shame. Such negative designations are further amplified by social paradigms like the model minority myth. In addition, other historical traumas may suggest that students must limit their scope to specific academic disciplines and navigate academic resources in a specific manner in order to achieve mobility to a degree that is socially acceptable and honorable. Monzon (2013) stated, “for a Filipino American student, attending college is not an “individual activity, but rather a ‘collective’ one, in which the influence of the family affects the student throughout his or her collegiate experience” (p. 237).

The dichotomy of western versus collectivist definitions, the model minority myth, and cultural and historical implications must be explored to determine the basis of dissonance. It is believed that the model minority myth and colonial mentality together may have the largest impact in understanding why Filipino and Filipino American undergraduate students require academic advisors with cultural understanding and sensitivity to assist them in their strategic plans toward educational mobility.

### **Filipinos in America**

The largest non-coerced Asian and Pacific Islander migrations to the United States historically occurred during the mid- to late-1900s after several immigration and naturalization laws were enacted, specifically after World War II. However, the Filipino migrant experience was unique and began much earlier compared to that of other Asian and Pacific Islander groups.

Prior to the Spanish American War of 1898, Filipinos arrived in the New World as labor workers and seamen on Spanish galleons (Bonus, 2000). Post war, the archipelago's colonial rule transitioned from 333 years of Spanish rule to becoming an American colony. During this time, Filipinos were able to avoid exclusionary immigration laws and other restrictions as U.S. nationals; however, they were not afforded the same rights and privileges as their White U.S. citizen peers. Instead, Filipinos were considered "lower rung and racialized participants in agriculture, service industries, and armed forces machinery, Filipino workers (mostly male) were exploited

and found their mobility restricted” (Bonus, 2000, p. 35). Other symptoms of the colonial condition and dehumanization experienced by Filipino labor and migrant workers included lower wages, barren living spaces, isolation from other worker communities, and assignments to the least desirable tasks and working conditions. The objectification of laboring migrant workers continued past the Philippine colonial recognition, into its designation as a U.S. Commonwealth in 1935, and through to its recognition of independence in 1946. The immigration experience is only part of the disenfranchised narrative of the Filipino diaspora, as a similar oppressive movement was occurring simultaneously in the homeland.

In addition to the denigration of bodies in the United States, the Filipino culture and educational system were also subject to U.S. colonial rule on the islands themselves. These hegemonic policies were, and are still, most visibly seen in the operation of the English language in the public and private school system. Leonardo and Matias (2013) noted, “the intention and aspiration for using colonial education was to model the paradigms and social norms of the colonizer” (p. 9). United States history and cultural context courses, such as home economics, were also taught to emulate and idolize the American way of life. As a result, the programming of Filipino youth to normative American practices and cultural norms at the primary and secondary educational levels began the process of assimilation of the colonizer (Leonardo & Matias, 2013). Through education, the narrative of the native and indigenous culture and histories were slowly



phased out and replaced with a new set of cultural expectations and socially acceptable creed against which to measure success and value.

The experience of Filipinos in the Philippines and the United States aligned in the consistency of how their value was continuously debased. Filipinos were racialized to accept their glass ceiling as part of the labor and agriculture work force but continued to immigrate under false promises of opportunity and protections as American nationals. Notwithstanding the social and cultural marginalization of their communities, “the most recent census figures indicate Filipinos comprise the second largest Asian American group in the nation (after Chinese), and the largest in California. Yet many lament that Filipinos are often lumped together with others as ‘Asian American’” (Bonus, 2000, p. 26). As their immigration experience evolved post World War II, and after several exclusionary and inclusionary immigration acts, the diasporic experience continues to develop and has allowed for multigenerational Filipino communities and enclaves to exist today. It is important to note that, even though the diaspora began to mature as early as American colonial times, the narrative of Filipino and Filipino American communities today is severely influenced by the construction of whiteness instead of introspection. Based on findings by Leonardo and Matias (2013), “this is precisely because the colonizer has forced the colonized to assume their role as a subjugated people. In turn, this makes it difficult for the colonized to see beyond their subjugation” (p. 5). This historical understanding of internalized coercion provides context to the weight of current systems of operation, such as the model minority myth and Asian advantage in higher

education, and why such systems are especially damaging to a community such as the Filipino and Filipino American undergraduate student population.

### **The Model Minority Myth**

The myth of model minority cultivates the understanding that the minority group achieves success regardless of any systemic hardships or inequalities. In addition, the myth assumes that what the minority lacks in resources, it will supplement by other means. In lieu of monetary resources, the minority group may have an intact family structure or even the cognitive ability to excel at quantitatively based degrees, earning them higher incomes and more prestigious job opportunities. Based on research conducted by Lee (1994), it is critical to understand the types of Asian migrants impacted by the model minority myth: voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary migration occurs when the migrant group immigrates in search of social mobility and believes mobility is possible. These students “tend to do well in school because they see schooling as a necessary step to social mobility” (Lee, 1994, p. 413). This community produces APIA students who are positively impacted, or not impacted at all, by the model minority myth. For example, Lee (1994) concluded that Korean students are more likely to consider model minority as an “affirming label, one associated with prestige and superiority” (p. 416). On the other hand, involuntary immigrants are those who migrate due to coerced action, such as slavery or refugee status. The involuntary immigrant community produces APIA students who are negatively impacted by the model minority myth because the myth creates a glass ceiling effect. Education does not validate their

experience, and they “view schooling as a threat to their oppositional cultures and identities” (Lee, 1994, p. 414). In addition, these students are the students who should utilize equity resources the most, but are more likely to stray away from them because of the distrust and stigma. This results in fewer awarded degrees and less investment in the value of educational mobility.

The historical context of Filipino migration categorizes their experience as more involuntary because of the nature of the colonial rule the United States had over this country. In addition, Filipinos were afforded a unique migrant opportunity, which many assumed to be an encouraging one. Although Filipinos were able to avoid many of the regulations limiting their immigration because of their U.S. national status, the adjustment was not a positive experience because “whites perceived Filipinos as greater threats because of their status as U.S. nationals (they could freely enter the country) and the lack of immigration restrictions against them” (Bonus, 2000, p. 38). No agency was afforded to Filipinos for this reason, and the power they would have otherwise enjoyed because of the lack of restrictions revealed different restrictions other API migrant communities did not experience. As a result, avenues that normally empowered mobility, such as education, did not validate the experience of Filipinos.

With the addition of the model minority stereotype, Filipino and Filipino American students were further disenfranchised by the unshared experience of their East Asian peers. This myth produced a hierarchy amongst APIA peers, “which generally placed Filipino Americans and Southeast Asian Americans at the bottom of the social

strata. Students often felt marginalized or excluded from Asian America because of this prejudice” (Wong, 2013, p. 100). Subsequently, the model minority myth serves to alienate many Filipino and Filipino American students, creating feelings of dissonance and self-doubt. These students begin to see education from a deficit lens. Coupled with added expectations associated with the model minority myth, this lens is further negated by policies and legislation similar to immigration policies that continue to hinder and neglect this student population.

### **Research on APIAs**

Research findings suggest that census data do not truly capture the mobility of Filipino and Filipino American communities, much less that of APIA communities. Russell Endo’s (1980) research proposed that census data imply APIA families earn higher wages per household, are in leadership positions, and are entrepreneurs. However, the data are not disaggregated in the findings and do not account for APIA community members who intentionally do not participate in government surveys based on overall distrust and fear. Similarly, the data do not account for inaccurate data because community members may intentionally report data they believe they should report. The data do not account for APIA families who have higher incomes because there are multiple members contributing to household income; leadership positions are not clearly defined as low to high level; and entrepreneurs may, in fact, be small family owned and operated businesses. “These statistics must be interpreted with care for they mask many of the problems” (Endo, 1980, p. 368) experienced by ethnic groups like Filipinos as

compared to Chinese. Unpacking the census data is important because it reflects how the social capital of APIA students varies grossly from that of other students.

Limited or no disaggregated data assumes that Filipino and Filipino American students have a standardized experience as they navigate their educational experiences. The impact of the undisclosed narratives that such data would reflect include the stark differences in poverty, cultural capital, and social capital, all of which would assist in informing policies that would create equity-based services for all APIA student groups, including Filipino and Filipino Americans (Wang & Teranishi, 2012). The lack of data also supports the need to reflect upon the missing narratives of these populations, since such histories would better inform policies that would authentically support equity-based programs for Filipino and Filipino American students. This is especially important for Filipino and Filipino Americans because of the long history with American colonialism and the effects of reconciling the intersections of identity as a cost of that experience. Since the United States racializes this group in various states based on how it best suits their needs, either as labor workers or minority scapegoats or something in between (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012), the narrative of this population is overwhelmingly lost amongst the various labels placed upon them throughout their immigration experience. In addition, since these labels and identities can certainly conflict at any given moment, the added expectation of aligning with the model minority mold serves only to further dehumanize and demoralize students of this population. As a result, “the ‘ordinary business’ of society – the routines, practices, and institutions that we rely on to do the

world's work – will keep minorities in subordinate positions” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 27), such as that of assuming the model minority myth provides a positive framework in which Filipino and Filipino American students are held in order to achieve an academic standard.

Understanding the census data and model minority myth influences the hypothesis of dissonance for Filipino and Filipino American students because it demystifies the notion that all APIA students are equipped with the tools to be model students (Pang, Han, & Pang, 2011). There is a clear stratified experience for APIA students, especially Filipino and Filipino American students, because of competing cultural values and systems: “Asian-American students may experience culture shock from trying to negotiate competing cultural value systems” (Yeh, 2001, p. 350). Resources exist to help students during their transition and in moving forward; however, some populations of students remain underserved because of the lack of equity for which these resources do not account, such as cultural sensitivity and awareness of cultural norms. For example, “inclusiveness of [APIA] educators and administrators throughout America’s education system is an essential ingredient for responding to broader problems that impact the participation, experience, and outcomes of [APIA] students” (Teranishi, 2010, p. 144). Teranishi and others explain this is due in part because the representation of APIA staff and faculty promote positive and validating representation of APIAs in higher education spaces, deconstruct stereotypes associated with model minority myth, and can engage with students on a level based on shared experiences. Although other staff and faculty, as

well as campus resources, may provide equity and support to Filipino and Filipino American students, these resources do not encourage use because this student population still feels wary and uncompelled to utilize such capitals. As a result, students are less likely to engage in these resources, and so continue to experience limited educational mobility. For those students who attempt to improve upon their social capital and use these resources, their experiences foster less than proactive results because they are still grappling with the lack of intercultural communication. Yeh's (2001) research uncovered that "a dearth of culturally sensitive personnel has been observed as a factor in underutilization" (p. 350), which supports the distrust associated with advising. It is possible that the achievement gap may be addressed if services were in place that addressed the stratified educational experience, such as recruiting more advisers with shared cultural experiences or an understanding of those cultural experience. Not only will Filipino and Filipino American students feel less stigmatized by approaching such a resource, but they may be more transparent regarding the disclosure of their goals in developing a strategic plan (Locks & Winkle-Wagner, 2013; Teranishi, 2010).

### **Advising Experience**

The current research on Filipino and Filipino American undergraduate students focuses mainly on mental health and counseling services and very limited research is available on how this student population, and AAPI student populations overall, utilizes academic advising (Sedlacek & Sheu, 2013). Due to systems of oppression like the

model minority myth, and the more modern Asian advantage, APIA students as a whole are assumed to be highly educated and, therefore, do not require access to academic and equity-based resources. This leads to a lack of general assessment, development, and research for the unique academic needs of this student population. Specifically, Filipino and Filipino American students experience duress and mental health challenges because of academic difficulties but find it difficult to be transparent about their needs based on historical, cultural, and internalized implications (Nadal, 2013). This is significant on a historical level because of the concept of colonial mentality, wherein the colonized Filipino diasporic community sees its value through the definitions of whiteness, or the colonizer. Since this oppressive mentality has existed since pre-Spanish American War times, it is even more difficult for Filipino and Filipino American students to be transparent with their needs because they simply do not have a good understanding of what those needs are. In addition, cultural expectations to continuously prove to the colonizer or oppressor that they have earned their place, in this case in the educational setting, creates a barrier of disclosing any challenges these students may face or requests for assistance that may aid administrators in developing programs and policies to assist this population.

In higher education settings, mental health is a critical piece that can assist policymakers and administrators in addressing the need to create equity-based resources for Filipino and Filipino American students. However, even counseling services do not



account for the variation in services necessary for the API student population. The experience is often skewed based on norms created because of the model minority myth.

One of the difficulties in promoting cultural competence among counselors and clinicians is that many cultural groups are often overlooked or misrepresented in mental health training programs. . . . Consequently, many Asian American ethnic groups are ignored, are falsely assumed to adhere to East Asian values, or both. (Nadal, 2013, p. 104)

Since the mental health and wellness of students is directly impacted by their academic experience, it is necessary to use this as a platform to transition into the conversation of addressing viable student services programs, such as academic advising. Wang and Teranishi (2012) discussed how “immigration histories and various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds are contributing factors that challenge how educators should view issues such as college admissions and affirmative action for AAPIs” (p. 5). Therefore, it is significant to consider both the colonial and post-colonial immigrant histories and model minority myth elements when addressing the variables that create a positive academic advising experience. The inability or failed attempt to acknowledge these intersections when developing academic advising strategies creates an undue hardship for these students. It also supports systems of oppression similar to immigration policies implemented by the commonwealth relationship with the United States. This means, if Filipino and Filipino American students are expected to adhere to expectations of excellence, or use resources developed for their APIA peers, the “race

based pressure placed on AAPI students to avoid academic and social services is a form of racism, which they must navigate to be successful in higher education” (Sedlacek & Sheu, 2013, pp. 331-332). As a result, students of this population do not utilize equity-based programs because such programs do not address the needs unique to this group nor do they empower these students to be authentic about the support they need.

To address institutionalized racism, Sedlacek and Sheu (2013) introduced noncognitive variables in his study regarding standardized testing and college admissions for non-traditional students. Noncognitive variables are those that support student perceptions of success. These same variables can also be used to explain the ways in which administrators can be mindful of creating equity-based resources and academic advising strategies to assist Filipino and Filipino American students. Sedlacek (2015) identified eight variables that assist nontraditional students, or non-White students, which can aid in persistence to degree (see Table 1).

Table 1  
Description of Noncognitive Variables

Variable Name	Variable Description
Positive Self-Concept	Demonstrates confidence, strength of character, determination, and independence.
Realistic Self-Appraisal	Recognizes and accepts any strengths and deficiencies, especially academic, and works hard at self-development. Recognizes need to broaden his or her individuality.
Understands and Knows How to Handle Racism (the System)	Exhibits a realistic view of the system based on personal experience of racism. Committed to improving the existing system. Takes an assertive approach to dealing with existing wrongs, but is not hostile to society, or is a "cop-out." Able to handle racist system.
Prefers Long-Range to Short-Term or Immediate Needs	Able to respond to deferred gratification, plans ahead and sets goals.
Availability of Strong Support Person	Seeks and takes advantage of strong support network or has someone to turn to in a crisis or for encouragement.
Successful Leadership Experience	Demonstrates strong leadership in any area of his or her background (e.g., church, sports, noneducational groups, gang leader).
Demonstrated Community Service	Participates and is involved in his or her community.
Nontraditional Knowledge Acquired	Acquires knowledge in sustained and/or culturally related ways in any area. May be on any topic, including social, personal, or interpersonal.

Source: (Sedlacek & Sheu, 2013, p. 329)

Although all eight of these elements are important for addressing equity-based resources for this population, two of the eight are strong components that can assist Filipino and Filipino American students: realistic self-appraisal and availability of a strong support person. A realistic self-appraisal is the ability for nontraditional students

to understand their value in systems of education. Specifically, “students of color need to also be aware of the external control on their lives which requires them to negotiate the racism in the system” (Sedlacek, 2015, p. 3). For students to properly navigate the higher education institutions, they must negotiate the expectations set forth by both the immigrant history, which resulted in colonial mentality, as well as the model minority myth.

Nevertheless, addressing the impact of such histories and how it is reconciled when navigating policy and bureaucracy should be supported by some oversight. Subsequently, a strong support person is necessary for these students also; “students who have done well in school tend to have a person of strong influence who provides advice to them, particularly in times of crisis” (Sedlacek, 2015, p. 4). In conjunction with the research of Nadal (2013) regarding mental health and Filipino students, this strong support person is critical to the successful experience of Filipino and Filipino American students because they can affirm the impact of colonial mentality and the model minority myth as well as encourage these students to be transparent about what they need to succeed. Based on Schlossberg’s theory on mattering (1989), “mattering refers to our belief, whether right or wrong, that we matter to someone else. This belief acts as a motivator” (n.p.). Similarly, Buenavista et al.’s (2009) work demonstrates that the invisible minority creates barriers toward success because it prevents Filipino and Filipino American students from engaging with campus resources and the campus community as their peers would. However, even a strong support person, such as an

academic adviser, is limited in their ability to holistically serve this student population based on several variables. Critical race theory explains:

Racism is difficult to address or cure because it is not acknowledged. Color-blind, or "formal," conceptions of equality, expressed in rules that insist only on treatment that is the same across the board, can thus remedy only the most blatant forms of discrimination. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 8)

Without the motivation of mattering, even from one support person, the dissonance produced is problematic because of the way it may impact the student's persistence toward degree attainment. A strong support person who fosters mattering is ideal to best support the mental health and academic experience for this student population, especially since this population is already resistant to the academic advising process.

### **Cultural Experiences and Expectations of Filipino and Filipino American Students**

An influential component of the adviser and student relationship is trust; this element is especially serious for APIA students because of the severe lack of conviction in the advising model. To understand the dissonance and disconnect Filipino and Filipino American students have toward advising, it is important to understand cultural norms for this community that capture the values of respect and humility. Nadal (2013) described the idea of humility, a primary barrier, based within the "Filipino cultural value of *hiya* (shame), many Filipino Americans may avoid seeking mental health treatment as it may be viewed as a sign of weakness or as a disgrace to one's family" (p. 105). By the same

token, academic advising is difficult for this population to utilize because of the association with weakness and assumptions regarding ability. Based on a study by Buenavista et al. (2009), Filipino and Filipino American students were not considered part of the marginalized student community, thereby creating an invisible minority experience: “Filipino American college students face similar retention issues as other students of color, but their experiences remain obscure, and postsecondary institutions consequently fail to provide the recognition and invest the resources to address their concerns” (p. 77). Consequently, the invisible identity of this student population deters the agency of this population from seeking what resources are available. Paired with historical context of the identity of Filipinos and Filipino Americans as devalued by the colonizer, mobility is limited, yet this population still seeks to do whatever is necessary to achieve the expectation of the colonizer. When stereotypes are in place, like the model minority myth, these students feel “pressured to assimilate, expressing a desire to fit in with their non-Asian peers, distancing themselves from other Asian Americans and adopting White or dominant norms” (Wong, 2013, p. 89). The model minority becomes the minimum standard, and the need to assimilate to white norms is the end goal. Accordingly, utilizing academic advising would be an admission of inadequacy.

This is even more difficult to navigate when a student is in need of such support because the power dynamic of an advisor and student relationship is already biased toward the advisor. Student services are created to promote equal access to resources on university campuses, but they may not necessarily promote equitable access for this

reason. The needs of API students, and even Filipino and Filipino American students, are not the same as those of their undergraduate traditional peers. In the case of the advisor and student relationship, the power imbalance and cultural bias may be an example of how equality-based resources are a disservice to students “when it stands in the way of taking account of difference in order to help those in need” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012, p. 26). Critical race theory acknowledges that transparent consciousness and cultural humility can truly address how such systems are problematic for nontraditional students (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Together with integration of noncognitive variables, such as realistic self-appraisal and a strong support person, nontraditional students will be better equipped to reconcile their *hiya* and approach academic advisors openly.

If a student is able to resolve feelings of dissonance and shame regarding utilizing academic advising and equity-based services, barriers may still exist regarding the adviser power dynamic. In a study conducted by Shen and Lowinger (2007) regarding school counselors and their perceptions of counseling competence with Asian American students, the demographic of counselors was noted as predominately female and Caucasian. Since counseling and advising are similar in their capacity to assist students, it is assumed this is the normalized typography of academic advisors as well. Based on racial identity development models, academic advisors are the personification of “an underlying assumption about race in the United States [which] presupposes that racial groups experience either domination or oppression, particularly to preserve whiteness” (Evans et al., 2010, p. 254). For Filipino and Filipino American students, the

noncognitive variable of a strong support person may be more effective if that person comes from or has experience with their community. Nadal (2013) explained the cultural norm of *kapwa*, which “refers to the connection that Filipinos may feel with one another as well as the collectivist nature of the Filipino community” (p. 111). Experiencing *kapwa* with the academic adviser creates a safe space for the student to be authentic about their needs, without experiencing *hiya* and racialized mediocrity as a result of the model minority myth and colonial mentality. Theoretical frameworks such as critical race and racial identity development confirm that *kapwa* with the academic adviser would be a substantial asset of the student and adviser experience because of its ability to affirm the cultural expectations and norms of this student population. *Kapwa* with the academic adviser enables the student to “consciously work to unlearn and challenge the negative messages and stereotypes that they previously adopted without question” (Evans et al., 2010, p. 265) because of the power dynamic this advisor would represent. In addition, if the academic adviser and student have *kapwa*, the student would be better equipped to reconcile the juxtaposition of competing cultural expectations from the dominant and collective cultures.

### **Persistence of Filipino and Filipino American Students**

To ensure students persist toward graduation, it is important to define how multiculturalism can be implemented within these systems in spaces of higher learning. Multiculturalism is defined as “the process of increasing awareness of and knowledge about human diversity in ways that are translated into respectful human interactions and



effective interconnections” (Watson et al., 2002, pp. 9-10). Multiculturalism is a means to hold the university accountable for underuse of student services programs, like academic advising, that can empower students to gain the social capital necessary to persist and thrive (Teranishi, 2010). Multiculturalism promotes positive intentionality within the university to create meaningful relationships with and for its students (Watson et al., 2002). It promotes the political consciousness of the university by recognizing that negative experiences of underrepresented and underserved students exist and that it is necessary to do work to ensure students are able to create positive self-perceptions.

The ability for students to persist can also be addressed by multiculturalism as it relates to the development of social capital for Filipino and Filipino American students. For this population, community, or *kapwa*, is especially important because it promotes validation and belonging within large public research institutions. Since many students do not already have a breadth of social capital or network prior to enrolling at university, it is especially important that the noncognitive variable of identifying a strong support person is addressed because “establishing a network of diversity . . . with the support necessary to successfully complete their chosen academic programs, simultaneously addressing their needs for social and emotional wellness” (Watson et al., 2002, p. 66). In addition, this network adds to the positive development of self-worth because this network will empower and mentor the student, allowing them to have positive associations with the API and Filipino identity. Multicultural theorists concluded, “probably the most significant element influencing the performance level of many

students is their inability to connect to an institutional agent” (Watson et al., 2002, p. 78). As a result, having access to an advisor will redirect the student to align more closely with a positive cultural identity instead of continuing to evaluate their experiences against expectations of whiteness. This altered perception of self can assist the student with developing a sense of pride in who they are (Evans et al., 2010) as well as a sense of comfort in maintaining a relationship with the adviser. If this is the case, Filipino and Filipino American students will feel more comfortable in utilizing academic advising resources more frequently and honestly to endorse their ability to persist.

Academic advisors, whether they have a shared cultural experience with this student population or not, should still be a part of the social capital necessary for this population to thrive (Carter, Locks, & Winkle-Wagner, 2013). The racial identity development model explains, “Asian American identity and white racism are not mutually exclusive entities” (Evans et al., 2010, p. 265), which suggests that advisers can use their privileges, of whiteness and or of power, to promote multicultural education and processes. This means systemic racism can be countered with the idea of cultural humility, the process of continued learning oriented to interactions with disenfranchised students. Cultural humility encourages multiculturalism because it holds the university accountable for its diversity initiatives as well as acknowledges the dissonance felt by students because of the “disappointment with the reality of the monocultural campuses they found after enrolling at the institution” (Watson et al., 2002, p. 53). Appropriately, the university must do work to recruit such assessments from the student population,

instead of assuming its success based on the ability of a majority of this student population through the framework of the model minority myth. By stepping away from this framework, the university can create proactive change, such as recruit API-identified staff, develop multicultural programs, and promote the community development for this underrepresented and underserved population. Without such action, the dissonance experienced by this population will remain deeply rooted and negatively impact their persistence toward graduation.

### **Advising Models**

According to the National Academic Advising Association, or NACADA, the global community for academic advising, advising practice is informed by six core values. These values uphold the critical capacity academic advisers hold to the students they serve, but do not dictate the advising model by which this practice is carried out. The values do acknowledge that advising models impact the interactions of the advisee, so it is important to address two common advising models most commonly experienced by undergraduate students.

#### **Transactional Advising**

In academic advising, a transactional model may be defined as the administration of information only. Transactional behaviors are characterized by Barbuto, Story, Fritz, and Schinstock (2009) as *laissez faire*, management by exception passive, management by exception active, and contingent reward. In *laissez-fair* advising, a student is left to

manage their own endeavors more and relies less or does not have access to their academic adviser. This may cause dissonance for the student because of the lack of access. Management by exception passive is defined as “setting standards but waiting for problems to arise . . . similar to an adviser that would only take action after a student makes a mistake” (Barbuto et al., 2009, p. 63). On the other hand, management by exception is when an adviser seeks out mistakes, enforces policy, and then corrects the problem. Lastly, contingent awards is when advisers reward students for achieving desired expectations. However, research suggests that a transactional approach is less supportive for overall student success because advising is a means to help students “develop a realistic self-perception and successfully transition to the postsecondary institution” (National Academic Advising Association [NACADA], 2005, p. 3). As a result, academic advisers are charged with the responsibility of engaging with the students beyond a transactional approach. However, institutional processes and practices may not always allow for other systems of advising, and transactional approaches are still pervasive models in this practice.

### **Holistic Advising or Developmental Advising**

Holistic is defined as engaging with the whole, while developmental is defined as relating to the evolution of the whole. In advising practice, these advising models impact students by recognizing that they are complex organisms and are a sum total of all the experiences and identities that define them. In the research, holistic advising and developmental advising are often used interchangeably because these approaches use

similar conceptual frameworks (NACADA, 2005). King (2005) identified academic advising needs to be a shared relationship; it is intended to assist the student to persist in achieving academically, as well as personally, and by engaging with the institution as a resource and community. When holistic or developmental advising models are used, an adviser may examine the various intersections of identity of the student and how those may impact the success or persistence at any given time. Acknowledging a student in this way allows an adviser to be more informed on how they may be an equitable resource or means of social capital. Based on Schlossberg (1989), “[by] examining mattering across spheres of life, we can get a more complete picture of the individual” (n.p.).

Considering the above mentioned are not the only two academic advising models that inform advising practice, they may be two of the most common that students in any community or diaspora may experience. The definitions of these models assist the research in determining how students perceive academic advising. Additionally, it will explore if these models are as common as research suggests. Moreover, identifying these models informs the research on whether these advising practices are preferred or beneficial to the student experience. “Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience” (Light, 2001, n.p.); however, it is important to understand how students define what good advising is. Therefore, an understanding of these advising models and how they are commonly practiced is meaningful to this study.

### **Rationale for the Study**

Historically, research on Asian and Pacific Islander undergraduate student populations is limited and assumes the population is a homogenous group with a successful academic experience based on assumptions created by the model minority myth. The Filipino and Filipino American identified population in California is the second largest minority population and the second largest API population nationally. However, this population is not represented in research related to higher education or the undergraduate student experience. Given the lack of visibility in this field, this research study represents a gateway for bringing to light the narratives, themes, and challenges this particular student population experiences.

The sullied migrant experience of Filipinos resulted in both a known and unconscious devalued self-perception. The Americanization of Filipinos created a dichotomous attitude toward identity development because it became hard to reconcile what it was to be both. “They want to be included as Americans and entitled to the same rights and privileges as the rest” (Bonus, 2000, p. 28) but at the cost of cultural and social independence. Limited by their socialized labeling as an “other,” Filipinos developed cultural mentality that coerced their perception of whiteness as a goal to strive for. In addition, cultural misnomers, like model minority, imposed additional expectations related to academic success that further isolated and devalued the Filipino and Filipino American experience. This framework further impeded the perceived ability for students of this population to seek out and retain resources that would assist them with persistence

to degree. Considering cultural concepts like “hiya,” discussing academic difficulties and areas of improvement add to the challenge of developing deeper advising relationships. Albeit cultural competence programs attempt to capture multicultural strategies to assist underrepresented and underserved students, “without more knowledge of how students construct and express their racial and ethnic identities, educators may be unprepared to give students the support and attention they need” (Wong, 2013, p. 87). As a result, the understanding of the advising experience from the student perspective will provide insight on sustainable steps to ensure this student population thrives and persists.

### **Summary**

It is necessary to acknowledge that research supports the fact that the model minority stereotype is, in fact, a myth. In terms of educational mobility, it does not capture the experience of the distinct ethnic groups that design the category “Asian American.” It assumes that every APIA student is good at everything and has a cognitive disposition to academic achievements. However, in exploring this stereotype, Zhao and Qui (2009) determined, “cognitive abilities are not the reason behind Asian students’ superiority in math” (p. 341), but instead mobility is achieved by hard work and time devoted to studying. However, these assumptions impact those APIA students who do not excel in quantitative subjects, and create barriers to accessing equity-based resources out of internalized guilt and shame. Since this student population is less likely to seek out resources in general, it is necessary to employ APIA educational practitioners to

reach out to and begin these conversations with these students. Endo (1980) recommended this as a way by which to help APIA students, such as Filipino and Filipino Americans: “hire qualified Asian American administrators . . . to provide financial assistance and support services in line with Asian Americans student needs” (p. 375). These administrators directly relate to the experience because of the understanding of conflicting cultural definitions and expectations (Locks & Winkle-Wagner, 2013; Teranishi, 2010). As Filipino-identified or API identified academic advisors, they may “mediate the dissonance between what students experience from the educational environment and what they experience in that environment” (Habley, 1981, p. 46). As a result, they are able to provide a trusting environment at the onset to foster the agency of the student to be transparent about disclosing their needs.

This does not mean current counselors are ill equipped to support these students. In fact, Yeh’s (2001) research suggests that counselors overall are competent in training, experience, and education. However, identity perceptions explored in research suggest there is limited upward mobility because of the lack of engagement in these resources. Due to the glass ceiling created by the model minority myth, academic advisors may be one of few variables to assist in dispelling the notion that Filipino and Filipino American students should already know how to create strategic plans and engage in resources that will sustain those plans. Academic advisors with cultural familiarity may validate the experiences of such students whose experiences are not measured against model minority myth or the Asian advantage.



## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

The objective of this study was to examine the use of equity-based resources by Filipino and Filipino American graduating students at a large public research institution. Specifically, this study aimed to understand the academic advising experience of this student population to determine if it is a variable in their persistence to degree completion. The study is exploratory in nature and aimed to examine if academic advisers serve this student population effectively based on the experiences of the student. The researcher determined the types of skills this student population believed academic advisers should have to best serve them and whether shared cultural experiences are a vital component of academic success.

Based on the noncognitive variables identified by Sedlacek (2015), Filipino and Filipino American students will be successful in higher education with the assistance of a strong support person. This strong support person may be more considerable if they also have a greater understanding of the cultural experiences of this population, based on the cultural concepts of “hiya” and “kapwa”. Such understanding is particularly important because the college experience allows students to become more reflective, thereby “individuals grapple with finding a balance between the dominant culture and their own cultural heritage and the role of both in shaping their identity” (Evans et al., 2010, p.

255). Since the Filipino and Filipino American student population is currently considered an underserved and underrepresented student population, it is important to address the need for adequate academic advising support and how that is defined by the student.

Presently, research on this student population is limited to their engagement with mental health counseling. In fact, most research on the Asian and Pacific Islander student experience focuses on mental health and academic achievement as they relate to the model minority myth. Since the duress associated with meeting cultural and familial expectations affects the academic experience, this student population experiences “cultural conflicts and serious questions about ethnic identity that come to light” (Endo, 1980, p. 374). At this level, the researcher was able to compare this type of equity-based resource to academic advising since both advisor and counselor can serve as an available strong support person for the student.

“Colorblindness,” as explained by critical race theory, is visible in academic advising through the typography of academic advisors who do not currently represent the growing diverse student population. Although academic advisors may be equipped with the proper credentials and multicultural training to assist diverse student populations, institutions of higher education do not employ many administrators or faculty or recruit graduate students who identify as Asian or Pacific Islander (Endo, 1980) and can speak to this experience and validate it for this student population.

In addition, research on the Asian and Pacific Islander student experience is not a monolithic one. Research focused on Filipino college students is limited. Specifically, Filipino and Filipino American students typically feel as if they are on the “bottom of the Asian hierarchy, and that they are often viewed as ‘not Asian enough’” (Nadal, 2013, p. 109). Similarly, Endo (1980) noted that universities are disinclined to recruit Asian and Pacific Islander administrators and faculty who may “provide support services in line with Asian American students’ needs” (p. 374). This study will contribute to the knowledge of variables impacting the academic experience of this student population at large public research institutions in higher education.

An analysis of data collected from six graduating students who identify as Filipino or Filipino American at a large, public 4-year research institution is derived from this qualitative study. This chapter describes the study sample, design protocol, data collection, instrumentation, data analysis, and study limitations.

### **Research Design**

A phenomenological research approach was used to measure qualitative data via semi-structured interviews. The interview data were used to assess common themes this student population experiences as part of their academic advising experience.

This is a qualitative phenomenological study of the academic advising experience of graduating Filipino and Filipino American identified undergraduate students enrolled at a large public research institution. Interviews conducted at a large, public 4-year

research institution generated data that were used to analyze the academic advising experiences of this underrepresented and underserved student population. This study aimed to identify whether a shared cultural experience with the academic advisor supports persistence toward graduation for these students, a marginalized student population at large public research institutions. Specifically, the study determined how the academic advising relationship impacts the social capital and persistence of Filipino-identified students at a large, public research institution.

### **Setting of the Study**

The setting of this study is a large, public research institution in Northern California. The Northern California Regional University, referred to as NCRU moving forward, had an undergraduate student population 28,300 as of the fall 2015 academic term. These students are engaged in 104 undergraduate majors that span four main colleges including letters and science, biological sciences, engineering, and agriculture and environmental sciences. NCRU also serves a graduate student population of 4,400 students seeking degrees in 96 academic programs and six professional school programs. NCRU is one of 10 campuses in the California Regional University system. As a large public research institution, NCRU's research funding in the 2014-15 academic year was \$786 million, with private support of \$184.1 million. NCRU has a research endowment of \$1 billion (Northern California Regional University [NCRU], 2015a).

The demographics of NCRU reflects 17 different ethnicity identifiers based on aggregate data for the fall 2015 academic term. The breakdown is as follows: 29.1%

White or Caucasian, 18.7% Latino, 39.1% Asian, 0.9% Native American, 3.3% African American, 1.6% decline to state, and 7.2% other. Within the 39.1% Asian-identified students, the limited disaggregated data from NCRU's tuition office indicates there are nine ethnicity identifiers that can be considered Asian or Pacific Islander. This breakdown is as follows for the 2015 fall academic term: 4,124 Chinese-American/Chinese; 1,452 East Indian/Pakistani; 1,287 Filipino/Filipino-American; 460 Japanese American/Japanese; 676 Korean-American/Korean; 791 Other Asian; 102 Pacific Islander other; zero SE Asian/not Vietnamese; and 1,564 Vietnamese (NRCU, 2015b). The statistics do not include the possibility of students indicating "other" or "international" or any other ethnicity identifier of the 17 available to select from.

The career staff at NCRU comprises 14,089, not including student staff. Twenty percent of career staff are identified as Asian or Pacific Islander. There is no current disaggregated data for NCRU career staff, so the number of Filipino-identified career staff cannot be determined. The number of student services staff at NCRU is unknown. The number of academic advisors at NCRU is unknown (NCRU, 2015a).

### **Population and Sample**

Study participants were screened for eligibility based on their self-reported status as enrolled undergraduate students at Northern California Regional University, or NCRU, and who self-identify as Filipino or Filipino American. These students must also plan to file to graduate within the 2015-16 academic year. Criteria for exclusion were non-students or students who did not file to graduate in the 2015-16 academic year. Criteria

for exclusion also included non-undergraduates and those who did not self-identity as Filipino or Filipino American and were completing their bachelor's degree at NCRU. This study did not include subjects from any special populations, such as young children or incarcerated persons.

### **Design of the Study**

The qualitative study aimed to identify common themes in the academic advising experience of Filipino and Filipino American graduating students at NCRU. The study's purpose was to understand whether academic advising is a variable associated with the persistence toward degree for this population. This study also aimed to determine if a phenomena of shared cultural experience was perceived to be part of the success associated with the academic advising received. The participants were recruited on a voluntary basis and were selected based on their self-identification as Filipino or Filipino Americans and with the intent of graduating in the 2015-16 academic year. The students were enrolled at Northern California Regional University, a large, public 4-year institution. All the interview questions were open-ended questions to empower the participant to be introspective about their undergraduate experience up until the point of their graduating year.

The sample did not require any specifications of the population except that the student identified as Filipino or Filipino American. However, this design may not have taken into account the varying experiences of undocumented, international, transfer, or

even non-cis-gender identified students of this population. This design may also not be entirely representative of the whole population of Filipino and Filipino American students at large, public research institutions.

### **Data Collection**

The researcher sought to recruit no more than six participants who met the selection criteria for the study, and no fewer than four participants. There was no expectation to the type of consenting participants outside of the selection criteria of this study. Participants were recruited through the assistance of NCRU's Multicultural Student Center. The center provided information about the availability of this research to prospective participants on behalf of the researcher. The Associate Director of the NCRU's Multicultural Student Center indicated support and willingness to disseminate the information about this study and to provide the researcher's contact information so potential participants may self-select participating in this study. Upon contacting the researcher, the participants received a confirmation email invitation to participate in the study along with a letter of informed consent (see Appendix A) and were asked to schedule an interview time with the researcher. Once the prospective participants were informed of the study, NCRU's Multicultural Student Center Associate Director had no other affiliation or participation with this study. A snowball sample was utilized to recruit additional participants as needed.

Northern California Regional University's Multicultural Student Center provides a culturally relevant community space for students who identify with underrepresented

and underserved groups. This center provides learning opportunities to students by engaging them in topics including identity development, lived experiences, critical consciousness, and cultural competency. Due to its mission to support collective cultural awareness, academic excellence, and student leadership, the researcher determined this was the best campus partner to assist in recruiting the most appropriate participants for this study.

### **Instrumentation**

In the fall 2015 and winter 2016 terms, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six study participants. After the study information was disseminated through NCRU's Multicultural Student Center, participants were invited via e-mail to participate in an interview with the researcher (see Appendix A). The interviews were scheduled with participants who agreed to participate in the interviews. The participants were asked to complete a pre-interview questionnaire to collect demographic information (see Appendix B). Interviews of approximately 45 to 60 minutes took place in the conference room of NCRU's Multicultural Student Center. The interview questions were intended to prompt subjects to explore their own academic experiences with reflection upon their relationships with academic advisors (see Appendix C). Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed to identify and categorize common emerging themes, as informed by the literature used to frame the study.

Initial data were collected through a pre-interview questionnaire. No direct identifiers were collected for each participant, and all study participants were given



pseudonyms. Only the researcher had access to the data collected. All interviews were audio recorded using a digital audio recorder, allowing the researcher to upload data electronically. All data were stored in a password-encrypted protected personal computer for no longer than three years after the study was completed. Only the researcher had access to the digital recordings, which were used by the researcher to transcribe for further analysis. Transcripts and de-identified data were uploaded electronically and stored in a password-encrypted protected personal computer. Paper documents from the pre-interview survey were uploaded electronically and stored in a locked file and will be destroyed after three years.

The researcher was the only member of this research study. The researcher received assistance from NCRU's Multicultural Student Center Associate Director in disseminating information about the research study and how potential participants could contact the researcher only. Snowball sampling was used to recruit any other participants after NCRU's Multicultural Student Center Associate Director disseminated the research study advertisement and all interested participants were contacted.

### **Data Analysis Protocol**

The data analysis protocol was designed to analyze and identify common themes regarding the academic advising experience of Filipino and Filipino American graduating students. This study intended to determine if a shared cultural experience with the academic advisor was a variable in persistence toward degree completion for this student population. The researcher distinguished common experiences and categorized them

based on themes related to dissonance, resource literacy, advising experience, shared cultural experience, and effect on persistence.

The data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed to allow the researcher to identify common experiences and categorize them based on themes. The interviews allowed the researcher to ask open-ended questions that enabled participants to be introspective about their academic advising experiences at NCRU. The results of the interviews are included in Chapter 4.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study focused on the experience of Filipino and Filipino American graduating students at a 4-year public research institution. From this sample, students who intended to graduate in the 2015-16 academic year and self-identified as Filipino or Filipino American were the primary target population. Considering this is a very specific population, the results of this study may not be generalizable outside of the graduating student population or beyond this population at NCRU.

A secondary limitation was the self-identification of Filipino or Filipino American. In light of the intersectionality of the historic identity development of Filipinos in America, students may have a hard time reconciling their cultural identity and, as a result, may choose not to align themselves with this community. This is an effect of internalized oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) of which students may or

may not be conscious as a consequence of the historical need for American or white identification.

Another limitation of this study was the authenticity of the student experience as reported by the student. This correlates to the idea of *hiya*; “they do not want their peers to know that they are struggling with any psychological problems, so they may pretend that there is nothing wrong in their lives” (Nadal, 2013, p. 111). The ability for student participants to be authentic about their experiences may be further influenced by the need to meet the expectations of the researcher, who also identifies as Filipino American. Therefore, the data collected may not truly reflect the experiences of the student because of the rationale to meet cultural expectations and ensure familial honor is upheld.

Lastly, a limitation of this study was the shared cultural experience of the researcher based on her own identity intersections. As a Filipina-American and academic advisor at a large, public research institution, the researcher was more exposed to the limited equity-based resources for this and many other underrepresented and underserved student populations within the Asian and Pacific Islander community and otherwise. As a student affairs professional and member of the diasporic community experiencing her own undergraduate degree at a similar institution, the researcher was aware there may be biases associated with this research study. However, this same bias made the researcher aware of the growing need for equity-based resources, multicultural awareness, and other variables that large, public research institutions can initiate to assist this population and similar underrepresented and underserved student populations.

## Chapter 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore if a shared cultural experience is a positive variable toward persistence to degree completion for Filipino and Filipino American students, a disaggregated population of the Asian and Pacific Islander community, at large, public research institutions. The study aimed to illustrate if this shared experience with an academic adviser provided social capital and if it is a necessary equity resource that can assist in persistence and completion. In addition, this study intended to delineate the ways the academic adviser does or does not serve as social capital and if the desire to have a shared cultural experience is important for the student. The following themes emerged from semi-structured interviews with six participants who identify as Filipino or Filipino American and graduating:

1. The impact of model minority myth on the student and if they experience dissonance.
2. The resource literacy of the student.
3. The impact of the academic advising experience.
4. The presence of a shared cultural experience with the academic advisor.
5. The effects of the advising relationship as it related to persistence.

The phenomenological qualitative study asked the following questions of the participants, which produced the themes above. The first group of questions was designed to determine how the participant engaged with various forms of aspirations in the form of expectations, such as cultural and familial. Similarly, these questions also prompted the participant to be introspective regarding model minority myth and if this related to their undergraduate process. The second group of questions was constructed to garner what social capital the participant had prior to attending university. The third group of questions captured the participant's overall advising experience and what kind of advising relationship existed. These questions also encouraged any manifestation of internalized dissonance or sense of *hiya* as it related to the academic advisor. The fourth group of questions asked the participant to reflect on any shared cultural experiences with their academic advisor and to acknowledge whether this was important to their overall undergraduate process. The last question was offered as a multi-part question to gauge whether the academic advisor, regardless of having a shared cultural experience with them or not, had any effect on the persistence for the participant. This multi-part question aimed to understand if the academic advisor provided, or was part of, a mechanism that created community for the participant. Knowing the level of consciousness regarding the sense of belonging for the participant, the definition of model minority myth, any resource literacy, and the advisor and advisee relationship was critical to understand how social capital functions for this marginalized student population.

These emergent themes address how dissonance may occur with this student population and how institutions of higher learning must be diligent with the intentionality of providing equity-based resources. Historically, this underserved population experiences limited validation and is subject to hegemonic standards of success and achievement. More specifically, the probability of experiencing trauma or distrust is higher with this student population because institutional practices do not validate their experience. As a result, the following research questions were identified:

1. What type of advisers serve Filipino and Filipino American students?
2. How do academic advisers serve this student population?
3. Does a cultural background experience make a difference in helping provide culturally sensitive student services?
4. Is the desire to have an academic adviser with shared cultural experiences important to the success of the student?

This chapter analyzes the results from the semi-structured interviews by answering these questions based on the aforementioned research themes. The themes were a framework for the interviews and were used to further develop the research. In addition, this chapter deconstructs the demographics of the participant population, as it is critical to explore the identities the participants used to frame their experiences. The analysis is explored in the order of the emerging themes, and is concluded with a discussion of these findings.

## Results

### Demographics

The sample for this study was taken from NCRU's undergraduate student population of approximately 1,290 Filipino and Filipino identified students during the fall 2015 academic term. There is a total undergraduate student population of approximately 28,300, of which 36.9% are considered Asian and Pacific Islander. The participants were asked to complete a pre-interview survey to collect demographic information regarding student status, graduation status, undergraduate year entry status, self-identified cultural status, and gender identity. The six participants in this study identified as undergraduate students in their graduating year at NCRU. One participant identified as a transfer student from a California community college, while the remaining five indicated they completed their full undergraduate study at NCRU. Two participants specifically identified as Filipino/a or Pilipino/a, one participant identified as Filipino American, one participant identified as Filipinx American, and two participants did not indicate a preference for their cultural status. Three of the participants identified as cis-gendered female women, two of the participants identified as cis-gendered male men, and one participant identified as non-binary demi-gender person assigned male at birth.

Cisgender, or cis, is acknowledged here because of participant responses; it is defined as a descriptor for individuals who experience gender performance that is aligned with their biologically assigned sex at birth and is a separate identifier from sexual orientation. It is also important to note that, although sexual orientation was not part of the pre-interview

survey questionnaire, two of the participants also identified as queer. The sampling was not a true random sample, as participants were able to self-select cooperating based on information they received from NCRU's student cultural center. A snowball sample was also utilized to recruit participants after the research study information was released.

The survey for this study was provided to NCRU's Multicultural Student Center, which served as a liaison to disseminate the research survey, to allow students who identify as Filipino or Filipino American to self-select participation. NCRU's Multicultural Student Center was identified as the best campus partner to disseminate this survey because of its accessibility to serving the entire undergraduate student population at NCRU. In addition, the partnership with NCRU's Multicultural Student Center was intentional because its inception was established from an agreement made with students and administrators that demonstrated NCRU's commitment to providing community and academic equity-based resources.

The survey yielded six respondents, all of which identified themselves as either Filipino or Filipino American graduating students at NCRU. All the participants were enrolled full-time (12 or more units) and planned to petition for graduation in the 2015-2016 academic year. All participants are California residents and self-reported growing up with both American and Filipino cultural norms in their households.



Table 2

## Description of Participant Demographics

Name	Andrew	Victoria	George	Darlene	Mallory	Damien
Gender Identity	Cis-gender male	Cis-gender female	Non-gender conforming male assigned at birth	Cis-gender female	Cis-gender female	Cis-gender queer male
Filipino or American	Filipino	Either	Filipinx American	Pilipina Humanities and Social Sciences	Either	Filipino or Filipinx American
Area of Study	Social Sciences	Humanities	STEM and Humanities	STEM and Humanities	Social Sciences	Social Sciences
Change of Major	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
MMM impacted experience	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Identity of Advisor	White females	Vietnamese male; Japanese female; White female (STEM)	White female (STEM); mixed race female	Chicana female; mixed race female; White female (STEM)	White females	Filipina mixed race female
Experience with Advising	Positive	Negative with STEM, Positive with Humanities	Negative with STEM, Positive with Humanities	Positive	Positive	Positive
Prefer Transactional or Holistic	Transactional	Holistic	Transactional	Transactional	Transactional	Holistic
Experience Transactional or Holistic	Transactional	Holistic	Holistic	Holistic	Transactional	Holistic
Shared Experience	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Desired Shared Experience	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretation**

**The impact of model minority myth and dissonance.** Five participants identified a STEM major to be a critical familial and cultural expectation as it related to

their area of study. Specifically, engineering and anything pre-medical were preferred.

Victoria explained this through the expectation of becoming a nurse:

Become a nurse cause that was just the-- the, I guess, for lack of better terms, like the dream job, um, cause the pay was good and you would basically always get the job in any health career. Um, so it was a lot geared with that, I mean I entered [NCRU] as an exercise biology major, um, but later found out that it just wasn't for me and it-- it was kind of hard to tell my parents.

Two participants identified nursing to be a preferred area of study, as this is one of the most common professional pathways for Filipino and Filipino American households. Four participants identified success to be an expectation also, and this term was generally understood to mean completing their degree within four years and in a STEM major. All six participants identified completion of degree was both a cultural and familial expectation, and that attending a 4-year university was also the preferred means to do so. Two participants also indicated their parents did not support the change in majors from a STEM to social science or humanities. "It's interesting because I keep getting the question now, 'So what're you gonna do with the degree?'" recounted George. "My extended side of the family, they don't understand what the point is."

The second question in this set sought to understand if the participants established community at the NCRU campus. Two participants identified their dormitory relationships as their primary source of community. Four participants identified the NCRU Filipino American, or FilAm, association as their primary source of engaging with

the campus. Three of the participants identified various student life centers as one of the main sources of community. Meanwhile, one participant, Darlene, did not feel a sense of community established at NCRU:

I came here as a bio medical engineer and I think that coming in with that hegemonic like notion like college and globalizing society. You know, it was like, wow, I would have to be, you know, like all these other people to be the best. And it was a very – I think harming um ah thing for me mentally. Especially when I was like dealing and grasping with all these different identities in me. And so I felt really isolated and I found Woman and Gender Studies and I think it is through that program - because I don't think [without] the department that I started to find my community. Especially since you know, I was a woman of color, like I really- I really felt that theory because it's – it's based on like lived experiences and so these are the people I could talk to.

As a follow up, the third question related to the feeling of belonging on campus, and five participants felt like they belonged on campus, while one felt like they did not belong on campus.

The last question in this set inquired about what resources the participants felt helped them succeed at NCRU so far. A majority (five) of participants identified student life and community centers as one of the most helpful resources on campus. Only three participants identified academic advisors and faculty advisors as a primary resource while

two of the participants indicated psychological and counseling services were also a resource that added to the success of their undergraduate experience.

Of the six participants surveyed, three changed their major from a science-, technology-, engineering-, or math-based major into a social science or humanities major after completing their first two years at NCRU. Of the six participants, four were completing two degrees in STEM, social sciences, or humanities disciplines. Of the six participants, three were also pursuing a minor degree in social sciences or humanities. One participant was pursuing a major in both STEM and humanities.

**Resource literacy of the student.** Since social capital is a focal point of understanding for this study, it is important to comprehend the type of social capital the participants had access to prior to attending NCRU. The first question in this emergent theme sought to determine the type of assistance the participants had in applying to university. Half (three) identified some type of resource or assistance, which could have been provided by either their high school, family, or both. The other half of participants did not have any assistance. These participants explained they were left to determine how to apply on their own and relied on the Internet to do so. All six participants acknowledged they were first-generation students; their parents did not attend university in the United States and did not have an understanding of the application process. As a result, they were of limited to no help during this time. However, all participants discerned the expectation to pursue the application process by any means necessary,

regardless of the lack of familial support. For Mallory, her parents expected she would find the appropriate process of applying and begin successful:

My mom always said, “You know, we didn’t have to [help you] because we -- we set out these expectations for you and you knew what you were supposed to do.

You-- knew you were supposed to get good grades. You knew you were supposed to go to college from a very early age, so I think that's why they never helped me and I guess they kinda just trusted us to figure it out on our own.”

Only one participant identified an older sibling who went through the process and was able to assist them.

Since there are many transitional programs in place for incoming students, it was also necessary to capture the resource literacy of students upon entering university. The next question inquired about resources that were available to participants at NCRU. One participant identified prior knowledge of resources because they attended summer orientation and made it clear they wanted to absorb as much information as possible because of the high cost of tuition, so they wanted to use as many resources for which they were paying. Two participants also identified attending orientation; however, they felt there was not ample time to absorb the information provided to them. For Damien in particular, being a transfer student was also a difficult part of the transition:

Just because I felt like they don't give much attention to transfer students. Not traditional students. And, I don't know that was-- that's really difficult, that transition. Um. And me especially being a student of color, Filipinix American

student. Um and I feel like I've received less attention. And as a transfer student, they've just expected us to come in, have a good idea of college already because we've been community college for two plus years. And I guess that's their mistake of not understanding that-- this is still our first year here.

In this case, the density of the orientation program made the participants feel like they were overloaded with information. Two participants identified no understanding of resources at NCRU, nor did they attend any orientation or onboarding programs during their first year. One participant identified no understanding of resources; however, they felt they trusted the resources they needed were already available and only needed to seek them out. All participants identified at least one of their academic advisors as being a resource during their undergraduate years at NCRU.

**The impact of the academic advising experience.** Academic advisors are charged with the core value of empowering the unique nature of each student within the academic setting. Thus, it is valuable for the student to have a positive academic advising experience to align with their persistence to graduation. This theme emerged as an understanding of the advising experience from the student's perspective, since research indicates the advising relationship is often solicited from the advisor's perspective only. This assessment of the student's experience will help determine the impact of academic advising, especially for underrepresented student groups, and if this is truly providing some equity for them.

The first question inquired if the participants understood the role of an academic advisor. All the participants said, “yes” and defined this role based on a transactional advising model. However, two participants also defined the role of an advisor using a holistic advising model. All six participants expected their advisors to be knowledgeable about resources on campus and be informed about the parameters of academic success of completing major requirements. Most of the participants expected their advisors to provide them with information regarding how to complete their respective majors, options on career choices related to their major, and extra-curricular activities that may pair well with their major. Some of the participants expected their advisors to be accessible and to make them feel like they belonged on campus. All the participants met with their academic advisor at some point in their undergraduate experience. Two felt comfortable only accessing their advisor by email, and four identified meeting with their advisor frequently. This is defined as beyond any mandatory advising capacity or annual major check. The one question asked participants if they met with any other types of advisors on campus aside from their academic advisors. The results indicated three participants met with peer advisors, one met with a residence hall advisor, one met with a student community center advisor, and two met with a counselor from the student health center.

The next few questions asked the participants about their general feelings toward and about their academic advisors. It is important to acknowledge again that three of the participants changed their major, four were pursuing double majors, and three were

pursuing minors. The participants spoke to their experience as it related to any or all of the advisors with which they interacted at any given time during their undergraduate experience at NCRU. Participants were asked if they felt distrust toward their advisors, and six identified at least one advisor where this did not occur; two participants identified at least one advisor with whom this feeling did occur. “Not really. Although I think it's because-- it's gonna sound weird but I thi- I think it's because I go into advising like having everything set, it's almost like as if I go there just to like affirm everything,” stated Andrew, who experienced overall satisfactory transactional advising from all of his advisers. On the other hand, George experienced severe distrust with his STEM adviser:

The [Evolution and Ecology] advisor yeah, because the first time that I talked to her was the time that she like told me that it's not her job to sit there and help me figure out stuff. And so like whenever I talk to her I always like try to double and triple check with the catalog, and then also I would e-mail like the college advisor just to make sure that what she was telling me was like correct and that I was like completely like good.

Participants were asked if they were completely transparent regarding their needs with their advisor, and four identified at least one advisor with whom this occurs. Two participants identified at least one advisor with whom they could not be completely transparent, and two felt transparency with their adviser was not relevant to their advisee relationship. When asked if the adviser made them feel welcomed and listened to, all six participants identified at least one advisor with whom this was the case; two participants



identified one adviser with whom this was not the case. Darlene especially spoke of her adviser as one of her most sustaining variables at NCRU:

Yeah, she is like gives me like-- she's like a huge supporter. Like just like emotionally, academically but like also-- you know, she'll like give me like numbers and like e-mails in which like, "Oh, this person may help you," so she really helps me like build my networking.

When asked if, in their experience, an adviser left them feeling alienated or ignored, three participants identified they had experienced this with at least one adviser. One of the questions inquired if the participant felt the adviser had expectations of them and two participants did not feel this was the case with at least one of their advisers. For example, Victoria recounted a triggering experience with her STEM adviser regarding expectations:

The other one um, he kinda act-- he was like I left like that adviser appointment really angry that like angry in the sense that like all I kept thinking was like I'm going to prove him wrong, like I'm going to- even though I knew like I was taking the class I couldn't handle, as you saw like angry that and wanting to like prove him wrong because it- like he basically even feel like I, like I'm not gonna get it done, like he was just like, uh just looking at your schedule, I don't know we'll just have to see. Like that was basically what he said and so like I walked out over there like man like really, like how you're gonna tell me like- like I'm already struggling and you're gonna tell me like basically you can't do it. So yes.

Four participants identified feeling expectations were present from their advisor and one felt this did not apply to their advisee experience. Of the five who felt they had advisor expectations to fulfill, three felt these expectations were positive and motivating. The remaining two felt the perceived expectations created an uncomfortable environment, which resulted in more dissonance.

**The presence of a shared cultural experience with the academic advisor.**

Although cultural competence and humility can be learned through various avenues of certification, such as professional development programs and credentials, it may not always be the most preferred way for students to feel validated. This is due to the implications in which taught experiences vary from shared experiences. For example, learning a language in high school for academic credit and never maintaining its practice may cause the learner to forget or lose comfort with the language. On the other hand, a language learner who grew up with and consistently practiced the language may always feel comfortable with this skill. This may also be true for cultural understanding and norms learned and shared within an adviser and advisee relationship.

Research shows that the act of mattering, which presents easily when the experience is shared and understood, allows for a more welcoming and empowering environment for students. This assists in promoting persistence and lessening dissonance. The following questions were asked to determine if this shared experience already exists, in what ways, and if this was even important to the participant. First, participants were asked what the ethnicity of their advisor was: four perceived their

advisor to be white, two perceived their advisor to be Asian, two perceived their advisor to be mixed race, and one was not sure what the ethnicity of their advisor was.

Regarding the perceived ethnic identities, three of the participants felt their advisor's ethnic identities made a difference in the type of advising they received. In addition, four participants felt they could speak to their advisor about more than just academic concerns. Damien regarded the ethnicity of his advisor to be especially helpful to his transition, which was additionally difficult because he was a transfer student.

Because my academic advisor does identify as FilAm. Um. And I guess, there's just- a lot that we can connect on, where it's a lot easier to speak to my advisor than it would be to speak to someone else, who doesn't identify um as a same ethnic background as me. Because they know the experiences that I've gone through. Um. And just, I know that's a big step in itself.

One of the questions specifically asked participants if they believed they shared a cultural experience with their academic advisor. Four said, "yes." It is important to note that "shared cultural experience" was not defined by ethnic identity alone. Of the participants who felt they had a shared experience, two identified the shared experience based on their Asian/Asian American, or Filipino/Filipino American identity. Two of the participants with shared experience indicated the identifier to be the experience as people of color or oppressed people of color. One participant with a shared experience specified the identifier to be the experience of growing up in Southern California. Victoria was able to connect well with one of her advisers for this reason:

We were both from Southern California, and like, um, kind of like the same area-ish, and like, we even connected, um like, little stuff of like, uh, like the basketball team we were like going for and also like the, like, her alma mater was like Cal Poly and my little sister currently goes there, so like, we were just like, um, connect over like little stuff like that, um, that made the-- made our relationship of like students to advise like stronger.

Finally, the last shared experience indicated by one of the participants was that the advisor also completed their undergraduate degree at NCRU. As a final point, the last question inquired if a shared cultural experience as self-reported by the participants impacted the advising relationship in any way, and four indicated it did. Of those participants who said, “yes,” the impact was positive for all of them.

**The effects of the advising relationship and persistence.** The last question was designed to understand if the academic advisor provided the equity-based resource intended to assist the participant with a more successful undergraduate experience. Since social capital is historically limited, and institutional resources are equality based instead of equity based, the academic advisor relationships is one of few variables that can close the gap toward achievement for underrepresented students. This multi-part question attempted to capture if this was the case for these participants as they reflected back on their undergraduate experience at NCRU.

First, the participants were asked if their academic advisor impacted their ability to navigate campus. Five participants affirmed that their current academic advisors

promoted this ability. Three of the participants changed their major from a STEM field to social science or humanities and felt those advisors did not promote their ability to navigate campus. One felt this question did not apply to their experience in navigating campus. Participants were also asked if their advisors impacted their confidence in their coursework, to which all of them identified at least one advisor with whom this was the case. All participants also identified at least one advisor who gave them confidence in their overall undergraduate experience.

Of the six participants interviewed, all of them identified at least one academic advisor who gave them confidence in their ability to graduate. The last question inquired if their advisor impacted their confidence in feeling like they belonged. Four participants felt their advisor empowered them in this way. At the same time, one felt their advisor did not make them feel like they belonged at NCRU. In addition, two felt the variable of belonging did not correlate to their advisee relationship.

## **Discussion**

This study was developed with the intention of understanding whether academic advising is a type of social capital accessible and utilized by Filipino and Filipino American students. It was also created to understand if social capital is already captured through the availability of this resource at public, 4-year research institutions. These institutions are limited in the equity-based resources they provide to student populations, and resources available to Filipino and Filipino American students are not normally

created with these students and their identities in mind, so it is significant to assess whether current functions already best serve this population. Academic advising is both a transaction experienced by all undergraduate students and a means by which equity can be achieved; the core mission of advising is to strengthen the individual advising relationship and help build a community for students at university.

The research participants were asked several questions pertaining to their experience regarding cultural and familial expectations, model minority myth, the academic advising relationship, shared cultural experience, and persistence toward degree completion. The results are discussed earlier in this chapter. While half the participants interviewed had little to no social capital prior to attending university, it was clear that an academic advisor was a critical resource to the overall undergraduate experience. Further, engaging in community is also a way to create social capital, which can also include an academic advisor. However, the type of advising the participant received and the value of this advising varied for each participant as well as how it impacted each participant's persistence.

The participants were first solicited for their understanding of model minority myth and if this framework impacted their undergraduate experience at NCRU. Two participants felt the model minority myth influenced their undergraduate experience in some way, as opposed to all six participants understanding that familial and cultural expectations impact many components of their undergraduate experience. However, for those who felt the model minority myth did not impact their undergraduate experience, it

was because they felt no association with the overall idea of marginalization on their campus. One participant did not identify as Filipino American and felt the model minority myth was unique only to the diasporic experience of the Filipino American community. Andrew stated:

I think it mainly comes down to because I identify as Filipino. A Filipino American, which I think plays a factor into that which is because- because of that identity my-- It's almost as if like it gives my experience at different context... Of course it's focused on minorities in the US but of course like identifying as Filipino and growing up there, it's-- I feel like I didn't really grow up in that um magnifying glass. So it's-- So basically you're growing up like [with] the concept of being a minority did not exist for me until I came here.

In addition, one participant also felt that, because they were well established in the Filipino American community and did not otherwise feel disconnected to the campus at large, the model minority myth could not apply to them because of this community engagement. One participant felt they overcame this experience as they transitioned out of high school and into the collegiate space and, because of the large population of Asian and Asian American students at NCRU, this no longer impacted them.

It was clear that the participants were considered first-generation college students, as all of them indicated their parents completed their university degrees in the Philippines. Appropriately, part of the reason social capital was limited was because of the lack of parental knowledge regarding the navigation of the application process in the

United States. However, three of the participants were able to access some sort of resource or assistance when it came time to apply for university. It is important to note that dissonance started early for one of the participants, who had negative experiences with their high school counselor regarding this process. This counselor did not empower the student to apply at all. Similarly, another participant explained their high school counselor was a limited resource because their high school was underserved, but found their educational opportunity program for summer start was a valuable asset to their experience. Only one participant identified another family member, an older sibling, who supported them through the application process, although two participants indicated they had older siblings who completed the university application process, as far as they were aware.

All participants indicated they had an understanding of the role of an academic advisor; however, only two participants defined advising from a holistic and transactional model. As such, academic advising is understood to be valuable from a transactional framework. This aligns with the cultural and familial expectations to do well in school (all participants) so identifying transactional advising as a means to reach this goal supports the need to achieve these expectations. Transactional advising is also important when it relates to the need for a strong support system, as defined by Sedlacek's (2015) noncognitive variables, as many participants (two) felt they did not have a good understanding of the resources available to them when they arrived at NCRU. It is important to note that holistic advising was defined by some of the participants (two) as



part of the role of an academic advisor and further explicated as tangible through the components of feeling mattered (two) and to build relationships with their students through accessibility (one).

Although advisors were categorized through their models of advising, transactional and holistic, they were also categorized based on the disciplines through which the participants experienced advising. This is interesting because there is a clear distinction between advising for STEM compared to advising for the social sciences and humanities. George said of his STEM adviser:

In the [Evolution and Ecology] office I feel like she expects me to have researched every little thing and that like every time that I've gone in there I feel like she has expected me to like um, run through the catalog. I do run through the catalog...before I walk into the room and so it feels weird 'cause she like presumes that I haven't and I'll like, I'll say like oh yes, no, blah, blah, blah, blah, but then it will feel like she still doesn't get the I get that, right? That I don't know my own requirements, if that makes sense.

When asked about the overall advising experience, those participants who had experience working with a STEM advisor indicated they felt distrust toward their advisor (two), they were not transparent regarding their needs (two), they felt alienated and ignored (two), and the expectations they felt their advisor had toward them impacted them negatively (one). At the same time, of the six participants who accepted their intent to register at NCRU, three participants started with the intention of pursuing a STEM

field and two of them changed majors into a social science or humanities discipline. Although this change of major was empowering and academically successful, one of those who made this change continue to have a difficult time negotiating this change with their parents.

It was also evident that, regardless of how the participants felt about their academic advisors, they still met with them at some point during their undergraduate years. Two preferred to access their advisor by email only because of traumatic past face-to-face experiences that left them feeling unsafe and uncomfortable. Dissonance was also presented when participants were asked if they felt alienated or ignored by an advisor (three). On the other hand, four of participants acknowledged meeting with their academic advisor beyond the minimum recommended amount of time, which is defined as an annual major check or as required by a mandatory advising model. Every participant was able to identify at least one advisor with whom they felt welcomed and listened, and affirmed this advisor was a resource to them at NCRU.

Since familial and cultural expectations are a driving force for this population, participants were also asked if they felt any sort of expectations from their academic advisors. One participant felt this did not apply to them; however, four did feel that their advisor had some expectations of them. One participant identified those expectations to be negative and traumatic; the expectation was that to be successful, the participant must engage in some research capacity and must only ask certain types of questions. This created a dissonant relationship for the participant, who engaged as little as possible with

this advisor. Another participant reflected that their advisor asked her to assist them with many administrative duties, similar to a student assistant. This made the participant feel reliable and responsible, affirming characteristics that made the participant feel empowered by the perceived expectations of the advisor. Comparably, another participant determined their advisor always had their best interest in mind, so the participant perceived the expectation to always do well because the advisor made the participant feel mentored.

Historically, the demographic of academic advisors was predominantly Caucasian cis-gendered women identified females. The diversity of the academic advising population is growing; however, based on the responses of the six participants, this demographic is still upheld, as most of the advisors working with the participants were perceived to be white women (four), followed by Asian women (two), mixed race women (two), or not identifiable (one). In most cases, the advisors were perceived to be cis-gendered women identified females and one academic advisor was perceived to be an Asian American cis-gendered male identified man. Of the advisors identified as Asian or Asian American, one advisor was perceived to be Vietnamese American, one advisor was perceived to be Japanese American, and one advisor was perceived to be Filipino American. Of the advisors perceived to be mixed race, one advisor was perceived to be Chicana mixed race, one advisor was perceived to be Filipina mixed race, and the other advisor was only assumed to be mixed race. Three participants felt the ethnicity of the advisor made a difference in the advising they received. George felt the ethnic identity

allowed their advisor the privilege of assuming model minority stereotypes upon them, which disenfranchised the advising experience. In comparing their advising experience, he stated:

Well women's and gender studies um because the department itself is very like women-of-color-centric, I feel like because we have that shared experience of being a person of color that we already- that we have like something to like hold on to you, right?... Um whereas with like [my STEM major] it's mostly from what I've seen [as] East-Asian or white. I'm not East-Asian, I'm not white and like micro-aggressions are very subtle in those spaces and particularly with my own advisors like- I don't know if like-- I don't know. Um, I never really thought about that. But I feel like honestly it might have made a difference because like um with white people it kinda feels like they expect me like already expect me to like um fall into a specific like, um, mode or like train of like- not mode or train but like expect me to know certain things already, right?

On the other hand, Damien felt the ethnic identity fostered a mutual understanding and respect for him, so this was a positive variable in the advising experience.

I feel that because my advisor and I share an ethnic identity. It's much easier to talk to them about my own experiences growing up. And my experiences in order to get education because I feel that they've been through it and they understand what I'm going through . . . I want to say that it affects it in a positive way.

Because I know it's my experience um with advising in high school and community college. I was unable to connect this way with any of my counselors. Because we didn't share a – an ethnic um background identity. Um. And so the fact that my advisor now and um and I share one, it's a lot easier to communicate with them.

Four participants felt the ethnic identity did not impact the type of advising they received; however, they indicated they would have liked to experience an advising relationship with an academic advisor of an ethnic identity similar to their own. Mallory explained, in retrospect, this could have been helpful to her:

I think it would be different if I had like an Asian adviser or uh, someone who's Filipino just because I feel like they would connect with me a little more like we've had that shared identity. I mean I don't -- I don't feel inferior to my adviser because she's white because I know who I am in my own place.

Ethnic identity was not the only perceived shared cultural experience or identity acknowledged by the data collected. Four participants surveyed felt they had a shared experience with at least one of their academic advisors. The experience variable is defined dynamically through the following identities: community membership (five), gender (four), shared history (two), and cultural (two). Of the participants who identified community as a shared experience, these variables were determined to be childhood locality, such as growing up in Southern California (one); completing undergraduate degrees at NCRU, or having the alumni experience (one); a shared history of oppression

due to the marginalized communities of which the advisor and advisee are members (one); growing up as a United States military dependent (one); and a shared history as women of color (one).

The gender expression of the academic advisors was predominantly perceived to be female. This was an influential identity for many of the participants (five) because it allowed them to feel less dissonance and more transparency regarding their needs. This was especially the case for those who identified as women (three), gender non-binary (one), and queer (one). Mallory shared she felt more trust with her adviser because of their gender expression:

I think maybe you know talking to women made it easier for me. So I think that helped with trust. I don't know how it would be if I talk to a man adviser or what that experience would like.

Similarly, the perceived shared history with the academic advisor, who was determined to be a woman of color, allowed the participant with the following intersecting identities to also feel more transparent regarding their needs: gender identified female (three), non-gender binary (one), and queer (one). Cultural identity, similar to ethnicity, is related to a person's awareness of belonging. Of the participant population, two felt their shared experience with their advisor related to their sense of belonging. This cultural identity was identified based on community shared variables and did not appear to have any correlation with gender or history.

There were also specific unshared cultural experiences collected in the data that affected the advising experience. Apart from ethnicity, two participants surveyed felt they did not share a cultural experience with any of their academic advisors.

Socioeconomic status (one) was determined to be a variable that was not shared between the advisor and advisee relationship. The data indicated the advisor most likely has a higher socioeconomic status than the advisee, so the advising recommendations may assume the participant has access and resources that will allow them to pursue co-curricular activities, such as study abroad, summer school, or student organizations, without having to consider funding for these opportunities. Andrew indicated socioeconomic status was an influential variable in how he engaged with his adviser:

I had everything planned out. Mostly because um when I was a freshman I thought um become classes – I found out that I was ahead and I could have graduated a year early, if not more. So I was definitely concerned to that. I think that's also why I visited the advising often, just because it was ah – it was an option that I considered for a long time. Just because I thought, oh um why not save money.

The gender identity of male (one) was also a distinguishing variable discovered in the data. Historically, academic advisors are predominantly white and female, so interacting with male advisors was of low probability. The data reflect that, given the opportunity to work with a male advisor, this would be less preferred for female-identified participants (four).

Lastly, although a shared identity regarding membership in communities of color may exist between the advisor and advisee, the type of community may not always be shared and may result in dissonance (one). The data showed that participants who perceived their advisor to have a shared ethnic and cultural shared identity with other students within the major appeared to have a stronger relationship with them and, therefore, appeared to provide them with more support. At one advising crossroads, Darlene could not make a connection with her adviser for this reason.

She identified as um, Chicana and most of the people in that space where identified that way. And I think because of that I felt a little isolated because um she just seemed to get along better with them because like they could code switch in Spanish, which I understand as well and speak too. But like, I'm, you know, I'm like visually and outwardly Asian so like, that's not something that she like relates to right away.

In addition, the data showed that those participants who lacked the shared ethnic and cultural experience felt they could not be as transparent about their needs and, therefore, did not seek advising from the academic advisor because they felt this disconnect. It is important to note that this particular data collection did not include STEM academic advisors. Overall, STEM academic advisors in this study were not perceived to have any shared ethnic or cultural experiences with any of the participants.

Persistence is the process of student goal achievement, by which an academic advisor plays an integral role. To conclude the collection of data, participants were asked



how their advisor impacted their confidence relating to their persistence at a public 4-year institution. The advisor's impact on the participant's confidence to navigate campus was mostly positive (five), indicating that at least one advisor provided them with the information they needed to operate campus processes and logistics. Three participants changed majors from a STEM field into either a social science or humanities discipline, and afterwards, felt affected by the confidence related to their advising relationship. One felt they could navigate the campus whether they had an advising relationship or not. The academic advisor is historically known to provide course planning and suggestions for students. All the participants indicated their confidence was positive that at least one academic advisor provided this service, whether in a STEM field or not. Similarly, at least one advisor was identified as supporting the participant's confidence in their overall undergraduate experience and ability to graduate within their desired timeline.

The last variable of persistence collected was the participant's perception that the academic advisor impacted their confidence in feeling like they belonged at NCRU. More than half the participants responded "yes" (four), while some felt the advising relationship had no bearing on this feeling (two). The data show that those who felt this had no bearing on their membership to the NCRU campus community defined their advising relationship based on a transactional advising model only, even though the data report four participants defined academic advising based on this model. In the meantime, the participants who suggested that their academic advisor impacts their confidence in feeling like they belonged at NCRU defined their advising relationship holistically, while

the data originally reported only two participants characterizing this advising model at the beginning of the interviews.

### **Summary of Findings**

A shared cultural experience with an academic advisor has an impact on Filipino and Filipino American students at a 4-year, public research institution. The term “cultural” cannot be defined solely based on ethnicity and culture, but must include any shared identity a student may perceive or know to have with their advisor. The data from this study show that the perception of a shared experience creates a space that cultivates intentional dialogue, wherein a student feels heard and understood. The student is, therefore, able to persist because they have acquired social capital through their academic advisor. This is important because Filipino and Filipino American students are an underserved population at public, 4-year research institutions with limited resource literacy and an overabundance of cultural and familial expectations that create barriers toward success not otherwise shared with their non-Filipino peers.

## Chapter 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Summary**

The focus of this study was to examine the academic advising experience of Filipino and Filipino American graduating students at public four-year research institutions. In particular, this study aimed to understand if a shared cultural experience with an academic adviser is a positive variable in the persistence to degree completion for this underserved population. The results of this study indicate that shared cultural experience is a positive factor and impacts the success of the student. The study also indicates that there is a desire for shared experience with the adviser, whether the experience is cultural or another social group membership.

A review of the literature revealed a lack of disaggregated data on Asian and Pacific Islander student populations in college institutions. As a result, the literature on Filipino and Filipino American student experiences in higher education is very limited. Specifically, there is little to no data regarding this student experience as it relates to how they engage with equity-based resources at public, 4-year research institutions, such as academic advisers. As this student population continues to grow, it is beneficial to further understand their student experience at university in order to make intentional efforts to support the persistence toward degree achievement.

This study utilized semi-structured interviews to capture qualitative data concerning the involvement and experience of graduating Filipino and Filipino American students at a public, 4-year research institution. Six students who identified as Filipino or Filipino American and were in their final year at university discussed their experiences building an advisee relationship with their academic adviser(s) and their overall experience building community on campus. In addition, these students expanded on their understanding of shared experiences with their academic advisers and whether this added to their persistence to degree completion. The main themes identified in this study are as follows:

1. The impact of model minority myth on the student and whether they experience dissonance
2. The resource literacy of the student
3. The impact of the academic advising experience
4. The presence of a shared cultural experience with the academic advisor
5. The effects of the advising relationship as it related to persistence.

The data captured were used to understand whether this student population was influenced by the model minority myth framework and if it impeded their agency or ability in developing an advisee relationship with their academic adviser. The data collected were also used to determine how this student population experienced academic advising and whether it is truly a resource that produces equity for this student population. Students were asked to be introspective about this experience since the

student population is small compared to non-Filipino student populations but is often assumed to be a cohesive and well supported population due to its affiliation with the greater API community.

Correspondingly, the research study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the following research questions:

1. What type of advisers serve Filipino and Filipino American students?
2. How do academic advisers serve this student population?
3. Does a cultural background experience make a difference in helping provide culturally sensitive student services?
4. Is the desire to have an academic adviser with shared cultural experiences important to the success of the student?

The researcher felt it was critical to understand what type of advisee relationship this student population created because of stigmatized frameworks that may prevent them from engaging with this type of resource. The researcher aimed to identify how this student population developed an advising relationship with their advisers, for what reasons, and how that relationship impacted the persistence toward degree completion. In addition, the intent of the researcher was to define what shared experiences are and if this is necessary to develop a successful means to persist towards degree completion.

The summary, conclusions, and recommendations by the researcher from the semi-structured interviews are presented in this chapter. The understanding of the role of the academic adviser and any shared cultural experiences are examined. The data for this

research were collected in the fall and winter terms of the 2015-2016 academic year at Northern California Regional University, a 4-year public research institution with a growing Filipino and Filipino American student population. The intended target population comprised just over 1,000 currently enrolled Filipino or Filipino American students of which the researcher was able to interview six. Participants volunteered for this study after receiving information from NCRU's Multicultural Student center. All participants completed a 45-minute to one-hour interview conducted by the researcher on the NCRU campus.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the data collected, the transactional advising model was best understood by participants to be the most helpful and desired type of advising relationship to assist Filipino and Filipino American students and their persistence to degree completion. Participants felt more secure in seeking assistance from an adviser who presented thorough knowledge of major requirements, campus resources, and career counseling. Only two participants clearly defined a holistic advising model to be complimentary to their advising experience. However, when participants were asked about a perceived shared cultural experience and its impact on the advising relationship, four of the participants knowingly or unknowingly described holistic advising through their shared experience that positively impacted their advising relationship with at least one of their academic advisers. The presence of a shared experience also empowered participants to

be more transparent about their needs, approach their adviser beyond the required meeting times, and consider their adviser as a variable in campus community membership. In addition, the shared experience cultivated feelings of empowerment and pride when participants identified the perceived expectations their advisers had of them.

The two participants who engaged in a transactional advising model with their adviser did not indicate a shared cultural experience existed in their advising relationship. These participants relied more on other resources, such as department literature, to navigate major requirements and only sought guidance from an academic adviser to affirm the academic planning they had done on their own. These participants were also less likely to meet with their advisers beyond the required meeting times or discuss concerns other than academics and did not consider their adviser to be a variable in campus community membership. It is important to note that the participants who did not experience holistic advising or a shared cultural experience indicated retrospectively a preference for such an advising experience.

The shared cultural experience must be defined fluidly and cannot be limited to ethnic identity or cultural experiences alone. The data show that shared experience must be considered on a spectrum of identities, and this study uncovered the following to be most impactful: community membership, gender, historical, and cultural. Students are complex beings with various identities that will also intersect. It must be assumed, then, that advisers are also complex beings whose identities can influence their advising techniques. As undergraduate populations become more diverse, the shared experience

can be a tool to demystify the role of an academic adviser and make them more accessible to students. In addition, the shared experience is a means to cultivate community for underrepresented students. This is especially important in large public, 4-year research institutions where community may not be the primary goal of such an institution. The participants who identified a shared cultural experience with an academic adviser felt a stronger campus community membership, were overall more satisfied with their academic progress, and considered their advisee relationship to be an investment in their persistence. The academic adviser is the first point of contact for the student, and creating this relationship positively impacts social capital, may potentially empower students to build or seek out more community membership, and keeps the student engaged in their academic progress.

Based on the data collected, it is understood that there is a strong desire to have a shared cultural experience with the academic adviser because this is important to the success of the student. This is especially prevalent for the participants whose intersecting identities left them feeling overall marginalized and underserved. In fact, the shared experience should not be limited to ethnic identity alone, but it can certainly include other social group memberships not yet discussed in this study. The data showed that some understanding of a shared experience allowed the participant to feel more comfortable with the adviser, utilize them beyond a transactional capacity, and even seek the adviser out as a mentor. The development of a mentoring relationship is critical for this student population because all the participants indicated limited to no support during their



application process, which suggests limited cultural and social capital, especially in the first two years of their undergraduate experience.

The data also showed that participants were more likely to identify shared experiences with academic advisers from the humanities or social sciences and advisers who were women of color. According to the data, it was important to distinguish between the following social group memberships: the Filipino American identity and Filipino queer identity. The impact of model minority myth and dissonance, and how the academic adviser was able to navigate these, were most impactful to the students. Participants who identified as Filipino American were more likely to seek out holistic advising and felt the model minority myth impacted their undergraduate experience. Participants who identified as queer were less likely to feel campus community membership and identified one of their academic advisers to be a source of social capital vital to their persistence.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are identified to inform academic advising practice based on the results of this study.

First, the academic adviser has the capacity to serve as a considerable source of social capital and support for underrepresented students, such as Filipino and Filipino Americans. Academic advisers are charged with the responsibility of seeking out developmental opportunities that will allow them the ability to understand and develop

such pedagogical student development practices that include diversity, cultural humility, and inclusion. However, the university must do its part to ensure it is held accountable for providing such programs that will empower academic advisers to best serve the complex and dynamic student population present today and to provide the tools and resources necessary for advisers to stay relevant in navigating institutional practices that are not made for underrepresented and marginalized students. In addition, the university can also be more intentional about recruiting academic advisers who can relate to the diverse student population, as this study has shown shared cultural experiences are a positive and desired variable for the student experience.

Another recommendation is to understand what types of staff development opportunities academic advisers seek out to inform their practice to support this student population. This is especially important, as it impacts *hiya*, that Filipino and Filipino American students would feel shame or dishonor for seeking assistance from academic advisers. The intentional completion of development opportunities, such as graduate degrees, credentials, or internal staff development programs indicate how academic advisers come to understand privilege and implicit bias. At the same time, it would inform universities on whether such internal programs are necessary to support their academic advising staff. Since the participants in the study had positive experiences with advisers whether a shared experience was present or not, it is important to acknowledge that a shared experience is still desired. This means that students are seeking advisers who have an understanding of cultural humility and diversity. The ability to make a

student feel as if they matter is an essential job description based on the data collected in this study. As undergraduate student populations continue to become more diverse and globalized, this may be a critical variable in the professionalization of academic advising.

The following recommendations areas of study that is limited or unavailable in current research, which may assist in informing academic advising practice in the future based on the results of this study.

Further research for this study would also include expanding the research sample size to gain a better understanding of the Filipino and Filipino American student experience at large public, 4-year research institutions. Since transactional advising was identified more commonly with STEM advisers, it would be beneficial to initiate focus groups or interviews specific to academic advising and persistence in the STEM field. In the same way, the development of the advising relationship and whether a shared cultural experience supports persistence toward degree completion should also be explored as part of this research study. This specific population of academic advisers may inform research of practices unique to STEM advising compared to non-STEM advising. This may impact the ways in which an adviser may develop such an advising relationship with Filipino and Filipino American students.

Another recommendation for further research is to expand the data collection of shared cultural experiences beyond the Filipino and Filipino American undergraduate student population. As demonstrated by this study, shared experience is not limited to ethnic identity membership and was experienced by the research participants on various

levels and at various intersections. As a result, it may be beneficial to inform the literature on how shared experiences with academic advisers support persistence toward degree across various student populations. This is also important work to demystify and destigmatize the role of the academic adviser for student populations who do not see the adviser as a source of support and social capital. It can also add to the literature supporting community cultural wealth, cultural capital, and how advisers can play a role by serving as a strong support person for underserved students.

Two major themes from the student experience were produced from this study; these were unsolicited but impacted the participants' experiences considerably. As a result, the researcher feels it necessary to explore the Filipino and Filipino American undergraduate experience further based on these topics: queer identity and the Filipino American diasporic identity. Albeit there is limited literature on the Filipino and Filipino American undergraduate experience altogether, the university has a responsibility to address these particular needs in order to understand how to further support this growing student population and ensure their success.

The challenges of the Filipino student queer identity, specifically the American diasporic experience, are an area of study that must be explored further in higher education literature. In this study, the term "Filipinx" was used by participants as a gender-neutral identifier. It was clear that the experience of Filipinx students in higher education is not part of the current literature, even the term Filipinx is not yet recognized. It is important to acknowledge that this term is currently part of the American diasporic

experience, and the researcher is unsure if this term is also adopted as a gender-neutral identifier for the immigrant Filipino community. For this reason, further research for this study should include focus groups or interviews specific to the Filipinx identified student population. This student population is at risk for dissonance because of the intersecting identities of their queer and gender identities. Coupled with familial and cultural definitions and expectations surrounding queerness, students of this population are in need of equity-based resources that will ensure both academic preparedness and mental health. This intentional study can inform the literature on the persistence of Filipino American queer community, on the academic needs of this community, and on the importance of introducing the term Filipinx.

Lastly, the data revealed that the experience of Filipino students compared to Filipino American students was distinctly different. This was predominant in the data relating to model minority myth and the development of the advising relationship. Filipino students who did not identify with the diasporic experience did not feel that model minority myth applied to them because they believed this was unique to the Filipino diaspora and Asian Americans. Their internalization of cultural and familial expectations was stronger and influenced their undergraduate experience more. Specifically, the cost associated with completing their degree and the dissonance of engaging with the FilAm community were substantial concerns compared to model minority myth. Similarly, they viewed the academic adviser as one of the many resources they must utilize because that is also included in the cost of tuition. The

transactional model was defined as more important because the adviser served to provide information to assist these students toward degree completion. At the conclusion of the study, the researcher feels further investigation dedicated to the Filipino student experience will inform the literature on how academic advisers can best support Filipino students beyond a transactional model, or if this is even necessary for this student population. Further research can explicate what type of undergraduate experience this student population experiences overall and if an academic adviser or other equity programs are the best ways to integrate these students into the campus community and undergraduate experience.

APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

## Invitation to Participate and Informed Consent

Dear Potential Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research study which investigates the impact of the academic advising experience for graduating Filipino and Filipino American identified students at a large public research institution.

I am a graduate student at California State University, Sacramento, in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Master's program. The purpose of this research is to investigate the potential impact of academic advising to the underrepresented and underserved Filipino and Filipino American student population at a large public research institution. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete a pre-interview survey and asked to participate in an interview to understand your experience as an undergraduate student. Your participation in this study will last approximately 45-60 minutes.

Some of the questions in this study ask about your experiences with cultural and familial expectations as it relates to academics. This may cause feelings of dissonance, indifference, or resentment. If you experience any of these feelings of stress, you may skip any questions or discontinue this study at any time. If you require assistance with duress, it is recommended you contact the NCRU Student Health and Wellness Center at 530-752-2300.

There is minimal to no risk involved for participants, as all responses will be anonymous. I ask that you complete a pre-interview survey to assess demographic information, but no personal identifying information will be collected from participants. All data obtained will be maintained in a password protected electronic format and will be destroyed after three (3) years from the date of the study is completed. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento at 916-278-5674 or by email at [irb@csus.edu](mailto:irb@csus.edu).

Your participation is entirely voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.



If you have any questions about the research at any time, please contact me at [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] or e-mail at [REDACTED]

**If you are interested in participating in this study, please read the information consent form and contact me to setup an interview. All interviews will be conducted at the Northern California Regional University Multicultural Center Conference room unless other accommodations need to be made for your convenience.**

Thank you for your consideration,

Katherine Parpana

## Informed Consent

**Study Title:** Not America's Next Top Model (Minority): The Advising Experience of Graduating Filipino Students at a Large Public Research Institution

This is a research study conducted by Katherine J. Parpana from the School of Education at California State University, Sacramento. This study is entirely funded by personal funds. You have the right to know about the processes, procedures, risks, and benefits of this study.

Participating in this study is voluntary. You have the right to discontinue your participation at any time. If you decide to participate, you have the right to skip questions or change your mind once the study has started. No matter what you decide, there will be no penalty to you.

If any changes are made to the study, the co-principle investigator will advise you of such changes as it may affect your willingness to participate. You may choose to discontinue at any time. The co-principle investigator may also withdraw you from the study if circumstances arise which warrant such action.

### **About This Study**

My goal as the co-principle investigator is to learn about the social capital, cultural and familial expectations, and the advisee student experience of Filipino and Filipino American undergraduate students at a large research institution such as California Regional Universities. I would like to understand the life experiences of up to 6 undergraduate students who will file to graduate in the 2015-2016 academic year.

You are asked to consider taking part in this study because you self-identify as Filipino or Filipino American and you are completing your bachelor(s) degree at Northern California Regional University. Your experience as an undergraduate in a large public research institution can help add to the limited knowledge about the Filipino and Filipino American student population at such an institution and in higher education in general.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a pre-interview survey to collect demographic information from you. You will be asked to partake in one interview lasting no more than one hour. During this interview, you will be asked questions relating to cultural and familial expectations, as well as your experience with academic advising. An academic advisor is a college administrator who guides you through the process of completing your major or degree requirements. You may also be asked questions regarding campus engagement and resources that may have aided your completion of degree.

Interviews will take place in the Northern California Regional University Multicultural Center conference room unless other accommodations need to be made for your convenience. The interview will be audio-recorded. If you do not want your interview to be recorded, I will hand write interview notes.

### **Discomfort and Risks**

There is minimal to no risk to you as a participant if you decide to partake in this study. The principal investigator will implement every precaution to ensure that all information collected from the pre-interview survey and survey is kept confidential. All paper documents and transcripts will be stored in an electronic file that is password encrypted on a personal computer for no longer than 3 years after the study is completed.

Should you experience any discomfort as it relates to stress or duress, it is recommended you contact the NCRU Student Health and Wellness Center at 707-XXX-XXX.

### **Benefits**

There are no direct benefits to you as a participant of this study. However, the results of this study can contribute to the limited research on the Filipino and Filipino American student experience in higher education. Your contribution will provide a better understanding of the lived experiences of students in this population, and will provide recommendations for additional research and study for this population and in this field.

### **Cost**

There is no cost to you apart from the time and effort required to complete the pre-interview survey and interview with the co-principle investigator.

### **Compensation**

Participants will not be paid for their participation in this study.

### **Questions?**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the co-principle investigator, Katherine J. Parpana at [REDACTED]. You may also contact Office of Research Affairs, California State University, Sacramento at 916-278-5674 or by email at [irb@csus.edu](mailto:irb@csus.edu)

## APPENDIX B

## Pre-Interview Questions

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. Please answer the demographic questions below:

1. Are you an undergraduate student pursuing a bachelor's degree at NCRU?
2. Do you plan to file to graduate in the 2015-2016 academic year?
3. Were you a transfer student?
4. Do you identify as Filipino/a or Filipino/a-American?
5. What is your gender identity?

## APPENDIX C

## Interview Questions

## Model Minority Myth and Dissonance

1. What are your cultural or familial expectations that might impact your academic experience?
2. Please define model minority myth.
3. Do you feel it relates to your experience as a student?
4. Tell me how you have gone to establish a community on your campus?
5. Do you feel like you belong on your campus?
6. What resources do you think have helped you succeed at NCRU?

## Resource Literacy

1. Did you have assistance applying to NCRU when you were in high school (ex. Parent, mentor, counselor)
2. Did you come to NCRU with an understanding of the resources that would be available to you
3. Do you consider your academic advisor as a resource to you at NCRU?

## Advising Experience

1. Do you know what the role of an academic advisor is?
2. What is your expectation of an academic advisor?
3. Do you meet with you academic advisor? If so, how often and for what reason(s).
4. If you do not meet with an academic advisor, who do you meet with?
5. Do you experience distrust when you talk to your advisor?
6. Are you completely transparent with your advisor regarding your needs?
7. In your experience, does your advisor leave you feeling welcomed and listened to?
8. In your experience, does your advisor leave you feeling alienated and ignored?
9. Do you feel like your advisor has expectations of you?
10. Do those expectations impact you in any way?

## Shared Cultural Experience

1. What is the ethnicity of your advisor?
2. Do you think your advisor's ethnicity makes a difference in the type of advising you receive?
3. Are you able to talk to your advisor about more than just academic concerns?
4. Do you believe you and your advisor have a shared cultural experience, If yes/no, please explain why?)
  - a. Does this impact your advising relationship in any way

### Effect on Persistence

1. How do you think meeting with your academic advisor impacts your confidence in:
  - a. Ability to navigate campus
  - b. Coursework
  - c. Overall experience
  - d. Ability to graduate
  - e. Feeling like I belong

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