

PATHS TO PERSISTENCE: MEXICAN AMERICAN UNDERGRADUATES'  
EXPERIENCES WITH CHOICE IN ACADEMIC RECOVERY INTERVENTIONS

by

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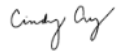
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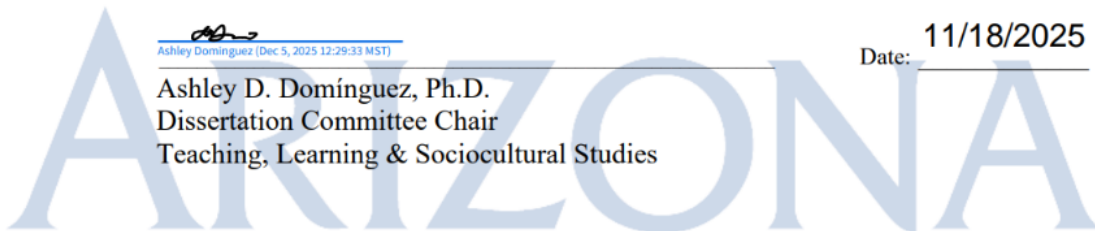
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We respectfully acknowledge the University of Arizona is on the land and territories of Indigenous peoples. Today, Arizona is home to 22 federally recognized tribes, with Tucson being home to the O’odham and the Yaqui. Committed to diversity and inclusion, the University strives to build sustainable relationships with sovereign Native Nations and Indigenous communities through education offerings, partnerships, and community service.

## DEDICATION

To the Academic Recovery students: This work is dedicated to your courage, resilience, and unwavering pursuit of growth. Always remember that your journey matters and that you matter. Keep moving forward; the seeds you plant today may blossom into tomorrow's successes

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Academic Probation (AP)

Academic Recovery (AR)

Academic Warning (AW)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Campus Health's Counseling & Psych Services (CAPS)

Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI)

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (DHSI)

Grade Point Average (GPA)

Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Minority-Serving Institutions (MSI)

Research Question (RQ)

Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Student Success (SS)

Student Success & Retention Innovation (SSRI) program

University of Arizona (UA)

## ABSTRACT

**Purpose.** This study explored the lived experiences of Mexican American undergraduate students on academic probation at the University of Arizona, who have the autonomy to choose their academic recovery interventions and their perspectives on the pushout phenomenon in higher education.

**Background.** Hispanic students face lower retention and graduation rates than their peers, and regaining good academic standing often involves significant academic and personal support. Without adequate support, students risk disengagement or withdrawal. Understanding these experiences is essential for designing supportive interventions. Poetic inquiry was employed to capture dimensions of students' journeys.

**Methods.** Seven Mexican American students participated in individual interviews. Data were analyzed using in vivo coding, thematic categorization, and poetic transcription. Lines were selected for emotional and linguistic significance, contextual relevance, and thematic weight, then arranged poetically to preserve participants' voices and meaning.

**Results.** Analysis revealed themes of resilience, identity, emotional responses, and recovery strategies. Poetic transcription highlighted struggles, hopes, and reflections in ways traditional prose could not, emphasizing student agency and the need for support.

**Conclusions.** Poetic inquiry honored participants' voices and highlighted the need for inclusive, empathetic spaces in higher education that foster resilience, hope, and academic success.

*Keywords:* academic recovery, academic intervention, poetic inquiry, probation

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Pursuing a college degree is widely recognized as a significant step toward a successful career. Undergraduate students enroll in educational institutions nationwide with diverse goals and interests. However, the influence of higher education extends beyond obtaining a degree. It plays a crucial role in shaping students' present and future prospects, a responsibility that cannot be understated. Higher education involves various demanding factors, some of which may not always be readily apparent or observable (Cappelli, 2020). Recent data indicate a substantial college dropout rate in the United States, with 40% of college students discontinuing their pursuit of higher education each year (Hanson, 2021; Harris, 2024). Notably, a significant percentage of students leave their higher education endeavors within their first academic year (Craft, 2021; Hanson, 2021; Harris, 2024), representing approximately 30% of U.S. college students (Craft, 2021; Harris, 2024). Academic disqualification is a prevalent reason for undergraduate students' departure, significantly affecting students, as around 28% of college students leave higher education institutions due to their academic standing (Craft, 2021).

### **Academic Recovery**

Recognizing the gravity of these issues, higher educational institutions have launched and implemented academic recovery intervention programs to assist academically struggling college students who are at risk of failing or leaving school (Arcand & Leblanc, 2011; Barouch-Gilbert, 2016; Vanacore & Dahan, 2021). These support programs provide a beacon of hope for many students and offer various strategies to enhance student retention and graduation rates. Academic recovery intervention programs are designed with specific objectives to help students overcome difficulties and return to satisfactory academic standing (Tovar & Simon, 2016; Vanacore &

Dahan, 2021). Assistance efforts may involve individualized or collaborative specialized support to develop students' skills for academic success, tailored to each student's unique needs. While some programs may be voluntary, others may be mandatory, such as preliminary class support, peer learning programs, academic coaching, and mental health services support. As suggested by Burke Leon et al. (2019), this collaborative approach can help academic recovery students learn about themselves and address issues, thereby assisting them in attaining graduation.

### **Problem Statement**

The dropout rate for Hispanic students in four-year colleges is a concerning 40% (Craft, 2021; Harris, 2024). This demographic exhibits lower one-year, four-year, and six-year retention and graduation rates than the broader student population (The University of Arizona, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, n.d.). Reinstating good academic standing poses an uphill battle for students in academic recovery, often accompanied by various obstacles (Vanacore & Dahan, 2021). Research by Tovar and Simon (2006) illustrates the necessity and eagerness of college students for institutional support to aid them in achieving and returning to satisfactory academic standing. The high-risk undergraduate student population presents a set of multiple complex needs that must be addressed through appropriate support systems for both personal and academic success. According to Tovar & Simon (2006), students on probation "will simply give up, perform poorly, or disappear altogether" (p. 559). The absence of such support harms students' academic performance, emotional well-being, and overall satisfaction with their university experience. Burke Leon et al. (2019) and Tovar & Simon (2006) highlight that in the absence of effective interventions, a majority of students on academic probation are likely to drop out, resulting in a substantial increase in grade point average (GPA) deficit from a

satisfactory level and incurring significant financial costs. This emphasizes the crucial role of institutional support in helping students recover academically. This study seeks to gain insight into the experiences of undergraduate students as they navigate their academic recovery.

### **Academic Probation**

Higher education institutions have established academic policies to address students who fail to achieve a specific semester grade or cumulative grade point average (CGPA) (Albert & Wozny, 2022; Vanacore & Dahan, 2021; Wright, 2020). As a universal standard, undergraduates must retain a specific CGPA (Arcand & Leblanc, 2011; Barouch-Gilbert, 2019). Customarily, students who do not maintain a GPA of 2.0 or higher for two consecutive semesters are placed on academic probation (AP). AP is a widespread phenomenon and systematic practice in colleges and universities, a pivotal point in students' academic journey during which they are placed from good standing to unsatisfactory standing for falling below a predetermined threshold (Gonzalez, 2022). The prevalence of AP and intervention in colleges and universities highlights a noteworthy phenomenon that warrants further attention and continuous research.

#### *Beginning with Good Standing*

When undergraduate students embark on pursuing higher education, they start the academic year in good standing (Barouch-Gilbert, 2019). However, they begin their higher education journey without a comprehensive understanding of their institution's probationary policies and the expectations to which they are bound (Robinson, 2015; Wright, 2020). This lack of awareness can leave students caught off guard by the AP policy, resulting in unexpected placement in AP (McPherson, 2019; McPherson & Arbelo Marrero, 2021; Tovar & Simon, 2006). Students often experience feelings of shock and dismay when placed (Frink, 2021).

Consequently, those failing to maintain an acceptable CGPA will receive notification of their dropping academic standing and will be required to focus on enhancing their academic positioning (Albert & Wozny, 2022; Vanacore & Dahan, 2021; Wright, 2020) by improving their performance, grades, and overall standing to continue their enrollment (Arcand & Leblanc, 2011).

### *Impact of Academic Probation on Students*

Academic probation has been linked to a substantial decrease in students' likelihood of retention and graduation in higher education (Burke Leon et al., 2019; Tovar & Simon, 2006). It can be a challenging experience that carries negative and punitive connotations, potentially harming students, including limited course selection, loss of financial aid, and potential dismissal from their institution (Barouch-Gilbert, 2016). Arellano (2021) found that some students contemplated dropping out of school due to their probation status. First-year students, in particular, are at a higher risk of leaving college when placed on academic probation (AP) due to a lack of confidence (Barouch-Gilbert, 2016). Moreover, AP can emotionally harm underperforming students by questioning their abilities, leading to a diminished sense of belonging, shame, embarrassment, doubt, and hopelessness (Arellano, 2021; Barouch-Gilbert, 2016; Rodriguez, 2019), highlighting the urgent need for interventions and support.

The impact of AP on students extends beyond academic implications to include psychological effects that deeply affect students' self-esteem and self-concept (Arellano, 2021; Barouch-Gilbert, 2016; Rodriguez, 2019). For example, Rodriguez (2019) found that students on AP perceived their situation as feelings of being in prison, fostering heightened pressure, disappointment, and restriction as though they "...have an expiration date because of this deficit

approach" (p.109). For example, one student shared, "I think of probation, and I think, like, prison, like, where you get out on probation. That's just—it's a just word association" (Rodriguez, 2019, p. 75). Students' experiences highlight the importance of addressing students' doubts about their academic capabilities and potential for success in higher education.

### **Study Purpose**

This poetic inquiry study aims to explore the experiences of Hispanic undergraduate students at the University of Arizona who have the autonomy to choose their academic recovery. When using the term Hispanic, I refer to individuals with cultural, ancestral, or linguistic ties to Spanish-speaking countries. The University of Arizona is federally recognized as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) by the U.S. Department of Education, as it enrolls 25% or more of total undergraduate Hispanic full-time equivalent students. This reflects the university's commitment to supporting Hispanic student populations.

The study seeks to investigate Hispanic college students' unique and valuable perceptions regarding their relationship with their higher education institution, their experience with academic probation (AP), their chosen academic recovery intervention, and their views on the pushout phenomenon in higher education. Doing so aims to significantly influence the design and implementation of academic recovery interventions to enhance support for Hispanic students in higher education. Students' insights will be crucial for a better understanding of their academic recovery experience and their autonomy in selecting interventions. The study aims to contribute to the existing literature by revealing how Hispanic students describe their lived experiences with AP and intervention selection, and by identifying the factors that either supported or hindered academic recovery.

## **Significance**

As an important population within college and university institutions, academic recovery students should not be overlooked, disregarded, or defined solely by their shortcomings; instead, they should be recognized as an integral part of these institutions, warranting immediate attention and support. As crucial stakeholders, educational institutions are responsible for actively cultivating hope and motivation in undergraduate students on academic probation. The active engagement of institutions in these recovery intervention programs carries the potential to profoundly impact students' lives, empowering them and fostering a sense of worth. Burke Leon et al. (2019) suggest that, with proper support, interventions can guide academic probationary students to learn about themselves, address issues, and ultimately help them achieve graduation.

## **Research Questions**

The primary purpose of this study is to analyze the lived experiences of Hispanic college students regarding their choice of academic recovery interventions, a crucial topic in higher education. To explore this, the study will seek to delve into the choices accessible to these students, their encounters with their chosen academic recovery intervention, and their perceptions of school pushout in higher education. This investigation can potentially influence the design of academic support services and interventions for undergraduate students. The study will aim to answer the following three proposed research questions:

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of Hispanic college students regarding academic recovery?

RQ2: How does autonomy influence the effectiveness of academic recovery interventions for students?

RQ3. How would providing information about academic probation and its implications before starting college impact a student's academic performance and mindset?

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I have provided a background for the defined problem. This study is significant because it aims to explore the experiences of Hispanic undergraduate students on academic probation and what fosters students' personal and academic success. The potential for improved retention rates, which this study could significantly contribute to, offers hope and optimism about student outcomes and retention rates. This study was designed to examine Hispanic undergraduate students' lived experiences with choice in academic recovery interventions and their thoughts on school pushout, with the ultimate goal of enhancing student outcomes.

### **Organization of the Study**

This dissertation is structured into five chapters. Chapter One serves as an introduction to the study, presenting the background, problem statement, purpose statement, research questions, and significance of the research. Chapter Two features a literature review and outlines the theoretical framework. Chapter Three details the methodology used to explore the phenomenon. Chapter Four presents the data analysis and findings, while Chapter Five discusses the implications, limitations, and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The United States has witnessed a significant expansion in access to higher education in recent decades (Kirp, 2019). Nevertheless, despite various initiatives and extensive research focused on retaining college students, the proportion of students who complete their degrees has not increased in the same measure (Delnoij et al., 2020; Kemper et al., 2020; Kirp, 2019; Rosen, 2005; Tinto, 2010). The undergraduate experience presents considerable institutional, personal, financial, and academic challenges for college students as they strive to adjust to the rigorous demands of higher education life. This transitional period can significantly affect students' academic intentions, leading many students not to complete their studies and leave school early for several reasons (Behr et al., 2020; Perchinunno et al., 2021). The factors contributing to student departure rates have become increasingly complex; some students depart by choice, while others may find themselves departing out of necessity or pressure (Bradley & Renzulli, 2011; Luna & Revilla, 2019). This literature review explores research on the pushout of undergraduate students in higher education, the factors contributing to it, strategies to prevent it, and potential directions for future research.

### **Contemplating Higher Education**

Although many high school graduates pursue higher education degrees, not everyone desires or wants to attend college or university (Rosen, 2005). Arguably, students may contemplate the value of pursuing higher education and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of obtaining a degree (Cappelli, 2020; Kelderman & Gardner, 2019). In recent years, undergraduate enrollment rates have declined in institutions across the United States (Ahmed, 2023; Aina et al., 2020; Kelderman & Gardner, 2019; Kirp, 2019). Fewer students are enrolling

in universities and colleges since their peak in 2010 (Adamiec et al., 2022). Some students value and explore alternative pathways such as securing entry-level jobs, enrolling in technical or trade training programs, as well as starting small businesses or becoming entrepreneurs (Ahmed, 2023). Research indicates that earning a college degree can lead to many benefits, including high-skill jobs, higher earnings, more stable employment, social capital, better health, marriages, and retirement (Kirp, 2019; Reber & Smith, 2023). Kirp's (2019) research reveals that individuals who attain a bachelor's degree are expected to earn almost one million more over their lifetimes than those with only a high school diploma. Furthermore, the earnings gap between these two groups continues to widen as more employers prioritize candidates with a university education (Kirp, 2019).

### **Dropout vs. Pushout**

#### *Dropout*

Unfortunately, the language commonly used to talk about students who leave their courses is problematic, as it often stigmatizes individual students as failures for not completing their higher education studies (Tinto, 2010, 2012). The term dropout is commonly used in literature to refer to an individual student's failure to complete their bachelor's program, regardless of the reasons or conditions that led to their departure (Aina et al., 2022; Tinto, 2010, 2012). Dropout has a negative connotation and is considered a deficit term that implies blame on the individual student and failure to measure up without regard for their character or abilities (Tinto, 2012). It is important to note that the term dropout overlooks external factors that may have contributed to a student's outcomes of their departure, such as exiting, leaving, withdrawal, and pushout (Mireles-Rios et al., 2020; Tinto, 2012).

Tinto (2010) points out that dropout is among education's most frequently misused terms. Moreover, much of the literature on student dropouts is commonly filled with stereotypes that unfairly portray students as lacking the essential attributes required to finish college (Tinto, 2010, 2012). Tinto (2012) emphasizes the need for a more comprehensive understanding, which recognizes that the reasons behind a student's departure from a higher education institution cannot always be individually attributed to their inability to fulfill the institution's social and academic demands. Dropout can signify a deficiency of the college and university itself. Therefore, it is not just essential but our responsibility to consider the language used when attributing a student's inability to complete their education solely to their actions, attitudes, and behaviors (Garcia et al., 2022; Mireles-Rios et al., 2020; Tinto, 2010). This flawed perspective reinforces the notion that student dropouts are fundamentally different from other students.

### *Pushout*

Rather than using the term dropout, some scholars prefer to use 'pushout' to emphasize school policies and practices that prevent students from completing their education. This concept, supported by researchers such as Bradley & Renzulli (2011), Fine (1991), Garcia et al. (2022), Luna & Revilla (2019), Mireles-Rios et al. (2020), M.W. Morris (2016), Snapp et al. (2022), Stearns & Glennie (2006) and Tuck (2011, 2012), is more than just a personal decision. It results from various factors and pressures exerted on students within the school environment. For instance, a student might be pushed out due to financial constraints, lack of academic support, or discrimination. As one of Tuck's (2011) students stated, "...You just get no support. Yes, ultimately, you are pushed out. If by pushed out, you mean pushed out by more than just the school" (p.818). Institutions that push out students can be found in rural, suburban, and urban

areas, ranging from small to medium to large (Tuck, 2012). The concept of pushout sheds light on why schools dismiss students and scrutinize the underlying causes behind these behaviors. It provides profound insight into the impact of the institutional education system on individual students' lives (Garcia et al., 2022; Mireles-Rios et al., 2020).

### **Pushout Phenomenon in Higher Education**

Simply enrolling in college does not guarantee graduation. Unlike secondary education, higher education is not a mandated requirement but a voluntary choice. Higher education poses unique challenges when assessing its impact on students' personal and professional trajectories (Cappelli, 2020). The issue of student non-completion and pushout has been a persistent concern for educational institutions across all levels, particularly in higher education (Aina et al., 2020; Delnoij et al., 2020; Tinto, 2010). The problem of undergraduate students leaving school before completing their studies is complex, with no single primary cause or factor (Goldberg et al., 2019; Perchinunno et al., 2021).

Moreover, it is important to note that regardless of whether students ultimately complete their degree and graduate, they are still responsible for paying the cost of a college education (Cappelli, 2020). These factors highlight the need for careful consideration and planning when pursuing higher education. Given its widespread occurrence, it is imperative to understand the phenomenon of pushout in higher education as it is not an isolated event but rather a process that occurs and unfolds over time (Behr et al., 2020). The pushout process in higher education can start with a student feeling disconnected from the academic environment, leading to a lack of engagement and motivation. This can then escalate to academic struggles, financial difficulties, or personal issues, ultimately resulting in the student leaving the institution. Colleges and

universities have recently grappled with escalating non-completion rates (Cappelli, 2020; Delnoij et al., 2020; Kirp, 2019; Rosen, 2005).

To put it in perspective, “more students leave their college or university before degree completion than stay” (Tinto, 2010, p.1). Public university bachelor's degree completion rates have plummeted below 50%, and for-profit institutions are even lower, at 25% (Kirp, 2019), resulting in a loss of time, talent, and retention for institutions and students. This necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the complex nature of this issue and proactive measures to enhance higher education's overall effectiveness. Kirp (2019) suggests that college students require immense luck to succeed academically. Pushouts can transpire at any juncture of a student's academic trajectory, often resulting from a decision-making process considering many factors. Understanding the conditions and circumstances contributing to pushouts is crucial to addressing the obstacles that hinder undergraduate students from completing their higher education and providing them with the necessary support. Support services, such as academic advising, mental health counseling, and financial aid, play a crucial role in this process, helping students navigate the challenges of higher education and reducing the likelihood of pushout.

### **Existing Studies on School Pushout**

Much initial research on school pushout has focused on high schools and their students. Several qualitative and case studies have explored how schools may create an environment that leads to student pushout and exclusion (Lee & Burkam, 2003). The high school pushout literature has focused on Black students (Bradley & Renzulli, 2011; Fine, 1991; Garcia et al., 2022; Mireles-Rios et al., 2020; M.W. Morris, 2016), general students (Boylan & Renzulli, 2017; 2005, Walter-Bailey), international students (Cardoso & Verner, 2006; Chinkondenji, 2022;

Ergün et al., 2017; E. Morris, 2018), Latino/a students (Bradley & Renzulli, 2011; Fine, 1991; Garcia et al., 2022; Haro, 2020; Luke, 2014; Luna & Revilla, 2019; Mireles-Rios et al., 2020; Rodriguez, 2013), LGBT students (Snapp et al., 2022), LGBTQ (Green, 2017), and Urban youth (Tuck, 2011, 2012) and women of color (Annamma, 2018). However, a notable gap exists in research on the pushout of undergraduate students in higher education. There have been few studies exploring this phenomenon within colleges and universities. Cabbell's (2021) study significantly contributes to school pushout and higher education research, particularly in its focus on the impact of school pushout on Black male students in higher education. The study aimed to gain insights into how successful Black males perceived their success and how educators could support such experiences to encourage young Black men to complete their degrees.

### *Considering Pushout Factors*

When considering pushout factors, it is crucial to recognize the distinct difference in the literature between voluntary and involuntary withdrawal from higher education institutions. Individual factors alone are not the sole determinants of a student's likelihood of leaving school (Lee & Burkam, 2003; Luna & Revilla, 2019). The reasons for students leaving school are multifaceted, encompassing various academic and non-academic factors, and these factors are typically not attributable to a single cause (Behr et al., 2020; Goldberg et al., 2019; Luna & Revilla, 2019; Tuck, 2012). Thus, it becomes imperative to investigate the underlying reasons why undergraduate students leave school and to consider the systemic and environmental factors that contribute to this phenomenon (Kirp, 2019). Despite ongoing efforts to reduce students' departure rates from school, more research is urgently needed to understand the causes fully. It is

essential to proactively identify and evaluate the underlying causes of this issue (Behr et al., 2020). Our role as educators, policymakers, and researchers is crucial in this process

### *Impact of Pushout on Students*

As Luna and Revilla (2019) and Kirp (2019) point out, "Students do not fail school; schools fail students" (p. 162), and "this is on us" (p. 2). Mireles-Rios et al. (2020) found that students expressed concerns over their schools not providing enough support, and that many students who left school believed they could have finished. Many undergraduate students who enroll at universities in the United States do not complete their degree programs, with approximately one-third not obtaining a degree, as indicated by research by Aina et al. (2020). These findings portray a concerning picture of the growing obstacles that higher education students face as they navigate through their academic pursuits at the undergraduate level (Aina et al., 2020). However, this also presents a significant opportunity for improvement. According to Kirp (2019), the phenomenon of students experiencing pushout from school can result in... "the feeling that they're to blame for having failed, that they're not 'college material,' [which] affects not just themselves but those close to them as well" (p.3).

## **Causes of Pushout**

### *Institutional Factors*

Institutional challenges can cause college pushouts. Institutions often fail to consider the complex lives of their students, focusing solely on learning and development, as Isserles (2021) notes. Several undergraduate students begin their higher education journey without being fully informed about their institution's policies and expectations, as Robinson (2015) and Wright (2020) noted. Schools often implement practices that create circumstances that lead students to

question whether to leave school, particularly those with social and academic risk factors. Studies have revealed that some students attribute their decision to leave school to issues within the institutional environment rather than external factors (Bradley & Renzulli, 2011; Luna & Revilla, 2019). According to Bradley and Renzulli's (2011) research, internal issues within a school can significantly affect students' motivation to continue their education, potentially leading to their pushout from higher education. It is crucial to consider the perspectives of students, educators, administrators, and policymakers in addressing these challenges.

Several compelling reasons students may discontinue their education include disrespectful treatment from educators and administrators, arbitrary rules and regulations, and high-stakes testing (Tuck, 2012). It is well documented that educational institutions lacking adequate resources often resort to strict disciplinary policies or narrow their instructional scope (Tuck, 2012). These findings challenge the conventional approach of attributing the blame for dropping out to individual students and instead highlight the need to address systemic issues within schools (Lee & Burkam, 2003). Powell (2014) found that one of the many reasons college students leave higher education institutions in the United States is that the system is inherently exclusive: "the value of undergraduate degrees is determined entirely by how few people obtain them..." (p. 96). Consequently, institutions are now engaging in challenging discussions about shifting their focus from growth to achieving higher completion rates, as reported by Kelderman and Gardner (2019). This entails reducing enrollment numbers and focusing on attracting students who are more likely to complete their degrees.

Hunt et al. (2012) identified various institutional issues affecting first-generation and non-first-generation students. These school departing issues included challenges associated with

academic advising, quality of instruction, student support, faculty relationships, campus size, and undergraduate size. Such challenges can have a detrimental effect on students' academic potential and performance (Hunt et al., 2012). Furthermore, Hunt et al. (2012) found that senior college students' primary concern was faculty members' perception; seniors felt that faculty members did not care about their problems. 12% of senior respondents reported that faculty members did not show enough concern for their academic and personal issues. Cabbell's (2021) study found that participants observed and experienced various forms of institutional racism in the form of microaggressions. Institutionally, this is especially concerning, given that the learning environment is intended to foster college students' growth and development (Cabbell, 2021). Such forms of racism can lead to considerable damage to students' self-worth and respect, which can ultimately undermine the integrity of the learning environment.

### *Personal Factors*

Personal challenges can cause college pushouts. A lack of preparedness for higher education is a common issue that often indicates this struggle (Aina et al., 2020; Kirp, 2019). The transition to college can be difficult for many students, leading to many departures among first-year students (Tinto, 2010). Goldberg et al. (2019) shed light on the harsh realities that students encounter. Their research cited bullying and verbal, physical, or sexual harassment by students, faculty, and staff, which, tragically, has led to students' premature departure from school. Furthermore, students may not have a comprehensive understanding of their academic program, leading to a lack of clarity about the complexity and effort required to succeed in subjects, the effort needed to pass exams, and how to interact effectively with the academic system.

### *Financial Factors*

Financial challenges can lead to student pushout from higher education. Consequently, individual students are becoming more selective in their choice of educational institutions, carefully evaluating colleges and universities based on various parameters before making a final decision (Kelderman & Gardner, 2019). As a result, prospective students are becoming more conscious of the financial investment needed for higher education, with rising tuition fees, charges, and the burden of student loans increasing this awareness (Cappelli, 2020; Kelderman & Gardner, 2019; Kirp, 2019). Pursuing higher education demands considerable financial resources and time commitment, which can be complex and challenging.

Due to limited awareness, students need help evaluating the expected costs and benefits of investing in their education and require additional information (Aina et al., 2022). Students face significant obstacles in balancing and completing their education as they strive for economic survival, particularly those financially responsible for themselves and their families (Luna & Revilla, 2019). The demands of family and work can limit students' ability and time to participate fully in academic activities. Furthermore, the steady increase in higher education costs places a heavy financial burden on students and their families. It is crucial to understand that this strain can deter students' academic progress, as poor grades can lower the financial benefits of staying in school (Stinebrickner et al., 2014).

Institutions must comply with specific financial guidelines to receive federal financial aid. It is worth noting that many universities have established policies and practices to ensure compliance (Gonzalez, 2022). As it stands, over one-third of undergraduate college students receive financial aid provided through the federal Pell Grant program policy (Gonzalez, 2022). Institutions with students receiving Pell Grants must abide by the satisfactory academic progress

(SAP) policy. Without financial assistance, students may face the daunting task of balancing employment alongside their academic workload, which can be daunting (Kirp, 2019).

Managing finances can be frightening for students who cannot fully pay off their debt charges. Ensuring prompt payment of college students' institutional account balances is crucial. If students do not pay their outstanding balance by the due date, their account is past due. Past-due accounts result in withholding university services and impact students in several ways, such as monthly charges, holds, collections, and tax refunds (The University of Arizona, n.d.-c). Academic institutions employ these measures to remind students of their past-due obligations. It is imperative to note that credit bureaus may be notified of a student's unpaid institutional debt. Monthly past-due balance charges may also be imposed until the account is fully settled. Services can only be reinstated, and holds automatically removed from the student's account upon full payment of the outstanding balance (The University of Arizona, n.d.-c).

Furthermore, account holds can have long-term implications for students' higher education journey. They can prevent students from registering for courses and withholding their grades, transcripts, and diplomas (The University of Arizona, n.d.-c). Consequently, if a student has a hold, they may be restricted from enrolling in classes; if they are not in classes, they are not registered for credits. If a student is not enrolled and cannot maintain an active status as an undergraduate, they will lose their eligibility to live on campus. The institution reserves the right to terminate the undergraduate housing license agreement, resulting in a student's removal from university housing (The University of Arizona, 2023). As a result, students must move out of their assigned residence. Moreover, past-due debt may be referred to a collection agency if a student is no longer enrolled. The student account holder will be responsible for collection costs

and legal fees, which could increase the account balance by up to 30% (The University of Arizona, n.d.-c).

### *Academic Factors*

Academic challenges can cause college pushouts. In addition, many college professors express their frustration with the unpreparedness of incoming high school graduates (Kirp, 2019; Rosen, 2005). Some professors who maintain high academic standards expect a certain percentage of students to "wash out" and fail (Rosen, 2005, p. 60). Maintaining rigorous academic standards is a keystone of higher education for these professors. They believe that academic freedom encompasses the right to uphold standards that are befitting of an institution of higher learning (Rosen, 2005). Maintaining specific academic standards in higher education is paramount for a student's retention and continued good standing (Arcand & Leblanc, 2011; Barouch-Gilbert, 2016; Gonzalez, 2022). Research has consistently shown a strong correlation between a student's grades and their likelihood of leaving school (Stinebrickner et al., 2014). Grades can impact a student's decision to leave their institution, as poor grades can make the school experience less enjoyable (Stinebrickner et al., 2014).

Students who perform poorly may want to stay in school but could be pushed out by force due to grade progression cutoffs (Stinebrickner et al., 2014). Higher education institutions have implemented academic dismissal policies to ensure educational quality (Gonzalez, 2022). If a student's grades or grade point average falls below a certain threshold, the student can be placed on academic probation (AP) (Albert & Wozny, 2022; Vanacore & Dahan, 2021; Wright, 2020). Consequently, students who fail to meet the academic requirements of their respective institutions face academic dismissal, accounting for 25% of all departures (Barouch-Gilbert,

2016). According to Gonzalez (2022), students on AP are more susceptible to being pushed out of higher education through academic dismissal or early withdrawal. Academic dismissal is typically a result of academic disqualification, a separation action between the student and the institution due to the student's continuous poor academic performance (Barouch-Gilbert, 2019; Gonzalez, 2022). Pushout through academic dismissal status prevents students on probation from incurring additional time and debt in repeat enrollment (Bowman & Jang, 2022).

### **Effects of Pushout**

#### *Individual Consequences for the Students*

The effect of pushout from higher education has severe consequences for students and institutions. Regardless of students' individual showcased efforts, they may face potential academic dismissal, disenrollment, disqualification, involuntary withdrawal, pushout, release, and separation (Albert & Wozny, 2022; Barouch-Gilbert, 2019; Tovar & Simon, 2006). Additionally, leaving an institution can lead to various consequences, such as loss of tuition, mandatory fees, room and board, financial aid, student loan repayment, a declining momentum, and difficulties transferring to another institution (Hunt et al., 2012). Institutional academic separation can be permanent; however, in some cases, readmission policies may allow students to return to their institution later or enroll in another institution after a specific period. Factors influencing the readmission process include GPA (Grade Point Average), deficit points, institutional classes, grades, separation timelines, and readmission outcomes (Gonzalez, 2022).

#### *Best Practices for Institutions to Address Pushout*

M.W. Morris (2016) recommends that colleges avoid punitive measures and exclusion and instead work with students to create frameworks that promote learning and inclusivity. The

impact of students' experiences on their academic persistence is significant. As noted by Goldberg et al. (2019), "Positive experiences reinforce persistence and negative experiences undermine it, thus reducing or enhancing the likelihood of leaving college" (p.382). By investing in undergraduate students' well-being and providing proper support, colleges can ensure students' continued enrollment and completion of their higher education (Aina et al., 2022; Baker & Robnett, 2012). Aina et al. (2022) argue that there should be no pushouts in an ideal world of perfect information and complete rationality.

According to Hunt et al. (2012), students need a sense of belonging, financial support, mentorship, and knowledge of available campus resources to succeed. Designing personalized approaches in partnership with students is recommended to meet their unique needs and position them for academic and financial success (Morris, 2016). However, it is not enough to wait for students to seek help. Implementing early detection programs for student pushout and timely intervention strategies is crucial to ensuring academic success. Students may face personal challenges that impede their academic progress despite being responsible for their actions. Therefore, colleges and universities implementing and providing proper guidance and support throughout a student's educational journey are not just imperative; it is urgent to address such issues (Luna & Revilla, 2019).

### **Investigating Academic Recovery Interventions**

The research conducted by Arellano (2021), Frink (2021), McPherson (2019), McPherson & Arbelo Marrero (2021), Renteria (2020), and Rodriguez (2019) collectively acknowledges the potential of supportive interventions in improving students' persistence and success in their academic pursuits. Interventions have the potential to impact students'

educational trajectories significantly and ignite hope for a more promising future. It was widely recommended that students actively engage in mandatory probationary intervention programs or courses. Although specific interventions were not evaluated in the studies, the studies suggested various engagement options that can contribute to student success and support, such as institutional actors, academic coaching, success coaches, student peer mentors, tutoring, programs, and workshops.

The lack of standardized support for students on academic recovery is a significant issue that requires immediate attention in higher education institutions. Many campuses have varying levels of involvement with these students. Not all institutions have established programs and dedicated intervention structures to help students move from AP to good academic standing (Rodriguez, 2019). When placed on AP, students often feel disoriented and require assistance in comprehending its implications (McPherson, 2019; Rodriguez, 2019). It is crucial to note that many educational institutions that attempt to address AP through interventions do not fully understand the target population, requiring immediate attention (Rodriguez, 2019). Supportive interventions are necessary to enhance academic recovery students' self-efficacy and increase their college persistence and success, particularly among underrepresented minorities (Arellano, 2021; McPherson & Arbelo Marrero, 2021; Renteria, 2020).

## **Intervention Programs**

### *Preliminary Class Support*

Recovery students can experience academic intervention assistance through a course class, varying in credit hours, curriculum, teaching, and requirements (Burke Leon et al., 2019; Robinson & Shi, 2022). Traditionally, college success courses are voluntary, credit-bearing for

undergraduate students on academic recovery (Hanger et al., 2011), while some may be mandatory (Vanacore & Dahan, 2021). Class course names vary from Academic Recovery Course, Bounce Back Retention Program (BBRP), EDUC-X158, and Portals to Academic Success (PASS), to name a few. College success courses cover foundational aspects of academic success across several topics, including soft skills, campus resources, policies, and engagement with staff (Vanacore & Dahan, 2021). They are designed to increase retention and rates for academic recovery students to reduce student education departures (Burke Leon et al., 2019; Robinson & Shi, 2022). However, some research has found that students who are enrolled in class support do not experience a significant change in their GPA during the following semester. However, they show a higher retention percentage than academic recovery students not enrolled in the course. (Vanacore & Dahan, 2021).

Research shows that supporting classes improve educational outcomes by strengthening students' academic skills and enhancing an established sense of campus community (Burke Leon et al., 2019; Robinson & Shi, 2022). For instance, Robinson and Shi (2022) found that academic recovery courses help students feel worthy and engaged in their institutions' committed efforts to help them succeed toward graduation. Additionally, well-designed courses encourage academic behaviors, learning strategies, perseverance, mindset, and social skills. Academic recovery students are more likely to increase their GPAs, lift their academic probation status, and stay retained (Burke Leon et al., 2019; Hanger et al., 2011). Students can develop noncognitive factors such as an optimistic attribution perspective, believing they can achieve success by transforming their efforts, shame resilience, academic identity (Robinson & Shi, 2022), and motivation for improving efforts and longstanding goals (Burke Leon et al., 2019; Robinson &

Shi, 2022). Furthermore, recovery intervention course programs can positively impact post-course academic performance for undergraduates (Robinson & Shi, 2022).

Burke Leon et al. (2019) desire to see research go beyond a short-term focus on retention to understand the full impact of the academic recovery programming design with a long-term evaluation focus on graduation. Robinson and Shi (2022) argue that college intervention courses could benefit from analyzing attendance requirements, declining attendance records, ways to maintain student engagement, and interviewing consistently absent students. Hanger et al. (2011) see a need to further investigate low academic retention levels at universities. The researchers suggest that exit interviews can assist with examining the academic recovery of students who do not complete course programs and those who choose not to participate.

### *Academic Coaching*

Academic coaching can be an intervention supported by institutions for academic recovery students. Though relatively new, it has emerged as an effective tool to enhance student retention and success in higher education (Alzen et al., 2021). Academic coaching is when students have a committed institutional agent who promotes their sense of belonging, develops academic skills, and strategically addresses students' challenges (Vanacore & Dahan, 2021). Student meetings are tailored as one-on-one to understand experiences within and outside of school by fostering rapport and trust (Arcand & Leblanc, 2011; Capstick et al., 2019). Academic coaches cater to academic recovery students' lived experiences and encourage the development of social and educational abilities, institutional context, forming goals, and knowledge of using campus resources. Strategies involve opportunities for feedback and progress reflection (Vanacore & Dahan, 2021). The practice of individual coaching meetings helps academic

recovery students return to satisfactory academic standing, improve their GPA, and improve retention (Alzen et al., 2021; Capstick et al., 2019).

The recent development of academic coaching as a student support program has received limited attention in the research literature. Few studies have focused on individual academic coaching practices and their corresponding (Capstick et al., 2019; Vanacore & Dahan, 2021). Arcand and Leblanc (2011) examined five undergraduate recovery students in-depth, gaining insight into their lives through academic coaching (companioning). They found that undergraduate recovery students who received support from a professional academic coach benefited from the program's structured experience, encompassing students' needs. The recovery students gained self-confidence and an understanding of the educational environment. Vanacore and Dahan (2021) suggest that exploring and expanding academic coaching for recovery students and investigating students' experiences at other institutions through diverse programs (e.g., education, engineering, education, and medicine) in large as well as small areas would be valuable.

### *Mental Health Services*

As an academic recovery intervention program, institutions may offer mental health services to undergraduates. Counseling is a resource that connects individuals with a trained mental health professional to address their needs and psychological struggles (Yang et al., 2013). Yang et al. (2013) found that understanding and addressing college students' psychological problems is essential to their academic achievement. Professional counselors in college settings are trained and informed of students' psychological dynamics, administrative policies, and resources available to recovery students for academic success. Mandatory counseling

intervention sessions should be considered to assist students in academic recovery. Counseling sessions can aid academic recovery students in overcoming their academic failures by developing a working alliance with a counselor who can address fundamental struggles impacting academic underachievement.

Vanacore and Dahan (2021) found that few studies focus on counseling and its outcomes regarding the academic recovery of students. Tovar & Simon (2006) argue that highly skilled college counselors need to be familiar with academic recovery students' complex issues and requirements for their personal and academic success. Yang et al. (2013) found that academic probationary university students gradually increased their GPAs significantly over semesters by participating in five or more mandatory counseling sessions compared to students who did not receive mandatory counseling sessions. Future studies are needed to implement comparable programs in different college institutions and to replicate the present research. Additionally, further student participants are necessary to confirm the current findings with two different participant groups, one without a mandatory counseling program intervention and the other with the intervention (Yang et al., 2013).

Consequently, it is essential to take a comprehensive approach and implement best practices to address the issue of higher education pushouts. Despite challenging circumstances, college and university undergraduates can overcome this obstacle, demonstrating resilience and the potential for success. Students' ability to succeed against the odds inspires change within our academic institutions. The insights and recommendations of undergraduates are of immense value and highlight the importance of considering their experiences. Recognizing that numbers alone provide an incomplete narrative, only revealing part of the overall story is crucial.

Cabbell's (2021) study delves into the themes contributing to students' success by examining the counter-narratives of participants and their lived experiences. Kirp (2019) underscores the importance of narrative through compelling stories involving campus leaders, faculty, and students. A comprehensive approach requires consideration of the perspectives of both undergraduate students and staff. Storytelling has emerged as a powerful tool for engaging students in education, enabling them to overcome challenges, achieve academic excellence, and foster positive community relationships (Mireles-Rios et al., 2020).

## **Conclusion**

Reducing school pushouts is imperative to providing undergraduate students with the opportunity to excel in higher education. Kirp (2019) notes, "Universities are not powerless to change this situation, but many of them take a hands-off approach" (Kirp, 2019, p.5). Higher education can offer numerous benefits to individual students and their communities. Conscious efforts can significantly influence higher education graduation rates (Kirp, 2019). Educational institutions are responsible for providing comprehensive support to every capable and willing student, as Powell (2014) emphasized. Institutional, personal, financial, and academic pushout factors must be acknowledged, and prevention strategies should be developed to improve the educational outcomes of undergraduate students. Personalized support and learning from students' experiences can uncover their abilities, help them overcome challenges, and support their academic pursuits. Therefore, all stakeholders, including college and university administrators, educators, and policymakers, must collaborate to enhance college completion rates, including improving student support systems, academic rigor, and financial burdens. Collaboration among stakeholders is not just beneficial; it is essential to providing each student

with the support and resources needed to remain in higher education and reach their full potential. Lastly, valuing all college students equally, with the same enthusiasm as those who continue to pursue higher education, is necessary.

### **Theoretical/Conceptual Framework(s)**

#### *Self-Determination Theory*

The topic of academic probation (AP) in higher education is complex and has been studied from various perspectives. Each of these perspectives offers unique insights and contributes to our understanding of the many aspects of AP. Theories surrounding AP provide valuable conceptual tools for understanding the complex processes associated with academic recovery and for developing ways to assist students in navigating academic challenges. However, the practical application of these theories relies heavily upon the commitment and action of higher educational institutions. Institutions play a crucial role in implementing these theories and supporting students. One theory that stands out in this context is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which emphasizes the role of student choice in the learning process.

Scholars like Blankenship (2021), Moore (2023), Mosier (2018), and Zak-Moskal & Garrison (2020) have contributed significantly to the exploration and understanding of SDT and its relevance to academic probation. Their work highlights the importance of autonomy, control, and motivation as primary factors in student motivation. By applying SDT to academic probation, these scholars have shown that it can lead to interventions that foster student autonomy and motivation, thereby improving academic outcomes. SDT is a human development theory that promotes individual flourishing through empowering individuals and cultivating self-confidence (Blankenship, 2021). According to SDT, individuals possess an innate desire to act

with autonomy. The theory underscores the pivotal role of motivation and behavior in self-regulation, goal achievement, and the learning process (Mosier, 2018). Student motivation, a multifaceted phenomenon, is influenced by various factors, with autonomy, control, and motivation identified as principal determinants (Mosier, 2018).

While Self-Determination Theory (SDT) offers valuable insights into the internal processes that influence student motivation, it gives limited attention to the institutional forces that shape these experiences. Students do not cultivate autonomy, competence, or relatedness in isolation; these psychological needs are significantly affected by the quality of advising, course offerings, campus climate, financial stress, and the overarching design of academic policies. Recognizing the impact of these institutional factors can inspire the audience to consider broader systemic changes that support student motivation and well-being. This emphasis risks placing an undue burden on students to exhibit resilience, grit, or self-regulation, even when institutional practices may undermine those very capacities. A more holistic application of SDT would acknowledge that institutions, not just students, share responsibility in fostering environments that promote autonomy, facilitate competence development, and encourage meaningful relationships. When institutions take responsibility for shaping these conditions through thoughtful policy, adequate resources, and intentional community-building, students' flourishing becomes a shared effort rather than an individual challenge.

### *Student Choices*

Individual college students navigate and exercise their agency differently within constrained structures. It is essential to pay attention to students' choices within higher education (Nielsen & Ulriksen, 2024). Choices play a vital role in shaping students' identities, reflecting

how they navigate their educational choices. The higher education landscape offers many options, which can be challenging for college students to navigate. It is crucial to understand this complexity because students' choices significantly impact their academic qualifications and opportunities (Nielsen & Ulriksen, 2024). A key finding highlighting the importance of this research is the significant role of future considerations in decision-making. Many students face uncertainty when pursuing their desired futures, profoundly influencing their decisions and emotional responses. Programs shape students' aspirations and educational and career decisions, with everyday practices and structures fostering a culture that emphasizes research and ongoing processes, influenced by their social context (Nielsen, 2021).

### *Institutions Responsibility*

Choosing an educational institution is a significant commitment, not only for the college student but also for the institution itself (McNabb, 2017). The ethical responsibility of colleges and universities extends beyond academic standards and resources. It involves actively collaborating with undergraduate students, forming partnerships to shape their educational journey, and ultimately leading to graduation (Bateman, 2022). Educational institutions are not passive entities; they are active participants in their students' success. They are tasked with supporting students who may not yet meet the institution's academic standards and effectively encouraging them to use the institution's support and resources. The existing literature stresses the active role of higher education institutions in collaborating with students to establish frameworks that foster learning and inclusivity (Morris, 2016). Equally important are students' perceptions of their college experiences, which significantly influence their decision to continue

or discontinue their education, making higher education institutions critical areas for research and intervention (Bateman, 2022).

### *Student Autonomy*

In contrast to high school settings, college environments are designed to foster greater autonomy, a factor that significantly influences students' well-being. Autonomy support, in this context, is about students feeling that their choices and decisions are respected and valued within the educational setting. This support not only provides encouragement and hope for their future but also strengthens their sense of belonging, engagement, and self-efficacy, all of which are vital for their academic and personal success (Zak-Moskal & Garrison, 2020). This underscores the importance of recognizing that the conditions that promote autonomy must be consistently nurtured for college students. Students can exhibit vastly different forms of self-regulation based on their personal experiences, motivation, and the influence of others (Mosier, 2018). Higher education institutions play a crucial role in enhancing autonomy support by creating environments that offer a variety of choices, both within and beyond the academic realm. However, it is imperative to acknowledge the need for change by thoughtfully assessing programs and initiatives that restrict choices and diminish experienced autonomy (Zak-Moskal & Garrison, 2020). Students are more likely to be resilient if they understand the reasons behind their actions. This understanding can also foster a curiosity for learning and a lifelong engagement in education (Mosier, 2018).

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

### Research Design

This qualitative participant study employs poetic inquiry to examine the voices and lived experiences of Hispanic undergraduate students on academic probation and their engagement in academic recovery interventions at the University of Arizona. Participant feedback is essential in qualitative research because it offers meaningful insight into students' truths, lived realities, and emotional worlds. This study also draws on a methodology that supports the representation of findings in innovative, accessible, and alternative formats (Leavy, 2020), inspiring readers' curiosity and openness to explore new ways of understanding and sharing knowledge. Poetic inquiry functions both as an analytic tool and as a representational form, capturing the emotional depth, cadence, and nuance of participants' narratives, dimensions that traditional academic writing often overlooks (Leavy, 2020). Through this approach, the study centers students' voices and illuminates their experiences navigating academic probation and recovery processes.

Central to poetic inquiry is its emphasis on emotional expression and its commitment to honoring participants' language, speech patterns, and repetitions as meaningful and valid contributions to the research process (Leavy, 2020). By cultivating an inclusive space for students' voices, poetic inquiry encourages participants to share their stories, make meaning, and engage in deep reflection about their educational journeys. This methodological stance urges educators, administrators, and researchers to listen more attentively to students' emotional landscapes and to advocate more intentionally for their needs, insights, and practices. In doing so, poetic inquiry fosters a more compassionate, nuanced, and human-centered understanding of student experiences.

## Setting

The research was conducted at the University of Arizona, a state institution situated in the southwest region of Tucson, Arizona. This public land-grant university had approximately 45,025 undergraduate students enrolled in Fall 2024 (The University of Arizona, n.d.-b). The university holds the distinction of being a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI), with approximately 30.2% of its undergraduate student body identifying as Hispanic or Latinx (The University of Arizona, n.d.-b). With over 150 degree programs, the university offers students a wide range of opportunities to explore their interests and passions. The university places a strong emphasis on recognizing and supporting each student's unique journey.

Furthermore, the University of Arizona is dedicated to fostering student success through its Student Success (SS) program, formerly known as the Student Success & Retention Innovation (SSRI) program before Fall 2025. This program aims to support the success of all undergraduates and improve retention and graduation rates by utilizing strength-based practices and assessments. Academic eligibility for undergraduate students is outlined in the Undergraduate Academic Eligibility Policy (The University of Arizona, n.d.-g), which helps students stay on track for degree completion. Academic eligibility is assessed for all undergraduate students who complete graded units at the end of each Fall and Spring semester. After each Fall and Spring semester, students on Academic Warning (AW) or Academic Probation (AP) receive an email notification regarding their academic standing, provided they have been enrolled in courses and received grades for the term. In this email, students on AW or AP are informed of their next steps, which include completing an SSRI Academic Eligibility Self-Assessment and connecting with their academic advisor. The SSRI self-assessment helps

students identify the most appropriate intervention to support them. This process directs students to the appropriate office for an initial intake, ensuring they have access to the necessary resources and can develop a personalized success plan tailored to their individual needs.

Notably, undergraduate students on Academic Probation (AP) are encouraged to work with campus partners to actively engage in their intervention program, which is developed in collaboration with the institution for the student during their probationary semester. These specific interventions, tailored to each student's needs, may involve building academic skills, strength coaching, mental health support, peer mentoring, assistance with basic needs, or major exploration. Available intervention programs include THINK TANK, Counseling and Psych Services (CAPS), Thrive Center, and the A Center. The primary goal of these interventions is to help students achieve a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or higher by the end of the semester or term. Successfully attaining this GPA allows students to return to good standing and regain eligibility. Students who begin a semester or term with an AP status and earn a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or higher by the end of the semester or term will be restored to Eligible status.

Prior to initiating and conducting the study, approval was obtained from the University of Arizona Institutional Review Board (IRB). This process involved submitting a detailed research proposal outlining the study's objectives, methodology, and potential risks to participants for review and approval (See Appendix E). Additionally, permission was obtained from the University of Arizona's Student Success Retention and Innovation (SSRI) unit, now referred to as Student Success (SS) as of Fall 2025, to engage with their intervention units. Once consent was granted, the goal was to actively engage with these units to identify potential participants by

distributing my recruitment email (See Appendix A) and recruitment flyer (See Appendix B) to potential participants within the targeted sample frame as part of the study.

## Participants

For this study, all participants were recruited exclusively from the University of Arizona. The study specifically sought to involve undergraduate students who self-identify as Hispanic, were presently on academic probation with a GPA below 2.0 and were participating in an academic recovery intervention during the Spring 2025 semester. The sample comprises seven undergraduates ( $N = 7$ ), whose ages ranged from 19 to 36, spanning from first-year students to seniors. One participant was male and six were female. The students' GPAs range from 1.2 to 1.92, encompassing six different college programs across three campuses (see Table 1).

**Table 1.**

*Understanding Academic Profiles of Participants on Academic Probation: Spring 2025*

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Year	GPA	1st Gen	Program	Campus	Intervention
Carlo	M	24	1st Year	1.2	Yes	College of Education	Main	Advisor
Daisy	F	36	Senior	1.444	Yes	College of Soc & Behav Sci	AZ Online	THINK TANK
Iris	F	23	Junior	1.429	Yes	College of Science	Main	CAPS
Kassandra	F	20	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	1.538	No	College of Ag & Life Sci	Main	THINK TANK
Lily	F	34	Junior	1.333	Yes	College of Soc & Behav Sci	Distance	THINK TANK
Marigold	F	20	1st Year	1.774	No	A-Center	Main	THINK TANK
Stella	F	19	1st Year	1.927	No	College of Humanities	Main	THINK TANK

*Note.* first-year students = freshman, CAPS = Campus Health's Counseling & Psych Services (CAPS),

## Recruitment

The recruitment process began by obtaining permission from the Student Success, Retention, and Innovation (SSRI) unit, which is now known as Student Success (SS). This approval allowed me to contact intervention units that could help distribute my recruitment email

(see Appendix A) and share my flyer (see Appendix B) with potential participants. I employed a combination of purposeful and snowball sampling methods to recruit participants. Interested student participants who met the criteria were encouraged to contact the researcher using the provided contact information. Before participating in online interviews, willing participants were required to provide informed consent by reviewing, signing, and returning a consent document (see Appendix C) via Qualtrics (Qualtrics XM // The Leading Experience Management Software, 2025). This process allowed for proper tracking and was communicated to participants through their school email. The consent forms collected through Qualtrics were securely stored on a password-protected computer and a password-protected UA Box folder, ensuring both accessibility to the researcher and privacy and security for the participants.

### **Data Management**

In conducting the research study, careful and protective measures were implemented to safeguard the confidentiality and identities of the participants. All electronic files related to this project, including interviews, audio and visual recordings, transcripts, advisement reports, recruitment materials, consent forms, and other confidential research materials, were securely stored on a password-protected computer for data security and never disclosed during the study. Additionally, all electronic files related to this project were stored on UA Box in a password-protected folder accessible only to the researcher. Comprehensive steps were taken to accurately audio-record participant interviews on a password-protected Zoom account. The recordings were transcribed shortly afterward and then deleted after being transferred to the University of Arizona UA Box network within 24 hours. Pseudonyms were used in transcriptions, analyses, and reports.

## **Data Collection**

Before initiating data collection, the interview protocol was carefully tested with trusted colleagues to ensure that the questions were clear and relevant to participants' experiences before deployment. The goal was to facilitate discussions that would allow for a deeper exploration of undergraduate participants' experiences and perceptions (Arellano, 2021; Creswell, 2014; Rodriguez, 2019). The interview questions were specifically designed to understand the college experiences of Hispanic undergraduates who had engaged in academic recovery interventions. Recognizing and respecting participants' autonomy was of the utmost importance; therefore, students were informed of their right to end the interview at any time, thereby ensuring they felt respected and maintained control of the process.

During the Spring 2025 semester, the primary method of data collection involved conducting participant interviews and gathering a range of artifacts, including audio recordings, advisement reports, transcripts, and notes (Creswell, 2014; Frink, 2021; McPherson, 2019; Rodriguez, 2019). Detailed notes were taken to document the students' observations and experiences, as well as my reflections, thoughts, and feelings as the researcher (Creswell, 2014). The initial interviews were conducted in a semi-structured, open-ended, one-on-one format, allowing participants to share their unique experiences and situations (Arellano, 2021; Creswell, 2014; Frink, 2021; McPherson & Arbelo Marrero, 2021; Renteria, 2020; Rodriguez, 2019) at the beginning of their selected academic intervention in the Spring 2025 semester. Follow-up interviews, which also utilized a semi-structured, one-on-one approach, were conducted after the Spring 2025 term. These follow-up interviews took place after the student had completed their interventions and at the end of the semester, coinciding with the collection of additional artifacts,

including academic appeal decisions and transcripts corresponding to the Spring 2025 semester. This approach aimed to develop a comprehensive understanding of students' perspectives and positionality following their interventions and at the conclusion of the Spring 2025 academic term.

Participants provided informed consent by signing a consent form (Appendix C) prior to each interview. Each voluntary participant underwent two individual interviews: one a couple of weeks into the start of the Spring 2025 term, allowing participants time to engage with their chosen intervention, and the second interview at the end of the Spring 2025 semester. The Zoom interviews lasted around 60 minutes each and were audio-recorded. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences in their own words (Frink, 2021). The interviews were conducted openly, respectfully, and without judgment (Renteria, 2020; Frink, 2021). A careful listening approach was used to demonstrate empathy and ask probing questions, helping gather rich, meaningful narratives of students' experiences. This non-judgmental and empathetic approach was essential in creating a safe space for participants to share their thoughts and emotions.

Collaboration was emphasized to highlight the importance of genuine engagement and rapport in research, ensuring that authentic voices are heard and understood, which is essential to the research process. Building rapport between the interviewer and participants was pivotal to the poetic inquiry approach, as genuine emotions and honest reflections were necessary to illustrate experiences of academic disappointment and recovery (Frink, 2021). The students' roles as co-

participants were integral to this work, and intentional collaborative efforts ensured that the exchange of experiences remained respectful and meaningful.

### **Data Analysis**

This qualitative research study was a collaborative effort that employed interviews and field notes to explore participants' experiences, identify common themes, and generate deeper insights. Individual student interviews were conducted at the beginning of March, with follow-up interviews occurring at the end of May when the semester concluded. All interviews were transcribed in their entirety. The analytic process began with open coding of the transcripts to develop an initial list of codes, followed by pattern coding to identify overarching themes and recurring patterns critical to understanding participants' actions and perspectives within their specific contexts. This approach drew on incorporating diverse perspectives from several participants to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study (Eisenhart, 2018). In the second analysis cycle, *in vivo* coding (Saldaña, 2013) guided the data analysis, incorporating multiple layers of coding and the constant comparison technique. Detailed notes were maintained for each transcription, ensuring that participants' voices were preserved and valued. This approach fosters an atmosphere of respect and openness.

Additionally, poetic transcription (Leavy, 2020) was utilized as a valid method for data interpretation, effectively capturing and emphasizing the participants' voices. The analysis adhered to an organized, multi-step process grounded in poetic inquiry. Each transcript was examined line by line to identify statements that conveyed emotion, insight, or meaning, underscoring the emotional impact of participants' experiences. Selected lines were organized into thematic categories reflecting the participants' challenges, resilience, and identity. Particular

attention was given to lines with strong emotional and linguistic weight, including voice, tone, and metaphor, as well as those contextually relevant to the broader narrative. Poetic techniques such as repetition and spacing were employed in the final arrangement to enhance the emotional tone, showcasing the creative and expressive potential of poetic inquiry. This focus on emotional content aims to make the audience feel more empathetic of the participants' inner worlds. By incorporating participants' exact words from the interview transcripts, this approach deepens understanding of students' perspectives and experiences. It facilitates a multifaceted exploration of key themes and emotional complexities, amplifying participants' voices in a clear, accessible, and impactful manner. This method invites readers to engage directly with the research, cultivating empathy and a richer understanding of participants' lived experiences.

#### *Steps for Trustworthiness*

An interview protocol was pilot-tested for reliability, ensuring participants could share their experiences by answering the questions (Arellano, 2021; Rodriguez, 2019). To minimize bias, the participants will be students with whom the researcher had no prior relationship (McPherson, 2019). The researcher took reflective notes before and after each participant's interview. This approach enabled the researcher to reflect on their experiences and preconceptions, identifying biases and assumptions (Arellano, 2021; Frink, 2021; Rodriguez, 2019). The researcher used various data sources (interviews and documents) to ensure the accuracy of the data gathered by cross-checking and validating the collected data (McPherson, 2019; Renteria, 2020). Follow-up interviews were offered with the same participants, allowing participants to review the interview notes to ensure an accurate representation of their views

(McPherson, 2019). Participants could request clarification or follow-up interviews if needed, helping improve the validity and reliability of the researcher's findings.

The achievement of interpretive validity relies heavily on the researcher's ability to accurately represent participants' inner worlds, a task made possible by participants' invaluable feedback (Frink, 2021). Poetic inquiry places a profound responsibility on researchers to thoroughly understand and critically reflect on participants' experiences, ensuring that their representations honor the emotional depth, language, and meaning conveyed by participants. This understanding is not just a professional requirement but a profound ethical responsibility that researchers must uphold. It also prompts researchers to acknowledge their power, privilege, and biases while critically examining the power structures that shape their participants and their research. Creating change requires a solid commitment to a common goal, which can only be achieved through mutual trust (Beach and Vigo-Arrazola, 2021). To effectively bring about successful change, the researcher must understand and represent those being researched. Such an understanding can help bridge a gap and establish a strong sense of justice.

Renteria (2020) stresses the non-linear nature of qualitative data collection, analysis, and procedures. The process is not a one-time event but a continuous and circular journey where the researcher collects, interprets, analyzes, and re-analyzes the data. The researcher's journey begins with crucial observations and detailed field notes of their surroundings and experiences. While they may have some expectations based on the literature, they are always ready to adapt their understanding to new findings and themes. The researcher explores the data to see what is happening. As they identify common themes, they constantly explore them further, allowing the

observations to shape their understanding. This repetitive and continuous process is also applied when conducting interviews.

### *Role of the Researcher*

Rodriguez (2019) emphasizes the critical need for researchers to acknowledge their own personal experiences and the related influences that have shaped their perspectives. Similarly, Frink (2021) has highlighted the significance of researchers recognizing the individual viewpoints they bring to their investigations, enriching the research process with diverse perspectives. Researchers interpret students' responses through the lens of their own knowledge and outlook. It is crucial that researchers thoroughly document their emotional and intellectual responses to participants' experiences. Arellano (2021) and Rodriguez (2019) have emphasized the necessity of self-reflection and awareness of biases and preconceived notions throughout a study to ensure objectivity in interviews and participant interactions. A researcher's experiences can be relevant to their research, both for themselves and for their participants. For example, Rodriguez (2019) was a college undergraduate on academic probation, and Arellano (2021) and Frink (2021) shared their college experiences before each participant interview, striving to establish rapport and facilitate comfortable, meaningful discussions about participants' college experiences.

### **Positionality**

My journey at the University of Arizona began in 2008 as a first-generation Mexican American student from the border town of Yuma, Arizona. As a Latina/Hispanic college student, I initially struggled to navigate the transition into higher education. I faced challenges maintaining my academic eligibility and GPA during the Spring and Fall 2009 terms, which

ultimately led to my placement on academic probation in Spring 2010. Although this period was filled with discouragement and discomfort, it also became a defining turning point. This dissertation stands as a testament to that journey — one shaped by challenges, resilience, and critical decisions. During this time, I sought out campus resources and support, adjusted my study habits, and strengthened my time-management skills. I also made the pivotal decision to change my major and pursue an undergraduate studies degree within the College of Education.

Looking back, that choice continues to hold deep value for me and informs the work I do today. Since 2019, I have held various professional roles in higher education, including learning specialist, academic coach, course instructor, and, most recently, academic advisor. In each of these roles, I have been deeply committed to supporting students in the ways I wished someone had supported me. My work centers on enhancing the undergraduate experience by fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment, creating an environment where students are not only guided toward academic success but also feel seen, valued, and capable of thriving.

I firmly believe that every student can achieve positive outcomes, such as improved retention and graduation, while also experiencing fulfillment and personal growth throughout their college journey. My dedication to students extends beyond my professional responsibilities into my research. I hold fast to the belief that all students deserve care, encouragement, and access to the support needed to succeed in higher education. With my lived experience and insider perspective, I understand the importance of recognizing my own positionality, constraints, and biases within the data collection and interpretation process.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This poetic inquiry study aimed to explore the experiences of Hispanic undergraduate students at the University of Arizona who have the autonomy to choose their academic recovery intervention while on academic probation (AP). The research focused on Mexican American students' unique perceptions of their chosen academic recovery interventions and their views on the pushout phenomenon in higher education. The participants were instrumental to the study as they shared their personal lived experiences during the data collection phase. My responsibilities included conducting interviews with participants, transcribing recordings, coding their responses, and generating qualitative analyses for the study's final report.

The insights gained from the student interviews, which highlighted their contributions, formed the foundation for addressing the research questions. All seven participants in this study were enrolled at the University of Arizona during the Spring 2025 academic term and were seeking academic interventions while on academic probation (AP). This research involved conducting two interviews with each participant: one at the beginning of the Spring 2025 semester and another following the conclusion of the Spring 2025 term. Chapter four presents the demographic information of the participants, describes the academic interventions implemented, establishes the research questions, and summarizes the study's findings.

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of Hispanic college students regarding academic recovery?

RQ2: How does autonomy influence the effectiveness of academic recovery interventions for students?

RQ3. How would providing information about academic probation and its implications before starting college impact a student's academic performance and mindset?

### **Participants Descriptions**

In the following section, I will provide an overview of the seven participants involved in this study. I will discuss the circumstances that led to their placement on academic probation (AP) and detail the academic recovery (AR) interventions that were initiated. Sharing these insights will provide a valuable understanding of the challenges these individuals face and the strategies they use to achieve academic recovery. Each student participant provided background information regarding their journey to academic probation and offered an in-depth perspective on their personal experiences. Below is a summary of each participant's demographic information, displaying the diversity of their backgrounds. At the time of the study, the participants' ages ranged from 19 to 36 years.

Furthermore, all participants (N = 7, 100%) identified as Hispanic and exclusively recognized a connection to Mexico when asked about their association with Spanish-speaking countries. Mexican American participants are organized alphabetically by the pseudonyms they selected. For those who did not provide a pseudonym, one was assigned with their consent to maintain their privacy. Notably, it is important to highlight that five out of the seven participants were simultaneously managing work responsibilities while pursuing their academic coursework.

**Table 2.***Understanding Student Participants' Academic Probation Interventions*

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>GPA</b>	<b>Working</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Gen</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Intervention</b>
Carlo	24	1.2	Yes	Yes	College of Education	Rehabilitation Studies Service	THINK TANK
Daisy	36	1.444	Yes	Yes	College of Soc & Behav Sci	Political Science & Creative Writing	THINK TANK
Iris	23	1.429	No	No	College of Science	Psychology	CAPS
Kassandra	20	1.538	Yes	Yes	College of Ag & Life Sci	Microbiology	THINK TANK
Lily	34	1.333	Yes	Yes	College of Soc & Behav Sci	Law	THINK TANK
Marigold	20	1.774	No	No	A-Center	No Major Selected A-Center	THINK TANK
Stella	19	1.927	Yes	Yes	College of Humanities	Interdisciplinary Studies	THINK TANK

*Note. A-Center is not a college; it is an academic unit that supports students with undeclared or transitional majors.*

**Carlo**

Carlo is a 24-year-old full-time freshman and a first-generation college student working full-time. He is pursuing a degree in Rehabilitation Studies and Services. Before starting his undergraduate studies, Carlo was unaware that academic probation (AP) existed; he only learned about it after being placed on probation. His situation is unique because before attending the University of Arizona (UA), he received a letter grade of D in a UA dual credit college class he took at his high school in Spring 2018, which resulted in him being assigned to AP before beginning his official first semester at the University of Arizona in Fall 2018. He discovered his probationary status via email just before the start of his Fall 2018 semester. Carlo was upset and wished he had been informed earlier, as this would have allowed him to take the class solely for high school credit rather than for UA credit. He feels that this situation unfairly set him up for failure from the beginning and believes that being aware of AP and the university's policies could have positively influenced his academic performance.

Additionally, while officially attending his first semester at the University of Arizona (UA), Carlo was managing multiple responsibilities, including navigating the complexities of the foster care system and life in group homes. He was in the process of transitioning to a semi-independent lifestyle, facing diminished support and encouragement. Furthermore, he had recently lost his job and had to start the semester following a week spent in a mental hospital facility. These circumstances contributed to his academic challenges, resulting in his falling behind in his coursework. He was subsequently discontinued after the Fall 2018 semester. Carlo disclosed that this was his second experience on academic probation (AP). Upon his return to the UA to enroll in classes in Fall 2024, he found himself reinstated on AP with his previous Grade Point Average (GPA). To effectively manage the continuation of his studies, he sought to have his intervention plan to incorporate regular meetings with his academic advisor in his primary college.

The Spring 2025 semester began on a positive note for Carlo, as he met with his Academic Advisor twice a month for a 1:1 meeting. He felt that his advisor was supportive and instrumental in his academic journey. Unfortunately, circumstances took a turn for the worse. Carlo expressed, "I definitely did not finish with the grades that I wanted to. I know I could have done better, but there's just so much going on this semester." He disclosed that his new employer was not accommodating his school schedule, making him work inconsistent late hours that extended into the early morning. "It was very detrimental to my mental health," he said. Although a few of his instructors were supportive, Carlo admitted, "I'm going through the hardest time." Tragically, this added to his distress: Carlo learned that his primary academic advisor had to temporarily step away from her position, making her unavailable for appointments

or additional support. This advisor had served as a crucial source of guidance for him, his primary source of intervention. He later found out and received the devastating news of her unexpected passing due to a concealed battle with cancer. In his grief, he reflected, “Who’s my support now?” He later mentioned, towards the end of our second interview, that he was supposed to attend three meetings regarding a different intervention, which was THINK TANK. However, he felt there was a lack of cooperation due to his challenging schedule, even after he communicated the days he was available. Despite his efforts to engage with the intervention, he expressed frustration over receiving little to no response and being met with silence when he tried to reach out.

### **Daisy**

Daisy is a first-generation college student who began her academic journey as a transfer student at the University of Arizona (UA) after attending an in-state community college. She is pursuing a degree in Political Science & Creative Writing. She felt significant pressure regarding her grades, perfect attendance, and the need to be a positive role model for her younger sibling. Coming from an immigrant family and a single-parent household, she often took on responsibilities similar to those of a second parent. Daisy was vaguely aware of academic probation and knew of some students who had faced challenges, as she did, balancing life, work, and family obligations, with family always coming first. After relocating to the university and living in the dorms, she experienced newfound freedom from family expectations; however, this freedom led her to fall behind in her classes. In the middle of her third semester in college, Daisy became pregnant, further complicating her ability to manage responsibilities alongside doctor appointments. She was disqualified from the university in Spring 2013.

Daisy, now 36 years old, has reentered the University of Arizona as a Spring 2025 readmit through the Second Start Readmission Program (The University of Arizona, 2019). The Second Start Readmission Program is unique in that it enables undergraduate students to return to the University of Arizona after an absence of three or more years and refresh their academic records (The University of Arizona, 2019; The University of Arizona, n.d.-d). Once admitted, students must complete 12 graded units with a minimum GPA of 2.500 during their first year back (The University of Arizona, n.d.-d). Following this, all grades earned before their absence will be excluded from the cumulative GPA. Courses previously completed with a C or higher will still be applicable toward degree requirements, but only coursework undertaken after enrolling in Second Start will count toward University Credit requirements (The University of Arizona, 2019). The Second Start option is available for one-time use only and is permanent once applied. It does not apply to students who have previously earned a bachelor's degree. Although prior grades will still be reflected on the transcript, they will no longer affect the GPA (The University of Arizona, 2019).

Daisy met the eligibility criteria for the Second Start Readmission Program during her absence and was able to return to the University of Arizona to take advantage of this "Second Start" option, which allows for GPA forgiveness and a reset (The University of Arizona, 2019). Having previously left the university while on academic probation, Daisy is reentering under probationary status, which requires her to not only meet but exceed a 2.0 GPA, achieving at least a 2.5 GPA during her first 12 units. In the Spring 2025 term, she enrolled as a part-time student, taking 6 units. The program may only be granted once in a student's academic career (The University of Arizona, n.d.-d). Daisy is currently balancing her responsibilities as a mother

alongside multiple work commitments, including roles as a substitute public school teacher and educational assistant. She is studying online as an out-of-state student and reported that her academic intervention was through THINK TANK.

At the time of our interview, Daisy had not yet completed the THINK TANK consultation for her academic intervention. However, during our interview, she expressed a favorable view of their services. She acknowledged their effectiveness in addressing various subjects, stating, “It is definitely something I wish to pursue further.” Regrettably, a second interview that could have yielded crucial additional insights was not conducted, despite multiple attempts to contact her. Furthermore, their lack of communication may have been intentional, as they did not engage with THINK TANK as their academic recovery intervention by the end of the semester. Additionally, of the two courses in which she enrolled, Daisy failed one and received an Incomplete (I) in the other, which has not been updated to a letter grade as of the tenth week of the Fall 2025 semester.

### **Iris**

Iris is a 23-year-old full-time junior and a first-generation college student. She is pursuing a degree in Psychology. She started her academic journey as a transfer student at the University of Arizona after previously attending a local in-state community college. Upon transitioning to the university, she faced challenges in managing deadlines and failed several courses. Unfortunately, she was unaware of the existence of academic probation (AP). She wished she had known earlier, as this knowledge could have prompted her to seek testing and appropriate support for ADHD and anxiety attacks. Iris became aware of her AP status only after receiving a notification regarding the suspension of her financial aid. This experience has caused her

significant financial and emotional distress, worsened by her lack of understanding of the academic policies and potential consequences of her performance. Iris's academic recovery intervention consisted of Campus Health's Counseling & Psych Services (CAPS).

Iris completed her academic intervention with Campus Health's Counseling & Psych Services (CAPS). Throughout this process, she met regularly with a psychiatrist and genuinely felt both understood and supported by them describing her as someone who is "great and "amazing." Through CAPS, Iris was able to access prescribed medication and medical documentation related to her panic attacks. She described the intervention as enlightening stating "it opened [my] eyes like knowing that there are people you know, that care, you know, and that do their job because they care not just because [it is] their job." The beginning of the semester went well, but the rest of the semester did not go as planned. Iris indicated that she is currently working to find the right balance with her anxiety medication, including finding the appropriate dosage and managing the associated side effects.

Additionally, she expressed that she attempted to work with her assigned Access Consultant from the campus's Disability Resource Center (DRC) to obtain accommodations for her attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). She expressed her disappointment and a sense of feeling "helpless" and "defeated." She contemplated filing a complaint against her Access Consultant, questioning how many other students may have experienced similar challenges; however, she felt guilty questioning an authority figure and apprehensive about potential retaliation. Upon reflection, she wished she had been more assertive in advocating for herself regarding her Access Consultant and the necessary accommodations she needed to be more successful, "that's what you're there for, like, you know, you're causing all these issues,"

she remarked. At the end of our interview, she was still considering whether to submit a formal complaint.

### **Kassandra**

Kassandra is a 20-year-old full-time in-state freshman who is juggling two part-time jobs. She is not a first-generation college student. She is pursuing a degree in Microbiology. She enjoyed the newfound freedom of college. Before enrolling, she was unaware of the academic probation policies. Over time, her attitude shifted from dismissive to serious. She realized that poor time management was a key reason for her probation. The cumulative effect of missed assignments led to disengagement, a lack of follow-through, and burnout. Additionally, she struggled with feelings of guilt and became more aware of financial issues and privilege.

Kassandra's academic recovery intervention consisted of THINK TANK.

Kassandra completed three academic intervention sessions with THINK TANK and her Academic Coach. She found the intervention helpful, particularly the opportunity to engage with an older mentor. She shared, "I really liked meeting with him, and like, I wish we got more meetings." Unfortunately, their Academic Coach became unwell, resulting in fewer meetings than they had hoped. Kassandra admitted she had honestly experienced a sense of sadness, as she greatly valued the discussions she had with him. When their Academic Coach returned to work, their schedules did not align, and the appointments were canceled again due to their Academic Coach's illness. Kassandra expressed, "It sucked. I really liked having that ... encouraging person where, ... I would show him... my chemistry exams, and...we talked about what went wrong... I love knowing... the good and the bad with him." In retrospect, she wished she had a backup option to continue her intervention, such as another Academic Coach with more

availability, someone similar to talk to and discuss her progress and challenges. In the end, she expressed, “I found it helpful, like the whole semester I had, Think Tank, which thank the Lord, but yeah, if it's something I could continue to have like in the future.” She intends to return to the University of Arizona and utilize its resources upon her return, regardless of the status of her probation.

### **Lily**

Lily is a 34-year-old post-traditional student, a full-time junior, a full-time employee, and a first-generation college student. She is pursuing a degree in Law. After completing college credits at other Arizona institutions, she transferred to the University of Arizona. Initially, she lacked previous knowledge about academic probation (AP) and what it entailed, which caused her anxiety and led her to imagine the worst possible outcomes. This experience prompted her to reflect deeply on her self-perception, and she wished there were more transparency regarding AP procedures. In addition to these challenges, Lily had faced personal and family crises that interfered with her academic responsibilities, particularly due to the health issues of both her grandparents. This situation had a negative impact on her family and academic performance, as it forced her to travel to Mexico while managing emotional burdens and additional caregiving responsibilities, while balancing her classes. Lily’s academic recovery intervention consisted of THINK TANK.

Lily completed her academic intervention with THINK TANK, working closely with her Academic Coach throughout the Spring semester. She appreciated the external validation provided by her Academic Coach. However, she expressed a desire for more flexibility in choosing the number of meetings, as she identifies as a post-traditional student adult learner. Lily

expressed that she achieved a breakthrough in self-compassion by learning the importance of self-validation and recognition, stating, "...it's okay to clap for yourself." She also recognized the crucial need to prioritize her well-being, saying, "...you could take a day off for your midterm and final." Additionally, she felt more empowered and increased her academic advocacy in professional settings, expressing, "...I feel like I'm gonna come out strong on the other side."

### **Marigold**

Marigold is a 20-year-old full-time, in-state freshman and is not a first-generation college student. She has no major selected at this time and is undecided. She was unaware that academic probation existed, and ended up on probation because she did not realize how different college would be from high school. After graduating from high school, she experienced a lack of motivation when entering college, which felt like a significant adjustment and a huge jump. The workload increased, and the classes were not forgiving about late assignments; she felt overwhelmed. Marigold's academic recovery intervention consisted of THINK TANK. Marigold completed her academic intervention with THINK TANK and noted that this semester, she received the most help and support. She expressed feeling "more open to help this semester." At first, she was nervous about meeting with an Academic Coach, but she gradually became more comfortable with her assigned coach and appreciated talking with her. Marigold said that her academic coach provided accountability, specific areas to work on, and helped her stay on track using a detailed planner. Participating in the recovery program changed the way she views herself; she now believes she is capable, has the necessary skills, and is responsible. She also shared that she gained more confidence and learned to speak up and advocate for herself with her instructors, which she had struggled with in previous semesters. Overall, she feels "more

hopeful.” Marigold stated, “I do still plan on talking to the academic coach just because she helped me so much,” and intends to continue using a detailed planner to manage her assignments and deadlines.

### **Stella**

Stella is a 19-year-old full-time freshman who also works part-time. She is not a first-generation college student. She is pursuing a degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. She struggled to adapt to the demands of college life and to manage her academic workload effectively.

Combining these challenges, she found herself in an unhealthy relationship with a partner who exhibited obsessive behavior, which ultimately resulted in her becoming pregnant. This situation escalated to a critical point where she needed to involve legal authorities due to threats made against her safety. Consequently, Stella became apprehensive about attending classes. She chose to prioritize her safety over her education. She lived with her parents and often isolated herself in her room. After a period of keeping her circumstances private and to herself, Stella eventually confided in her mother about her pregnancy and academic probation (AP). During this difficult time, she experienced significant stress, which hindered her ability to complete her schoolwork. Tragically, she also faced the emotional impact of a miscarriage. Stella’s academic recovery intervention consisted of THINK TANK.

Stella completed her academic intervention with THINK TANK. At the beginning, she initially found it daunting to seek assistance and approach the process with some resistance and stress. Nevertheless, she ultimately recognized its values. She stated, “I didn't go as often as I should have, or like what I wanted to. But it was... nice, knowing that...it was there if I needed it.” Stella indicated that she developed stronger boundaries, improved her time management,

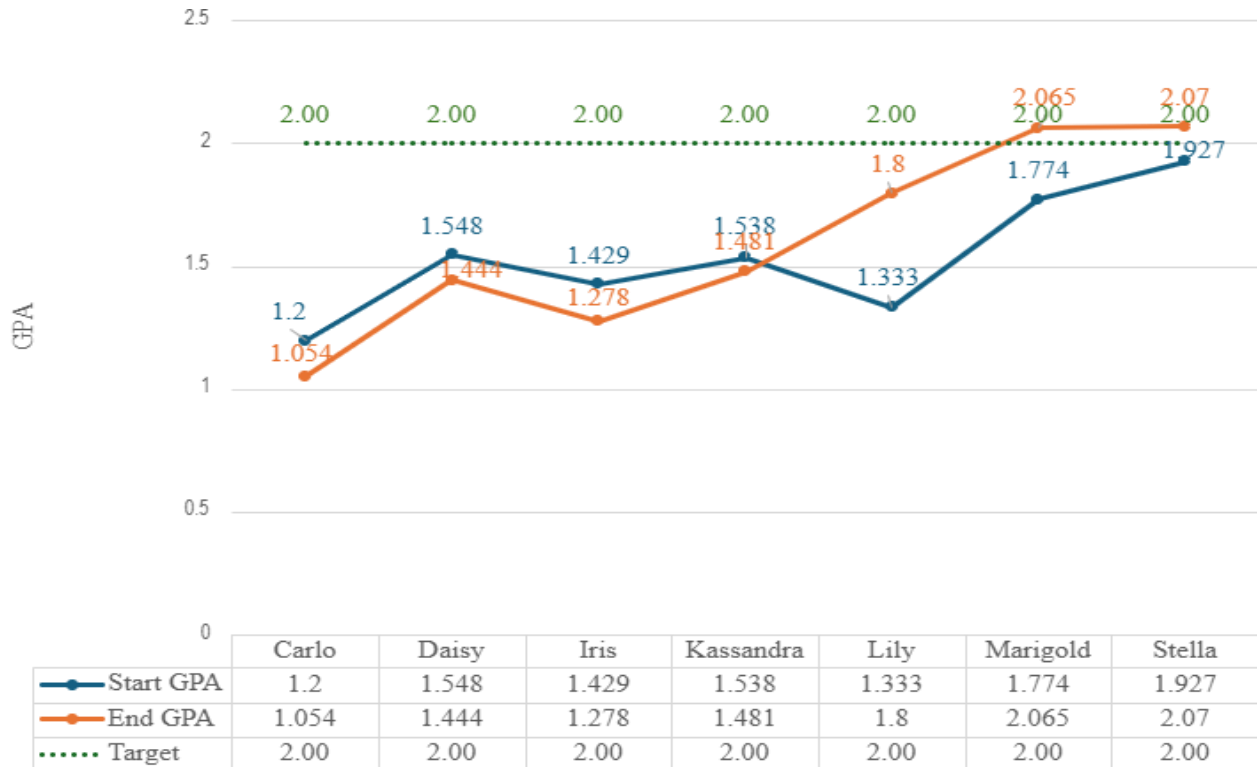
prioritized her academic responsibilities, and built relationships with her instructors, thereby strengthening her ability to advocate for herself.

### **Participants Academic Interventions**

At the outset of Spring 2025, all seven participants demonstrated an initial interest in the academic recovery intervention associated with AP. Ultimately, six of the seven participants committed to actively engaging with the intervention, except for Daisy. Out of the six participants, five completed their selected intervention within the SSRI program. Four of these participants were involved with THINK TANK, while one utilized CAPS. Carlos was initially assigned to THINK TANK as an intervention; however, he did not participate. Instead, he opted to prioritize meeting with his academic advisor to help him navigate his challenges, considering these meetings as his own personal intervention for AR.

**Figure 1.**

*GPA Changes of Recovery Students: Spring 2025*



### Academic Appeals

All participants had access to the Academic Appeal Form through their student accounts starting April 28. The final day of classes for the Spring 2025 semester, as well as the deadline for students to request a complete withdrawal from all courses, was May 7. All seven participants (N = 7, 100%) in this study completed the Spring 2025 semester without withdrawing from the term. Final grades were submitted by May 19. Consequently, on May 21, students received email notifications regarding their academic eligibility status from the Office of the Registrar via their official university email accounts. These notifications included important information about their academic standing. The priority deadline for submitting an

academic appeal was June 1. It is important to note that only Daisy among the seven participants qualify as a Second Start student. Her unique status exempted her from the requirement to submit an Academic Appeal at the end of the Spring 2025 semester, as she is pursuing her “second start” towards her education. Among the six participants required to submit an academic appeal, only five completed the process by the designated priority deadline of June 1. Carlo's appeal submission was received after the established appeal deadline.

### **Academic Status Changes**

The priority deadline for submitting appeals was established as midnight Arizona time on June 1. Participants who completed the semester and achieved letter grades that raised their GPA to 2.0 or above had their academic standing updated at the conclusion of the Spring 2025 term on June 1 to "Eligible". Students who submitted an academic appeal were informed of the outcome through their student email, determining whether they were approved and eligible to continue their studies or denied and thus ineligible to continue at the University of Arizona. The academic review process was expected to take 2 to 7 business days, during which Academic Eligibility Appeal Reviewers would conduct a comprehensive evaluation. Beginning on June 2, students who were deemed ineligible and had not submitted an academic appeal by the June 1 priority deadline faced significant consequences, including being dropped from their enrolled courses for Summer 2025 and Fall 2025. Notifications regarding the cancellation of their future course enrollments were subsequently issued. This situation highlights the importance of timely action and its potential impact on enrollment status. It is also important to note that students can continue to submit academic appeals beyond the Spring 2025 priority deadline until October 15, 2025.

### **Highlights Academic GPAs and Appeal Eligibility Decisions**

Among the seven participants on academic probation, four individuals, Carlo, Daisy, Iris, and Cassandra, did not improve their overall cumulative GPAs. Six participants were required to complete an Academic Appeal, and three of those appeals were denied, resulting in those individuals being ineligible to return and re-enroll. Although Iris completed her intervention, her academic appeal was still denied. In contrast, Lily, Marigold, and Stella fully participated in and completed their academic recovery interventions, resulting in improvements in their cumulative GPAs. Their academic appeals were approved, allowing them to remain eligible to continue their studies. Among these three, Marigold and Stella successfully returned to good academic standing, each achieving a GPA of just over 2.0. Although Lily did not reach a 2.0 GPA at the end of the Spring 2025 term, she made the most substantial improvement in her overall cumulative GPA. She was granted an additional term to improve her academic standing. In summary, three of the seven participants were dismissed.

**Table 3.**

*Student Academic Outcomes and Appeal Decisions: Spring 2025*

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Starting GPA</b>	<b>Ending GPA</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Intervention Complete</b>	<b>Appeal Decision</b>
Carlo	1.2	1.054 ↓	THINK TANK	No	Ineligible
Daisy	1.548	1.444 ↓	THINK TANK	No	Eligible
Iris	1.429	1.278 ↓	CAPS	Yes	Ineligible
Kassandra	1.538	1.481 ↓	THINK TANK	Yes	Ineligible
Lily	1.333	1.8 ↑	THINK TANK	Yes	Eligible
Marigold	1.774	2.065 ↑	THINK TANK	Yes	Eligible
Stella	1.927	2.07 ↑	THINK TANK	Yes	Eligible

*Note.* ↓ Decreased Spring 2025 GPA, ↑ Increased Spring 2025 GPA.

**Summary of Findings by Research Question**

The purpose of this qualitative participant study was to examine the experiences of Hispanic undergraduate students on academic probation and their engagement with the academic recovery interventions they have chosen at the University of Arizona. The study is organized around three primary research questions that guided the study. This chapter is structured according to these three guiding research questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of Hispanic college students regarding academic recovery?
2. How does autonomy influence the effectiveness of academic recovery interventions for students?
3. How would providing information about academic probation and its implications before starting college impact a student's academic performance and mindset?

**Research Question One**

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of Hispanic college students regarding academic recovery?

### **Theme 1- Lack of Awareness and Understanding**

The participants identified a knowledge gap regarding academic probation, unaware of its existence before their undergraduate studies at the University of Arizona and its associated consequences. Below, I present their reply and feelings in a collective poetic transcription to capture their profound emotional reaction of surprise and shock (Table 4). The transcription reveals that students were unfamiliar and unprepared for a policy they had no prior knowledge of, highlighting a significant gap and institutional communication failure. Furthermore, it emphasizes the critical need to improve the dissemination of clearer information on academic policies and their implications for undergraduate students, thereby helping students avoid probation more effectively.

#### **Table 4.**

##### *Unseen Gaps & Under the Radar: The Weight of Unawareness*

No, no, I wasn't.  
No, no, I didn't.  
I did not know  
I didn't even know.  
I didn't know, like academic probation was a thing.  
And then you had to get a certain Gpa.  
I didn't know that there was the possibility of like being kicked out of the school  
Didn't know the U of A does that  
I was not aware of it.  
Yeah, I had no idea.

*Note: This collective poetic transcription is derived from the participant's direct verbatim account and has been thoughtfully structured to articulate the emotional complexities associated with academic probation. It reflects themes of ignorance, confusion, and institutional unawareness.*

This poem, *Unseen Gaps & Under the Radar: The Weight of Unawareness*, exemplifies the theme of “Lack of Awareness and Understanding,” highlighting participants' confusion regarding academic probation policies. The repeated “no’s” and phrases “I didn’t know” vividly illustrate the depth of students' unawareness. These repetitions emphasize not only the gaps in knowledge but also the heavy emotional burden that comes with feeling unprepared and blindsided, creating a strong, echoing effect. Unlike conventional quotes, this collective poetic transcription weaves together multiple voices that reflect the participants' shock and confusion. The poem invites readers to immerse themselves in the tension, rather than observing it from a distance. The deliberate repetition of lines emphasizes how deeply ignorance can be internalized and take hold, shedding light on the profound emotional and mental weight of being uninformed. The approach fosters empathy toward readers. Ultimately, this poem serves as a powerful reminder of both the factual and emotional sides of the student’s experiences. It enhances our understanding of how institutional unawareness profoundly shapes students' journeys through academic challenges. More importantly, it highlights the crucial need for awareness and support within educational systems, thereby encouraging action.

## **Theme 2- Learning During Crisis and Communication**

Upon receiving notification of their academic probation placement status via email, the participants experienced a complex array of emotions, including overwhelmed shock, disorientation, fear, guilt, shame, and uncertainty. This profound emotional and psychological response exceeds a mere reaction to grades or institutional policies. Instead, it highlights a deep internal struggle that these students endured as they grappled with disruptions to their academic identities, self-worth, and future aspirations. The emotional impact of academic probation was

largely unanticipated by students. The following collective poetic transcription captures the students' sentiments, which underscores the emotional intensity, confusion, and apprehension expressed in their voices (Table 5). Many students reported feelings of hopelessness, indicating a significant internal struggle between motivation and despair. This observation reveals the considerable challenges these students face, stressing the need for improved, timely communication and interventions to support undergraduate students effectively during this challenging period.

**Table 5.**

*Undone by a Notification: The Weight of Placement*

reading it was a big shock.  
Does this mean I'm going to be...expelled or kicked out of school.  
Oh, my God, does this mean..., I'm in trouble now  
what does this mean?  
how do I explain this?  
oh, shit  
It's scary  
freaking out  
such a battle  
my mom doesn't know  
afraid to tell my parents  
scared the heck out of me  
hit me like a ton of bricks  
this is like a wake-up call  
They're not gonna let me back in  
embarrassed that I was even in that position  
made me feel guilty more than anything else  
thought I was gonna get kicked out of school.  
Disappointed, you know, more than anything  
it does discourage me from continuing education  
How am I supposed to confront people about this?  
I felt like the rug was kind of pulled under me.  
I really felt... I had failed myself  
I was really panicked at the time.  
I remember just...stressing  
I thought I could do it

I was really shocked  
I can see other folks... walking away from their education and saying, Hey, it's too much  
It's for other people, not for me  
I'm not smart enough

*Note: This collective poetic transcription is derived from participants' direct, verbatim accounts and has been thoughtfully structured to reveal students' emotional, cognitive, and relational responses to academic probation.*

The poem *Undone by a Notification: The Weight of Placement* explores a theme of learning during crisis and communication in the context of academic probation. It powerfully shows how a single probation notice can trigger a cascade of emotional, mental, and interpersonal challenges for students. The use of phrases such as “freaking out,” “scared the heck out of me,” and “hit me like a ton of bricks” makes the experience of probation universally understandable. The poem vividly bridges the gap between the administrative status of probation and the profoundly personal crisis that shakes and disrupts a student’s sense of self and threatens their future, evoking strong empathy in the audience. The poem asserts that academic probation extends beyond grades or policies; it is felt physically as panic, guilt, and shame, and affects relationships through silence and a fear of exposure. Unlike traditional quotes, the poetic form layers multiple accounts into a rhythm of shock and self-doubt, allowing the reader to experience the urgency and weight of these moments. By weaving multiple student voices into a shared emotional landscape, the poem offers a closeness and depth that standard written excerpts cannot achieve, drawing readers into the students' personal lived experiences.

### **Theme 3- Language, Perceptions, and Identity in Probation**

This theme explores students' perceptions of academic labels and their strong preference for more empowering, less stigmatizing language. The participants articulated various emotional

burdens, such as anxiety, fear of failure, and feelings of isolation, while expressing discomfort and shame associated with the term "academic probation." This term often results in secrecy and silence due to the associated stigma it carries with personal shame. Many students find the term "probation" unsettling because it invokes criminal connotations and social judgment. The use of the word "probation" reinforces a punitive identity and profoundly shapes students' sense of self. Students expressed a clear, distinct preference for compassionate terminology in interventions, language that evokes empathy and understanding. Participants favor terms such as academic recovery, academic intervention, and academic revival. The term "recovery" was seen as suggesting a more optimistic path forward. In contrast, "intervention" was seen as indicating someone can step in and evaluate the necessary support, recognize existing challenges, and provide assistance. To enhance the emotional tone, repetition, and rhythm of the participants' expressions, their sentiments have been formatted into a collective poetic transcription regarding their perspectives on the term "academic probation" (Table 6).

**Table 6.**

*Unwelcome Word: The Weight of Probation*

making it feel like you're in jail, you know what I mean.  
Some people... hearing. Oh, so and so is on probation, they think of..jail.  
Jail.  
To be honest...probation for me... goes to...somebody who's in jail, or somebody who's  
...in probation.  
you know, prison, or like you got in trouble with the law, or something like that.  
You hear somebody's on probation. They're probably not doing that great  
you don't want to be on probation or anything, even criminally wise  
I feel like everyone's look on their face is gonna be disappointed,  
don't hang out with that person, they're not a good influence.  
Your head just goes to... you're in trouble... you're not good  
So it has...that kind of gravity and that kind of weight to it.  
take the sting or the stigma out of the word of like probation.  
the word probation is kind of like an icky word.

I think that that verbiage has a lot to do with it.  
It feels really awkward to talk about  
has a negative connotation to me  
It's such a negative connotation  
has that...negative feeling  
It marks you, you know.  
it sucks being on it  
It's a sad term  
it feels wrong  
definitely change that.  
changing the name  
I honestly don't like it  
you should be embarrassed about it  
there's better words. They could have used.  
I feel like there's other words that are better.  
saying, you're in academic probation, it...made me feel like  
an ungrateful little shit  
you must think I'm stupid.  
It makes me feel like gross  
I feel like nervous or anxious.  
It's obviously scary, very scary  
I'd say it's more like nerve wracking  
sense of like guilt, or even like shame.  
I feel it shouldn't be what it is

*Note: This collective poetic transcription is derived from the participant's direct verbatim account and has been carefully organized to reflect the emotional responses associated with academic probation and the calls for change.*

The poem "*Unwelcome Word: The Weight of Probation*" explores how language, perceptions, and identity shape probation in the context of academic probation. It vividly illustrates how the term "probation" carries a heavy stigma that profoundly shapes and affects students' emotional and social reactions and lives. Expressions like "makes it feel like you're in jail", "they think of like jail" and "it marks you" reveal how this label can evoke intense feelings of anxiety, fear, and shame extending beyond academic implications to affect self-perception and relationships. The poem spotlights the critical role of language; the words chosen and used by educational institutions can intensify emotional struggles and significantly disrupt students'

sense of belonging. The integration and interweaving of several students' voices within a shared emotional environment effectively illustrates the substantial cumulative burden of stigma in a way that isolated quotations cannot. This approach effectively engages readers, helping them empathize with and comprehend the emotional weight, urgency, and significance of the collective demands for transformative change articulated by undergraduate participants. The emotional weight of this issue is not only beneficial but imperative for the well-being and success of students experiencing academic probation.

### **Research Question Two**

RQ2: How does autonomy influence the effectiveness of academic recovery interventions for students?

### **Theme 4- Living with Limits: Resistance to Institutional Power and Control**

The participants critiqued the institution's power dynamics and strongly opposed a standardized, one-size-fits-all approach to interventions. They believe that such a mandatory and rigid method is inappropriate. Students do not want to be forced to comply even with well-informed support, as it can trigger emotional resistance and passive withdrawal. The lack of choice leads to feelings of resistance and disengagement. Additionally, students perceive a significant imbalance in power and responsibility between themselves and institutional authority. They wish to avoid a sense of voicelessness or a lack of agency regarding their interventions. Many students believe that the institution owes them respect, support, and flexibility, particularly given their financial investment. To capture the emotional tone, repetition, and rhythm of the participants' sentiments, their statements were compiled into a collective poetic transcription (Table 7).

## Table 7.

### *Under Pressure: The Weight of No Power*

the same thing doesn't work for everyone.  
I feel like if I didn't have a choice, I'd feel...more...stubborn... I wouldn't want to do it.  
I just want to drop out kind of thing because you're not having your choice  
I have to be here, you know, rather than I get to be here,  
you feel like you are being forced to do something.  
if you tell me one thing, I'm gonna do the other  
I think a lot of people would also probably like kind of give up  
I'd probably honestly just like kind of give up.  
You do not really want to do it  
we're paying the university.  
They're not paying us.

*Note: This collective poetic transcription is derived from the participant's direct verbatim account and has been carefully organized to reflect the emotional responses associated with resistance to forced intervention.*

This poem highlights the theme of *Under Pressure: The Weight of No Power* by demonstrating how a lack of agency in probationary interventions can lead to resistance rather than genuine engagement. Phrases like “I have to be here, you know, rather than I get to be here,” and “if you tell me one thing, I'm gonna do the other” illustrate students' feelings of enforced compliance as a significant loss of choice. This perception can lead to frustration, disengagement, and even thoughts of dropping out, underscoring the urgent need to understand and address student perceptions. The poem effectively conveys that support measures, when perceived as mandates, can unintentionally increase feelings of powerlessness and reduce motivation. By integrating multiple voices into a cohesive expression of resistance, the poem powerfully captures the emotional weight and relational dynamics inherent in these experiences. This approach allows readers to confront the stark reality of institutional control and its impact on student agency, fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges faced in such contexts.

## **Theme 5- Leaning into Choice: Autonomy and Agency in Academic Recovery**

The participants expressed a strong desire for autonomy and agency, and a clear preference for their choices regarding academic interventions. They highlighted the benefit of individualized support and expressed a need for ownership over their academic recovery process. Emphasizing the importance of regaining their academic standing on their own terms. Participants advocated for a student-centered approach for interventions. When students are empowered to make decisions, they are more likely to engage meaningfully in their educational journeys. Participants noted that having a voice enhances motivation and their effort, arising from a sense of control in their circumstances. Support that involves asking students rather than telling fosters a sense of respect rather than control. Collaboration cultivates a sense of shared investment and trust among students. Students desire to determine their own recovery pathways. The aspiration for academic improvement is significantly reinforced when students feel acknowledged and actively involved in the process. Approaches that prioritize respect for students' choices enhance their intrinsic motivation for success. The participants' sentiments are illustrated in a collective poetic transcription to emphasize the emotional tone, repetition, and rhythm of their expressions regarding their choice of academic recovery intervention (Table 7).

### **Table 8.**

#### *Uplifted by Choice*

it's them asking  
Here's what you can do if you choose to do it  
We want choices, but not too many  
it's still better to be given the choice than not,  
I feel... I have a choice in.. how I ... go through with my recovery!  
make me feel like... I'm in charge of getting back on track  
I feel like I'm more in charge.

I would prefer that we did  
I would. Yeah, obviously  
Yeah, I would prefer  
I like it.  
Can I get this help  
which makes me want to like work harder at getting my grades up.

*Note: This collective poetic transcription is derived from the participant's direct verbatim account and has been thoughtfully structured to articulate the emotional complexities associated with academic probation. It reflects themes of agency, ownership, and student-driven recovery.*

This poem highlights the theme of *Uplifted by Choice*, showing how agency and ownership can significantly transform how students experience academic recovery. Notable lines such as “We want choices”, “make me feel like... I’m in charge of getting back on track,” and “which makes me want to... work harder” serve as powerful reminders that when students are presented with meaningful choices, their motivation, engagement, and investment in their success are significantly heightened. The poem asserts that empowerment, rather than enforcement, is essential for fostering resilience and encouraging students to take an active role in their own recovery. By integrating multiple student voices, the poem encapsulates a collective sense of optimism and self-determination that may not be as evident in isolated quotations, thereby uniting readers in the understanding of how agency can transform the emotional and cognitive weight and challenges associated with probation.

### **Theme 6- Leaning into Support: Launching into Growth**

Students reflected on their experiences with academic recovery intervention. Initially, many expressed their feelings of apprehension and nervousness. However, after their first visit, their initial resistance faded after a positive interaction with the intervention's support staff, leading to a rewarding experience and a productive relationship. Many students attributed their academic progress to the interventions, which contributed to both their academic and personal

well-being. They noted that adequate support helped them reframe past failures. The support addresses the whole student holistically, focusing not just on grades but also on fostering deeper outcomes. Students expressed a strong desire to feel acknowledged, heard, understood, and validated, all of which contribute to building comfort and trust in the intervention process. This comfort and trust highlight the importance of these interventions in students' lives. Establishing rapport was essential for enhancing student engagement, motivation, and investment in their own success, thereby increasing student buy-in and commitment to the intervention. Through accessible, responsive support, students felt empowered rather than overwhelmed. The interventions were specifically designed to meet each student's unique needs, ensuring an optimal learning experience.

**Table 9.**

*Uplifted by Support*

like it's always uncomfortable  
one of my big issues was asking for help.  
the best motivator is like having someone there  
academic recovery is just having people by your side  
an intervention is people coming up together to help you out  
No, maybe I don't need it... but you do 99% of the time you need the intervention.  
It helps not only...my academic, ...career, but also outside... everyday life.  
if I wouldn't have gone to them it just would have been not good.  
they help me deal with stuff that you know I have trouble with  
it's just this one person who knows, and it's their job to know.  
if I can't talk to anyone else about it, let me talk to you  
helping you kind of like put the Band-aids on, and... heal  
asked, you know what's working for you, what's not  
Hey, you're struggling here. Let's work on that kind of thing.  
they give you real advice and actually help you  
they were well knowledgeable about things  
I could actually do this kind of thing.  
we kind of clicked like right away.  
willing to listen and talk to you  
I'm doing better than I have

I love having that person  
constant communication  
So I pretty much like it  
to keep myself on track  
it keeps me on track  
They had everything  
which is important  
they had resources.  
We're gonna do it.  
helped a lot  
helped me.  
Comfortable  
Amazing  
great  
safe

*Note: This collective poetic transcription is derived from the participant's direct verbatim account and has been thoughtfully structured to express the emotional complexities of academic probation. It highlights themes of vulnerability and transformative support.*

This poem illustrates the theme of *Uplifted by Support* by demonstrating how meaningful relationships and continuous guidance can significantly alter the probation experience. The lines “academic recovery is just having people by your side” and “they give you real advice and actually help you” highlight the notion that support extends beyond academic aid but also emotional and relational aspects. This emphasis fosters a sense of safety and encouragement among students. The poem presents a critical perspective on the process of seeking help, suggesting that such support can alleviate the discomfort often associated with asking for assistance. In actuality, it redefines and reframes probation as an opportunity for personal development rather than a punitive measure. The poem's collective structure presents students' lived experiences in their own voices, establishing a rhythm of connection that allows readers to appreciate and engage with the depth of vulnerability and the transformative potential that conventional writing styles may fail to convey. This multi-layered approach highlights the

essential role of support systems in educational settings and their positive impact on student resilience and development.

### **Research Question Three**

RQ3. How would providing information about academic probation and its implications before starting college impact a student's academic performance and mindset?

### **Theme 7: Looking Back: Reflections on Missed Guidance and Motivation**

Participants expressed that proactive communication, along with earlier education about academic standing, could support and empower students to make more informed, motivated decisions. This earlier communication and guidance could have potentially significantly changed or prevented their academic trajectory, including their academic probation. Students indicated that they would have preferred to know about the implications of academic probation before starting college. They revealed that if they had been informed and educated about academic probation, they would have prioritized their studies more effectively. To emphasize the emotional tone, repetition, and rhythm of their voices, I have formatted their sentiments as a collective poetic transcription (see Table 11). The transcription reveals that students wished they had received some background information. They also expressed a desire for the institution to guide them on what academic probation entails, how to navigate it, and how to effectively collaborate with available resources and faculty earlier in the process, such as during orientation.

#### **Table 10.**

##### *Understanding Too Late*

Yes.

A 100%

Definitely

if I had known more about...what academic probation was, and everything that it entailed

I definitely would have made school... more important, so...I didn't get to this point  
if I would have known about it, I would have at least tried to put in more...effort  
I definitely would have put...more focus on my studies  
would have been... seeking the help that I did not feel...I had  
it would have made me a little bit more motivated.  
I would obviously ...would have tried harder.  
I would have thought more about it  
would be in the back of my mind.  
make sure that this and this happens.  
took it...more seriously  
it would have been different  
approached it differently  
everything differently  
So hopefully they're able to do something like that in the future for other students.

*Note: This collective poetic transcription is derived from the participant's direct verbatim account and is thoughtfully structured to convey the emotional complexities associated with academic probation. It reflects themes of regret, recognition, desire, and hope.*

This poem explores the theme of "Understanding Too Late" by capturing the participants' lack of early awareness of their academic probation, leaving them feeling regretful and unprepared. Expressions such as "if I had known," "I definitely would have," "it would have been different," and "everything differently" indicate participants' recognition of missed opportunities and a desire for change. Their words show how previous knowledge could have significantly influenced students' motivation, focus, and outcomes. The poem conveys that awareness is not just about having information; it has the potential to be transformative, offering hope and inspiration. Timely understanding can influence, as well as shape, effort, persistence, and engagement before students reach a crisis point. The use of multiple student voices in a poem effectively highlights the need for preventive measures in a way that isolated quotations cannot. This approach enables readers to grasp the weight of regret while simultaneously contemplating the possibility of improvement for future students.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the study's findings. The study begins with an overview of its purpose, followed by a review of the research questions that guided the investigation. Following the overview, I present the conclusions from the data analysis and discuss the implications of these findings, along with their limitations. Next, the chapter includes recommendations for future research, as well as suggestions for potential changes and improvements to institutional practices. Lastly, the student participants offer valuable insights and recommendations for future students who may encounter challenges associated with academic probation and the placement process. Their recommendations are expressed in their last collective poetic transcription, reflecting their direct words.

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of Hispanic college students on academic probation (AP), their chosen academic recovery (AR) interventions, and their perceptions of the pushout phenomenon, a crucial topic in higher education. Using a qualitative interview design, I gathered insights from seven academic probationary students (N = 7) at the University of Arizona. Participants were recruited via a recruitment email (See Appendix A) and a recruitment flyer (See Appendix B). All were voluntary undergraduate students who self-identified as Hispanic, were on academic probation with a GPA below 2.0, and were enrolled in an AR intervention during Spring 2025. Each participant took part in two individual Zoom interviews, except for one, which was conducted at the beginning of the Spring 2025 semester, and another at the end of the semester. In total, 13 interviews were completed (seven at the start, six at the end). The following three research questions guided this qualitative study focusing on academic recovery students:

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of Hispanic college students regarding academic recovery?

RQ2: How does autonomy influence the effectiveness of academic recovery interventions for students?

RQ3: How would providing information about academic probation and its implications before starting college impact a student's academic performance and mindset?

### **Summary of Findings**

The data suggest that the prevalence and institutionalization of academic probation in higher education are pressing issues that call for intentional attention and reform. The students' personal narratives provided valuable insights into the truths, challenges, and experiences they face in academic recovery. Each finding serves as a call to action for multiple audiences, including institutional leaders responsible for shaping policy and campus structures, student-support professionals, such as advisors and faculty, who work directly with students, and the broader higher education systems committed to equity and student success. This section presents the study's significant findings in relation to the research questions. Drawing from the 13 interviews with seven (N = 7) Mexican American undergraduate participants, seven key themes emerged reflecting their lived experiences of academic recovery, autonomy, and mindset: (a) Lack of Awareness and Understanding, (b) Learning During Crisis and Communication, (c) Language, Perceptions, and Identity in Probation, (d) Living with Limits: Resistance to Institutional Power and Control, (e) Leaning into Choice: Autonomy and Agency in Academic Recovery, (f) Leaning into Support: Launching into Growth, and (g) Looking Back: Reflections on Missed Guidance and Motivation. Together, these themes illuminate the complexity of

academic probation experience and highlight the need for institutional practices and support that are responsive to students' individual circumstances and pathways towards growth.

While most students begin their college journey in good academic standing (Barouch-Gilbert, 2019; Rodriguez, 2019; Vanacore & Dahan, 2021), many later encounter challenges that place them at risk of probation (Aina et al., 2022; Albert & Wozny, 2022; Behr et al., 2020; Bowman & Jang, 2022; Goldberg et al., 2019; Gonzalez, 2022; Kirp, 2019; Wright, 2020). Scholars emphasize the importance of transparent communication about institutional policies (Arellano, 2021; Luna & Revilla, 2019), implementing early interventions (Bateman, 2022; Hunt et al., 2012; McPherson & Arbelo Marrero, 2021), and reframing probation-related language to reduce stigma (Garcia et al., 2022; Mireles-Rios et al., 2020; Rodriguez, 2019; Tinto, 2010).

Research also highlights the need to promote student agency (M.W. Morris, 2016), providing structured autonomy (Mosier, 2018; Nielsen & Ulriksen, 2021; Zak-Moskal & Garrison, 2020), and ensuring access to mentorship (Arellano, 2021; Frink, 2021; Hunt et al., 2012; McPherson & Arbelo Marrero, 2021) and proactive check-ins (Arellano, 2021; Frink, 2021; Isserles, 2021). The findings of this study align with these recommendations, reinforcing that such practices can meaningfully support students as they navigate academic recovery. Consistent with Burke Leon et al. (2019), the study further highlights the value of a collaborative approach that empowers students to lean into choice, understand themselves deeply, address challenges effectively, and move closer to degree completion.

The application of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to student success raises critical questions about where responsibility for motivation truly resides. While SDT offers a valuable framework for understanding students' psychological needs, it often overlooks the systemic

conditions that influence whether those needs can be adequately met. For example, a student's sense of competence may diminish not because of a lack of ability, but due to systemic institutional issues such as unclear policies, inconsistent advising and support, large class sizes, or limited access to instructors, illustrating that structural conditions, rather than individual deficits, often drive declines in student confidence.

By placing the student at the center, SDT can inadvertently encourage educators to help students adapt to existing structures rather than prompting institutions to reconsider and redesign them. This focus risks obscuring the systemic origins of academic challenges and places an undue burden on students to navigate barriers that should be addressed at an institutional level. Framing students as needing to develop greater resilience diverts attention from the policies, practices, and cultural dynamics that influence their academic experiences. A more comprehensive application of SDT would involve integrating a clear institutional perspective, acknowledging that student motivation is co-constructed by educational environments and not determined solely by individual psychology. Incorporating this perspective can foster a sense of shared responsibility and motivate collaborative efforts for improvement.

## **Interpretation**

The following section reviews the interpretation of the study in relation to each research question.

### **Research Question One**

RQ1: What are the lived experiences of Hispanic college students regarding academic recovery?

#### **Theme 1: Lack of Awareness and Understanding**

The findings from this study reveal an ongoing need for clear and more accessible communication of academic policies and their implications for undergraduate students. Improved dissemination of this information could play a significant role in preventing students from being placed on academic probation. This finding aligns with prior research indicating that many students enter college without a complete understanding of institutional expectations, academic regulations, or the consequences of their academic performance, as highlighted by Robinson (2015) and Wright (2020). As a result, academic probationary policies often emerge as unexpected outcomes, leaving students feeling caught off guard and unprepared to navigate the process (McPherson, 2019; McPherson & Arbelo Marrero, 2021; Tovar & Simon, 2006).

### **Theme 2: Learning During Crisis and Communication**

Findings from this study illustrate that college students often learn to navigate academic recovery while managing a period of crisis, stress, and uncertainty. These experiences highlight the intersection of emotional, academic, and institutional factors that influence students' ability to persist and perform. The findings align with previous research, which demonstrates that college students frequently encounter both personal and academic challenges throughout their educational journeys, significantly affecting their progress and well-being (Arellano, 2021; McNabb, 2015; Vanacore & Dahan, 2021). These challenges can disrupt students' academic trajectories and impact their overall success throughout the semester

### **Theme 3: Language, Perceptions, and Identity in Probation**

It is not only essential but also our responsibility to carefully consider the language we use when attributing a student's challenges in completing their education solely to their actions, attitudes, and behaviors (Garcia et al., 2022; Mireles-Rios et al., 2020; Tinto, 2010). Another

important finding is that the terminology associated with probation affects how students view themselves, invoking criminal implications and societal judgment, as Rodriguez (2019) also observed. As highlighted by Barouch-Gilbert (2016), such terminology can carry negative, punitive connotations. The term "probation," in particular, often carries a negative perception among students (Arellano, 2021; Barouch-Gilbert, 2016; Rodriguez, 2019). It is crucial to acknowledge that deficit-oriented language may hinder students' recognition of their potential as learners (Rodriguez, 2019). To enhance the students' experience, educational institutions must reevaluate the negative language and terminology associated with probation. Pivotal change can empower and foster a more supportive environment.

### **Research Question Two**

RQ2: How does autonomy influence the effectiveness of academic recovery interventions for students?

### **Theme 4: Living with Limits: Resistance to Institutional Power and Control**

Another finding shows that students in academic recovery frequently resist policies they perceive as restrictive. Higher education institutions need to refrain from applying a uniform approach to all students; instead, they must implement policy changes that promote equity, thereby encouraging students to persist in their studies rather than withdraw. M.W. Morris (2016) asserts that colleges should avoid punitive measures and exclusionary practices. Instead, they should engage collaboratively with students to establish frameworks that support learning and inclusivity. This collaborative engagement is not just beneficial but integral to the process. Students' experiences have a profound impact on their academic persistence. As noted by Goldberg et al. (2019), "positive experiences reinforce persistence and negative experiences

undermine it, thus reducing or enhancing the likelihood of leaving college" (p.382). By investing in undergraduate students' well-being and providing targeted support, colleges can effectively promote student retention and facilitate the successful completion of their educational programs (Aina et al., 2022; Baker & Robnett, 2012). Institutions should develop personalized strategies in consultation with students to address their individual needs and enhance their prospects for academic success (Morris, 2016). Therefore, it is not only vital but also urgent for colleges and universities to provide comprehensive guidance and support throughout students' educational journeys (Luna & Revilla, 2019).

#### **Theme 5: Leaning into Choice: Autonomy and Agency in Academic Recovery**

Another key finding indicates that decision-making enhances students' sense of ownership in their academic recovery journey. When students understand the reasons behind their actions, they demonstrate greater resilience and are more likely to sustain a lifelong curiosity for learning (Mosier, 2018). Educational institutions play a vital role in fostering this understanding by removing barriers and demonstrating confidence in students' capacity to make sound decisions. However, the true catalyst for recovery lies in the students themselves.

For students on academic probation, having the autonomy to choose their preferred intervention method is not just a defining element but a crucial factor in their recovery. This autonomy empowers students to take personal ownership of their learning, reflect on their experiences, and set meaningful goals. Students are more likely to follow through when they generate their own reasoning for making a change and a decision. These actions not only promote both personal growth and accountability but also restore the students' agency, which is often compromised during academic challenges. Zak-Moskal and Garrison (2020) stress the

importance of critically assessing programs and initiatives that restrict choice and undermine autonomy. They argue that meaningful change requires the restoration of student agency. Allowing students to select options that best align with their individual needs and circumstances is a tangible step toward this change and their power.

Ultimately, when institutions trust and support students' capacity to make informed decisions, they affirm students' dignity while strengthening persistence and the potential for degree completion. Research grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides further support for these findings. Scholars such as Blankenship (2021), Moore (2023), Mosier (2018), and Zak-Moskal & Garrison (2020) emphasize that autonomy, control, and intrinsic motivation are central to student engagement. In the context of academic probation, SDT illustrates how fostering autonomy can inform the design of interventions that not only motivate students but also empower them to take ownership of their educational journey, ultimately leading to more sustainable academic success.

### **Theme 6: Leaning into Support: Launching into Growth**

The findings from this study highlight the importance of mentorship, peer support, and connections with faculty. Many students, initially hesitant and apprehensive, attributed their academic progress to interventions, which significantly contributed to both their academic and personal well-being. This aligns with existing research indicating that students require a sense of belonging, support, mentorship, and awareness of available campus resources to succeed (Hunt et al., 2012). It is recommended to design personalized approaches and strategies in collaboration with students to address their unique needs and foster both academic and financial success (Morris, 2016). Research further indicates that obtaining a college degree can lead to numerous

benefits, including access to high-skill jobs, increased earnings, greater job stability, enhanced social capital, improved health outcomes, and better retirement prospects (Kirp, 2019; Reber & Smith, 2023).

### **Research Question Three**

RQ3. How would providing information about academic probation and its implications before starting college impact a student's academic performance and mindset?

### **Theme 7: Looking Back: Reflections on Missed Guidance and Motivation**

The study's findings are significant, as they highlight the profound impact of early, proactive, and informed education on students' motivation, focus, and overall academic performance. These findings are crucial for informing stakeholders about the benefits of proactive educational strategies, which can significantly enhance students' overall experiences. College students express a desire for their institutions to provide explicit guidance on the implications of academic probation, including strategies to navigate the status effectively, and how to collaborate with available resources and faculty from the start, particularly during orientation.

These findings align with previous research, which suggests that students' perceptions of their college experiences significantly influence their decision to continue or discontinue their education in higher education institutions (Bateman, 2022). The implementation of early academic alerts and motivational support is not just critical but also highly effective. Proactive check-ins and motivation-building interventions, such as academic coaching, have been proven successful in enhancing student retention and academic success in higher education (Alzen et al., 2021). Academic coaching plays a pivotal role in higher education. It involves assigning a

dedicated institutional representative who not only supports students' academic development and addresses their challenges strategically but also fosters a sense of belonging among them. This process provides students with opportunities to provide feedback and reflect on their progress (Vanacore & Dahan, 2021).

## **Implications**

The following section discusses the implications of the study's conclusions. These implications emphasize areas for potential improvement and enhancements in practice, programming, and institutional change. Overall, the findings suggest that academic recovery is not simply a process of remediation, but rather a process of rehumanization. Institutions that perceive probation as an opportunity for growth rather than a punishment can foster a sense of belonging, agency, and resilience while avoiding the drawbacks of deficit-based language. This new perspective promotes hope and optimism, emphasizing the potential for growth and development.

### **(a) Lack of Awareness and Understanding**

Educational institutions must not assume that undergraduates fully grasp the implications of academic probation. Research indicates that the language, timing, and tone of communication significantly influence students' emotional and behavioral responses. Consequently, universities should prioritize creating transparent, empathetic probation communication plans that foster trust and respect. These plans should deliver messages that are both informative and humanizing, reducing confusion and stigma while encouraging early engagement with recovery resources.

### **(b) Learning During Crisis and Communication**

Students often experience academic probation during personal or emotional crises, yet institutional communication remains primarily focused on procedures. The findings suggest a need for comprehensive, university-wide communication strategies that acknowledge the complexity of students' lived experiences. By incorporating flexibility, compassion, and follow-up support, these strategies can transform a moment of crisis into an opportunity for care and learning, ultimately leading to improved retention and recovery outcomes.

### **(c) Language, Perceptions, and Identity in Probation**

The term "probation" often carries negative connotations that can harm students' academic identities. As educators, administrators, and policymakers involved in student affairs and academic policies, they need to promote a positive student identity. Institutions should prioritize a thorough reexamination of the language used in their policies, correspondence, and advising practices. This reevaluation, with its focus on affirming students rather than labeling them. By reframing "academic probation" as "academic recovery" or "learning renewal," institutions can shift the institutional narrative from one of punishment to one of growth, helping students regain and reclaim their sense of agency and belonging.

### **d) Living with Limits: Resistance to Institutional Power and Control**

The tension between student autonomy and institutional authority suggests the need for recovery programs to find a balance between accountability and choice. Strict probation structures can unintentionally lead to feelings of disempowerment among undergraduates. Instead, institutions adopt academic recovery plans developed in collaboration with students, allowing for student input and reflecting their individual goals and needs. This approach fosters collaboration rather than compliance.

### **(e) Leaning into Choice: Autonomy and Agency in Academic Recovery**

When undergraduates are given opportunities to make meaningful choices, such as selecting recovery activities or designing their success plans, they can begin to rebuild self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation. Institutions need to incorporate this finding by integrating choice into recovery programs, allowing students to customize pathways that align with their individual learning preferences and strengths. These practices, which support autonomy, are consistent with self-determination theory, encourage sustainable academic resilience, and demonstrate the institutions' commitment to supporting student success.

### **(f) Leaning into Support: Launching into Growth**

This theme emphasizes that academic recovery is not solely an individual journey; it is a communal endeavor. Universities have a responsibility to invest in mentorship and coaching to foster relationships between faculty and students. By creating support networks that extend before and beyond the probationary period, we can help normalize the act of seeking help, reassuring undergraduate students that it is a normal part of the academic experience. This transformation of vulnerability can lead to opportunities for growth and connection, empowering everyone involved.

### **(g) Looking Back: Reflections on Missed Guidance and Motivation**

Students' reflections on their experiences highlight the negative impact of delayed intervention and inadequate guidance. This observation highlights the importance of institutions adopting a proactive approach and implementing effective strategies that focus on early and ongoing engagement through advising, mentorship, and specialized programming. By implementing such measures, institutions can avert academic probation, thereby significantly

enhancing the overall student experience. Additionally, it can foster a culture of shared learning from past experiences to improve future support.

## **Limitations**

The following section acknowledges and discusses the limitations that may have influenced the study's findings.

### **Practical Limitations**

Due to delays in the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval process, the study could not be conducted until the beginning of the Spring 2025 semester, instead of the initially planned Fall 2024 semester. The IRB approval was granted only after the last day of classes on December 12, 2024. This timing made participant recruitment for Spring 2025 particularly challenging due to the tight schedule. Many students placed on Academic Probation did not learn of their academic standing until January 2, 2025, when Academic Eligibility was assigned. This left students with very little time, essentially just days, to understand their status before classes began on January 15. As a result, I faced challenges in my recruitment efforts between January and March, finding willing and interested participants for the Spring 2025 study.

It is important to note that if the study were to focus on newly assigned academic recovery students at the end of a Spring term, students would receive their Academic Eligibility assignments in Late May. This would provide a gap from May until school starts in late August, allowing students more time to learn about their academic probation status. With this extended period, I could have improved my recruitment efforts, giving me a better chance to find willing and interested participants to share their experiences about their academic recovery. Instead, I had a shorter timeframe to recruit.

### **Methodological Limitations**

The sample size of seven students was relatively small. This limitation is believed to be partly due to the stigma associated with academic probation. Such a status can impose emotional burdens and influence students' self-perceptions, leading many to maintain secrecy or refrain from disclosing their experiences to avoid social judgment. Consequently, recruiting willing participants was challenging, as many appeared reluctant to disclose their status as students on academic probation or to openly share their experiences.

### **Participant-Related Limitations**

During the research interview process, several challenges were encountered with participants who had consented to take part in the study. These difficulties were most evident in three areas, participation in the intervention, scheduling, and logistics conducting interviews with six of the seven participants. Most participants were uncomfortable turning their camera during their first interview, with only two choosing to do so; by the second interview, four of six did participants opted to use their cameras. Additionally, many participants did not regularly check their emails, resulting in delays in communication and multiple missed interviews, which required multiple rescheduling efforts. The participants could have benefited from enhancing their organizational and time management skills. This situation highlights the complexities these students face in effectively managing their time and responsibilities, which was an issue that affected six of the seven participants. Regrettably, one participant was unavailable for the second interview despite multiple attempts to contact them. It is also important to recognize that, among the seven participants in this study, only five actively engaged in their Student Success Retention and Innovation (SSRI) program, which has since been rebranded as Student Success (SS).

Despite these limitations, the study holds valuable insights into the experiences of Mexican American students on academic probation.

### **Scope Limitations**

One limitation of this study is its exclusive focus on students who identify as Mexican American and have a connection to Mexico, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to students from other racial or ethnic backgrounds. This highlights the need for further research into students' experiences from a broader range of backgrounds. Furthermore, since the study was conducted at a single institution, the results may not be applicable in other educational contexts. Additionally, it is essential to acknowledge the study's limitations, particularly the small number of participants who chose to participate; this may not fully represent the full range and diversity of student experiences.

### **Researcher-Related Limitations**

From my insider perspective, my experience and understanding of the institution and its academic recovery programs shaped both the data collection process and my engagement with participants. This background informed the rapport I built and influenced how I interpreted their narratives. While my positionality provided a source of insights, it also introduced the potential for bias in understanding participants' specific experiences.

### **Contextual Limitations**

#### **Institutional Financial Instability and Campus Climate**

During data collection, it became evident that the university's budget shortfall and subsequent staffing reductions have had a significant impact on campus climate and participants' perceptions of institutional support. In the Fall of 2023, the University of Arizona announced a

\$240 million budget shortfall, including a \$177 million deficit (Lineberry, 2025). This financial crisis has had a profound impact on both staff and students, leading to critical measures such as hiring and compensation freezes from December 2023 through June 2024, layoffs, and widespread budget reductions across various departments, colleges, and academic divisions to reduce expenses (The University of Arizona, 2024). This situation has also resulted in the cancellation of funding for strategic initiatives. As a result, employees faced increased workloads due to reduced staffing and limited resources, often without receiving additional compensation for their extra efforts. Prospective students faced reductions in both merit- and need-based financial aid, along with the elimination of tuition guarantees for new students starting in Fall 2025; however, current students remained unaffected (The University of Arizona, 2024). Understandably, these developments influenced the confidence and trust of employees and students, raising concerns about the university's financial priorities and long-term commitments.

### **Political Change, Leadership Transition, and the Reshaping of Diversity and Inclusion**

While financial instability significantly affected campus morale and operations, the 2024-2025 academic year introduced new complexities amid political and administrative changes. These shifts at both federal and institutional levels altered leadership priorities and the university's approach to diversity and inclusion. A notable milestone occurred as Suresh Garimella was appointed the new president of the University of Arizona, effective October 1, 2024 (The University of Arizona, n.d.-f). Meanwhile, Donald Trump began his second term as President of the United States on January 20, 2025. During this term, his administration has sought to eliminate all Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives and programs at American universities. The stakes are high, as educational institutions that do not comply risk

losing federal funding (The White House, 2025). The U.S. Department of Education has ended funding for Minority-Serving Institutions (MSI) and defunded several grant programs under the Title V Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (DHSI) initiative (U.S. Department of Education Ends Funding to Racially Discriminatory Discretionary Grant Programs at Minority-Serving Institutions, 2025). This initiative, which aimed to enhance educational opportunities and improve retention, degree completion, career readiness, and post-graduation success for Hispanic/Latinx and low-income students, directly affected the College's Title V Project grants.

Shortly after this funding cut, the University of Arizona quietly updated its Land Acknowledgment, removing the phrase “Committed to diversity and inclusion” (The University of Arizona, n.d.-a). Additionally, the university consolidated its Cultural Resource Centers (CRCs) and established a new initiative called Campus Community Connections (CCC). This consolidation merged seven cultural resource centers into a single unit, the Student Culture and Engagement Hub (The University of Arizona, n.d.-e). The lack of prior communication regarding these changes raised concerns among the campus community. All cultural centers were affected, and decisions were made without consulting the students who would be impacted. During the summer, when classes were not in session, the administration dismissed the directors of the seven CRCs, leaving students without the opportunity to meet, reorganize, or respond. As part of the reorganization, the cultural resource centers underwent significant changes, including adopting new names that no longer included 'Center' or 'Affairs.' For instance, the former Chicano/Hispano Student Affairs, which was renamed in 2014 as the Guerrero Student Center, is now known as the Adalberto & Ana Guerrero Student Space. Similarly, the Asian Pacific American Student Affairs (APASA) has been renamed the Lotus Lounge Student Space, and the

African American Student Affairs has been renamed the MLK Jr. Dream Student Space. The Disability Cultural Center has been rebranded as the Omnes Disability Student Space (The University of Arizona, 2025).

On October 1, 2025, the University of Arizona received a draft plan from the U.S. Department of Education titled "The Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education," with a request for feedback by October 20 (Conner et al., 2025; U.S. Government, n.d.). The university reviewed the proposed compact and related mandates to assess their potential implications for access to federal funding in exchange for adopting specific policy changes. One primary concern is the potential impact of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. The implementation of DEI-related restrictions could not only limit but also significantly hinder specialized research focused on diverse populations, including Latinos, Hispanics, Indigenous peoples, women, and other groups.

The compact requires careful evaluation to determine whether any financial benefits justify potential trade-offs in academic freedom, freedom of speech, and the creation of inclusive environments for diverse students. However, adopting the compact could significantly conflict with the university's stated commitments to equity and inclusion, which are already being compromised. This could set precedents affecting institutional autonomy in responding to federal policy changes, particularly regarding their capacity to "serve" as a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). On October 20, the University of Arizona declined the Trump administration's proposed higher education compact and provided feedback by submitting a Statement of Principles to the Department of Education (Garimella & University of Arizona, 2025).

Hispanic and non-Hispanic academic recovery students possess distinct needs and characteristics that significantly influence their academic performance. As crucial stakeholders, institutional leaders and educational institutions are not only responsible for shaping policy and campus structures, but also the driving force behind change (Bateman, 2022). The engagement of institutions in recovery intervention programs has the potential to profoundly impact students' lives, empowering them, fostering a sense of worth, and helping them achieve higher retention and graduation rates. According to Burke Leon et al. (2019), with proper support, intervention can guide academic probationary students in learning about themselves, addressing their challenges, and ultimately help them achieve graduation. They can actively cultivate hope and motivation in undergraduate students on academic probation or, conversely, risk diminishing it. Our roles in shaping policy and driving change are crucial, and our actions can make a significant difference in students' lives.

### **Recommendations**

The study, along with prior research, suggests that undergraduate students continue to encounter challenges related to academic probation. In response to this issue, the study proposes several recommendations to support students in their academic recovery journey. It highlights the importance of gaining a better understanding of students' experiences with recovery interventions, the impact of having choices in those interventions, and the challenges they encounter. The findings from this research provide valuable insights that inform and enhance strategies to improve student retention. It is essential to recognize that these students do not choose to be placed on academic probation; rather, many find themselves in this situation due to various external circumstances.

The specific recommendations are as follows: (a) ensure early transparent and timely communication regarding academic warning and probation policies and expectations, (b) implement comprehensive university-wide communication strategies, (c) reframe the associated terminology from punitive to growth-oriented, (d) co-create individualized academic recovery plans (e) adopt practices that support student autonomy, (f) cultivate networks focused on relationship-building and care, and (g) facilitate early and continuous engagement with students. The successful implementation of these recommendations, which relies on the expertise and dedication of university administrators, faculty, student support staff, and policymakers, offers a promising outlook for students navigating the academic recovery process.

### **Recommendations for Institutions**

For meaningful progress to be achieved, institutions should consider reframing the language surrounding probation in their messaging. There is a pressing need for collaborative policy design and the allocation of targeted resources and interventions to assist undergraduate students effectively. Institutions must examine and address the gaps in students' understanding by implementing more intentional onboarding orientations and proactive academic advising. The data indicate that all student participants would benefit from clearer onboarding processes in their first year, including transparent communication regarding institutional policies, procedures, and available resources. Proactive outreach is crucial for enhancing student awareness, preparedness, and overall success. Early alert systems integrated with platforms like D2L, Brightspace, Trellis, and Blackboard would facilitate the identification of students at risk of academic warning, enabling timely connections with student support professionals and campus resources, such as advising teams, academic skill-building workshops, and tutoring services.

While Self-Determination Theory has greatly enhanced our understanding of student motivation, its inclination to individualize responsibility can limit its effectiveness in addressing the structural and systemic factors that influence educational experiences. Students succeed not merely because they possess internal motivation, but because institutions create environments where that motivation can thrive. Students require environments deliberately designed to fulfill their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, reassuring educators and policymakers of their crucial role in student success. To genuinely foster student success, institutions must transcend the expectation that students consistently exhibit greater levels of grit or resilience. Instead, they should take accountability for creating conditions that promote a sense of belonging and ensure the equitable distribution of resources and support. Recognizing this collective responsibility can motivate educators to feel more engaged and committed to systemic change, emphasizing that student flourishing is a shared goal.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Future research could include students from a variety of institutions where autonomy and agency are integral to their interventions, offering a unique approach warranting further exploration. Additionally, including students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds in this research will underscore the importance of conducting additional research to explore the experiences of students from a broader range of backgrounds.

### **Conclusion**

Supporting every capable and willing student is a collective responsibility (Powell, 2014). Higher education plays a crucial role in shaping undergraduate students' present and future opportunities (Bateman, 2022). This responsibility is especially important for academic

recovery students who should not be defined by their challenges but recognized as integral members of the academic community, deserving of intentional attention, inclusive practices, and meaningful support. Ultimately, this study underscores the significance of fostering environments that cultivate resilience, agency, and a sense of belonging. Instructors, advisors, and support staff play a crucial role in fostering conditions that enable students to turn obstacles into opportunities. By recognizing students' strengths, honoring their experiences, and providing intentional support, higher education can help students achieve progress and success.

Each participant in this study expressed optimism and carried hope for their future. Analysis of 13 interviews with seven Mexican American undergraduate students (N=7) reveals seven key themes reflecting their lived experiences with academic recovery, autonomy, and mindset. Together, these themes illustrate the complexity of navigating academic probation and the need for institutional practices that are responsive to students' individual circumstances and support their pathways to academic recovery. The use of flower names for pseudonyms was intentionally chosen for the participants who did not provide their own (Daisy, Iris, Lily, Marigold). Much like flowers, students require care, attention, and an environment that nurtures their unique needs. When a flower does not bloom, we do not blame the flower; instead, we recognize the need for change and adjust the conditions to help it flourish. Similarly, students thrive when placed in environments that foster growth, resilience, and a sense of belonging. Just as each flower grows at its own pace, so do students. Educators, academic advisors, and student support staff play a crucial role in creating the conditions that enable students to grow and thrive. For effective growing to occur, it is only possible in favorable conditions and environments designed for them to thrive. A supportive community ensures that the responsibility for student

success is collaboratively shared among all stakeholders, reinforcing the collective effort essential for student progress.

### **Epilogue: Empowering, Encouraging, and Emerging**

As this dissertation comes to a close, it is both fitting and essential to reflect on, honor, and conclude with the voices of the seven undergraduate participants who generously shared their personal lived experiences and insights into academic recovery from the beginning of the study. Their contributions help enrich this study and provide valuable perspectives that extend well beyond these pages, deepening our understanding of the academic recovery process and its broader implications for student success. When asked what advice they would give to a student who has just been placed on academic probation, they offered their wisdom, which is outlined below. Their words not only offer encouragement but also serve as a testament to the resilience future students can draw upon as they navigate the complexities of academic probation and the placement process, emphasizing that no student needs to face these challenges alone. The participants' lived experiences highlight the importance of self-empowerment, self-reflection, and self-advocacy, while also emphasizing the need to utilize available resources. They affirm that students value having choices and appreciate the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to overcome challenges. They can move forward with resilience. By embracing their words and wisdom, one may find guidance and reassurance, discovering that it is indeed possible to emerge from academic recovery not only intact but strengthened, renewed, and ready to thrive.

#### **Table 11**

*Uplifting the Self: Uncovering Strength Through Support*

it's okay  
don't feel embarrassed

things happen in your personal life  
this doesn't mean that you're not good at what you're doing, or that this is not the  
right path for you.  
continue to move forward.  
Stick up for yourself  
Just keep keep going  
clap for yourself  
elevate yourself  
if you honestly make it your goal to like improve. You can do it.  
you're empowered, and you can still be successful.  
be successful at school  
You can still get your degree  
you can still do what you need to do, and you can do that at UofA.  
self-evaluation  
self-reflection  
get back on track  
figure out what it is that's like actually affecting your schoolwork  
pinpoint, what exactly is going wrong  
make a spreadsheet of all the interventions, you know  
somebody there to... give you resources  
network all your resources the best you can  
use the resources.  
use more resources  
Try to find resources on your own because you're not going to be given every single  
resource that's available.  
say what you need  
Talk to your advisor  
talk to a counselor  
talk to academic coaches  
I recommend...a peer mentor  
ask other students on academic probation  
know to communicate with someone  
find anyone that can help you navigate it  
help you

*Note: This collective poetic transcription is derived from the participant's direct verbatim account and has been thoughtfully structured to convey the emotional complexities associated with academic probation. It reflects themes to promote self-reflection, self-advocacy, and support.*

This poem, "Uplifting the Self: Uncovering Strength Through Support," is not just a narrative; it is an invitation for readers to witness a process of personal growth. It shows how

encouragement, reflection, and resourcefulness can empower students to persist through academic probation. Phrases such as “clap for yourself,” “network all your resources the best you can,” “talk to your advisor,” and “help you” serve as calls to action, demonstrating how students can cultivate both internal resilience while also drawing on the nourishment of external support. The poem emphasizes that recovery encompasses not only academic skills but also the gradual blossoming of confidence, self-advocacy, and proactive engagement with available resources. By weaving together perspectives into a single narrative that unfolds from self-doubt to empowerment, the poem conveys both rootedness and renewal, evoking a sense of strength and possibility. Ultimately, it serves as a reminder that students can reimagine themselves on their journey of constructing their identities through both self-belief and supportive networks. Each act of reflection, advocacy, and resource-seeking nourishes growth, allowing students to flourish academically, personally, and relationally.

I encourage each and every student to recognize their worth and invest in themselves. Just as a flower needs the right conditions to bloom, students can flourish when they seek the proper support and nurturing they need for their growth. Similarly, institutions, in turn, play a vital role; they must create environments rooted in compassion, understanding, and available resources to empower students to thrive. It is essential for students to have a voice in choosing the interventions and supports that align with their individual needs. This involvement allows them to take an active and informed role in their academic journey. Seeking help is a courageous and commendable step that enhances one’s ability to succeed and grow.

So, complete your degree; it is within reach. “Use the resources,” “use more resources.” Keep striving to grow and bloom, and remember to “help you, “...You can do it.”

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A. RECRUITMENT EMAIL

**Subject:** Call for Participants! Study on Hispanic Academic Probationary Students

Dear Colleagues,

My name is Rae L. Palmer, and I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education's Teaching, Language, and Social Cultural program at the University of Arizona. I am conducting a study on the experiences of Hispanic academic probationary students who have chosen to participate in an academic recovery intervention of their choice with THINK TANK, Thrive Center, or CAPS during the Spring 2025 semester and are willing to share their experiences and insights regarding their academic probation, academic recovery, and academic intervention.

**Eligibility:**

- Identify as a Hispanic University of Arizona undergraduate student
- On academic probation with a GPA under 2.0 for Spring 2025
- Participating in an academic recovery intervention for Spring 2025
- Able to complete a one-hour Zoom interview

**Time Commitment:** Approximately one hour

**Compensation:** \$50 Amazon Gift Card

**Location:** Zoom

**Please reach out if you meet these criteria and are willing to participate. Thank you!**

**Contact Info:** Rae L. Palmer at [labar@arizona.edu](mailto:labar@arizona.edu) or 928-503-1554 for questions.

Thank you,

Rae LaBar Palmer

APPENDIX B. FLYER



**\$50  
for an  
Interview**

## Calling for Participants

- Are you on Academic Probation this Spring 2025?
- Are you a Hispanic UA Student?
- Are you actively participating in an Academic Recovery Intervention with THINK TANK, THRIVE, or CAPS?

**Please come share your experiences!  
Compensation will be in an Amazon Gift Card.**

Time commitment for participants is:

- One-hour Zoom interview



If interested, please contact **Rae L. Palmer** at **labar@arizona.edu** or text **928-503-1554**

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The University of Arizona reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research: STUDY00005446

Participation in this study is completely voluntary

## **APPENDIX C. CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY**

### **Introduction**

You are invited to take part in this study. I, Rae, am the researcher and will be available to provide additional information for any questions you may have. You will be asked to sign this consent form. The information in this consent form is provided to help you decide whether to participate in the study; a copy of the consent form will be given to you.

According to the IRB Protocol, educational records are being accessed in this study. Educational records are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. Records cannot be released without your written consent. Educational records are being requested as part of this research project.

- GPA and academic recovery intervention of choice.
- Analyze consenting academic probationary undergraduate students' GPA's before and after their academic recovery intervention of choice.

### **What is the purpose of this study?**

I seek to examine the experiences of Hispanic students with academic recovery interventions to better understand their relationship with education.

### **Why are you being asked to participate?**

You are being invited because you have experienced placement on academic probation, are completing an academic recovery intervention, and are Hispanic. I want to learn about your relationship with your education.

### **How many people will be asked to participate in this study?**

Approximately 10-15 people will be asked to participate in this study.

### **What will happen during this study?**

A Zoom 1:1 interview will be scheduled for us to meet for one hour. An additional invitation may be sent afterward to participate in an additional Zoom 1:1 interview (audio/video recorded): approximately 1 hour.

### **How long will I be in this study?**

If you choose to participate, you will participate in the Zoom 1:1 interview for approximately 1 hour.

### **Are there any risks to me?**

Participation in the study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to redact any information after an interview or focus group. We have attempted to minimize these risks, and some of the questions I will ask may be stressful or uncomfortable, particularly those related to being on academic probation. If you feel uncomfortable, you can choose not to answer any questions. Additionally, you may withdraw from the study at any time by simply informing me that you no

longer wish to participate without facing any negative consequences. You will not be identified in any report or publication of this study.

**Are there any benefits to me?**

There are no exact benefits to participants, but participants may benefit from self-reflection, 1-1 dialogue. Participants may gain an enhanced critical consciousness or have a therapeutic experience from sharing their academic probation and recovery experience experiences.

**Will there be any costs to me?**

There are no costs other than your time for participating in the study.

**Will I be paid to participate in the study?**

Yes, you will be paid for your participation.

**Will the information that is obtained from me be kept confidential?**

Yes, several actions will be taken to protect participants' privacy. Your records will be confidential. You will not be identified in any of the work I produce for my research. Pseudonyms will be used in transcriptions, analyses, and reports. All electronic files related to this project will be stored in a password-protected folder that only the researcher can access. Your information may be used for future research or shared with another researcher for future research studies without additional consent.

**May I change my mind about participating?**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to decide not to participate. You may also stop participating in the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the research study, your data will be deleted.

**Whom can I contact for additional information?**

You can contact me as the researcher as well as the Principal Investigator to share any concerns or complaints about this research study. As the researcher, my contact information is (928) 503-1554 and labar@arizona.edu If you have 1) questions about your rights as a study participant, 2) questions, complaints, or concerns about the research.

**Will video or audio recordings be made of me during the study?**

If you consent to participate in the study, the researcher, Rae L. Palmer, will record audio and video during the study to ensure that your responses are recorded accurately.

**Please check one:**

If you agree to be part of the study, please check one of the options below:

\_\_\_\_\_ I give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give my permission for audio **and** video recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

The information that you provide in the study will be handled confidentially. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released or shared as required by law. The University of Arizona Institutional Review Board may review the research records for monitoring purposes.

For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact my advisor Dr. Ashley D. Domínguez at [ashddominguez@arizona.edu](mailto:ashddominguez@arizona.edu).

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who part of the research team is not, you may contact the Human Subjects Protection Program Director at 520-626-8630 or online at <https://research.arizona.edu/compliance/human-subjects-protection-program>.

**Your Signature**

By signing this form, I affirm that I have read the information in the form, the study has been explained to me, my questions have been answered, and I agree to participate in this study by signing and submitting this consent form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date signed

## **APPENDIX D. INTERVIEWS VIRTUAL/ONLINE PROTOCOL**

This 1:1 Zoom interview is being conducted to explore the experiences of Hispanic college students participating in academic recovery interventions at the University of Arizona. This interview seeks to gather information and data on the academic recovery of students on academic probation. The goal is to amplify students' voices and personal narratives, which are vital to my ongoing research.

### **Background Survey:**

1. What Spanish-speaking country/countries do you self-identify with?
2. Are you an in-state, out-of-state, or international student?
3. Are you a first-generation college student?
4. Are you working this semester?
5. What is your gender?
6. What is your age?

### **Questions:**

1. Were you formerly aware that academic probation existed before you began your undergraduate semester? When did you learn about it?
2. Would learning about academic probation and its implications before starting college influence your academic performance differently? If so, how?
3. How did you learn about your placement on academic probation?
4. How did you find yourself placed on academic probation?
5. How do you feel about being placed on academic probation?
6. How do you feel about UofA?
7. How do you feel about your quality of education at the UofA?
8. How do you feel about the term
  - a. Academic probation? Proposed term?
  - b. Academic recovery? Proposed term?
  - c. Academic intervention? Proposed term?

9. Would you prefer to have a say or not in choosing an intervention? Why or Why not?
10. How do you feel about having a say in your choice of intervention?
11. Why did you choose your specific choice of intervention?
12. How do you perceive your choice in your intervention?
13. What factors from your intervention support your academic recovery?
14. What factors from your intervention hinder your recovery?
15. Would you change your choice of intervention? Why or Why not?
16. How do you believe your academic recovery would differ if not given a choice?
17. How do you believe others' academic recovery would differ if not given a choice?
18. How do you believe others' academic recovery would differ if given a choice?
19. How do you feel peers perceive you while on intervention?
20. How do you feel faculty or staff perceive you while on intervention?
21. How do you feel academic advisors perceive you while on intervention?
22. How do you feel the university perceives you while on intervention?
23. How do you perceive yourself while pursuing your academic intervention?
24. What else do you feel could be done to support your intervention?
25. What could be done to support future college students' interventions and success?
26. What do you think about when you hear the word college pushout?
27. What is the difference between college pushout and college dropout?
28. Do you know anyone who experienced college pushout? Who? How?
29. Have you witnessed the pressures of college pushout yourself? How?
30. What are ways students feel the pressures of college pushout from school?
31. What do you think should be done to prevent college pushout?

**Closing Questions:**

32. What do you think is important for us to know about this subject that we have not already discussed?

33. Would you be willing to participate in a follow-up interview in Spring 2025 to share your thoughts and feelings after the completion of your intervention?
34. Do you have a self-select pseudonym name you would like me to use?

**End:** I greatly appreciate your honest responses to the questions, thoughts, and time. Thank you for your participation!

## **APPENDIX E. FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW VIRTUAL/ONLINE PROTOCOL**

This 1:1 Zoom interview is being conducted to explore the experiences of Hispanic college students participating in academic recovery interventions at the University of Arizona. This interview seeks to gather information and data on the academic recovery of students on academic probation. The goal is to amplify students' voices and personal narratives, which are vital to my ongoing research.

### **Questions:**

#### General Well-Being and Reflection

1. How did the rest of the semester go for you academically and personally?
2. What stood out to you the most this semester?
3. Are there any moments from this semester that you're particularly proud of?
4. Are there any moments from this semester that you're particularly disappointed by?
5. What things would you change this semester to have greater success and satisfaction?

#### Reflection on the Intervention Experience

6. Did you find your intervention(s) helpful? Why or why not?
7. How did your perception of the intervention change over time, if at all?

#### Personal and Academic Growth

8. What did you learn about yourself as a student through this experience?
9. Have your academic habits or approaches changed since participating in the intervention? If so, how?
10. What strategies or tools from the intervention do you still plan to use today?
11. Do you feel more confident or capable academically now? Why or why not?

#### Emotional Impact and Identity

12. Did participating in the recovery program change the way you see yourself as a student? How do you see yourself now?

13. Can you describe any emotional challenges or breakthroughs you experienced during the process?

#### Community and Relationships

14. How did your relationships with peers, faculty, or advisors change after the intervention?

15. Were there specific individuals who made a difference in your recovery journey? If yes, how so?

#### Reflections on Institutional Support

16. Do you feel the university's academic recovery process was fair and equitable? Why or why not?

17. What resources or practices do you think were missing or could be improved in the intervention process?

18. If you could redesign the intervention program, what changes would you suggest?

#### Long-Term Impact and Looking Ahead

19. How do you view your academic future now compared to before the intervention?

20. Has your experience changed your educational or career goals?

21. What advice would you give to a student who has just been placed on academic probation?

22. How do you feel after submitting your Academic Appeal?

23. What now till the Fall Semester starts?

#### **Closing Questions:**

24. Is there anything else important you would like to share on Academic Recovery or Probation that we have not already discussed?

**End:** I greatly appreciate your honest responses to the questions, thoughts, and time. Thank you for your participation!

## APPENDIX F. IRB DOCUMENTATION



University of Arizona IRB  
 845 N Park Ave., Suite 537A  
 Tucson, AZ 85719  
 Fax: 520-621-9810  
[VPR-IRB@arizona.edu](mailto:VPR-IRB@arizona.edu)

### MINIMAL RISK APPROVAL

December 12, 2024

Dear Rae LaBar Palmer:

On 12/11/2024, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Hispanic College Students' Lived Experiences with Choice in Academic Recovery Interventions
Investigator:	Rae LaBar Palmer
IRB Submission ID:	STUDY00005446
Sponsor:	None
Prime Sponsor:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2024 CV- Rae LaBar Palmer, Category: CV;</li> <li>• Advisor_Co-I Attestation Form_v2022-08.docx, Category: Other;</li> <li>• Advisors CITI, Category: Other;</li> <li>• Appendix A. Recruitment Email, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li> <li>• Appendix B. Flyer, Category: Recruitment Materials;</li> <li>• Appendix C. Consent Form to Participate in the Study, Category: Consent Form;</li> <li>• Appendix D. Interviews Virtual Online Protocol, Category: Data Collection Tool;</li> <li>• APPENDIX E. Focus Group Question Protocol, Category: Other;</li> <li>• CITI Completion - Responsible Conduct of Research - Rae L. Palmer.pdf, Category: Other;</li> <li>• CITI Completion - Social &amp; Behavioral Research Investigator - Rae L. Palmer.pdf, Category: Other;</li> <li>• Conflict of Interest Required Disclosure Training Certification, Category: Other;</li> <li>• Department/Center/Section Reviewer , Category: Other;</li> </ul>





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissertation Proposal Approval , Category: Institutional Approval;</li> <li>• LaBar Palmer. Version 1- IRB Protocol for Human Subjects- Research-v2024-08.docx, Category: IRB Protocol;</li> <li>• Scientific Scholarly Review Attestation Form_v2022-03.docx, Category: Other;</li> </ul>
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The IRB approved the protocol from 12/11/2024 .

The consent form(s) were approved with this submission. Please ensure to download the stamped consent forms located on the main study workspace in the “Final” column of the Study Documents tab.

Regulatory determinations:

- **Risk Level:** No greater than minimal risk
- **Pediatric Risk Level:** None
- **Review Level:** Exempt; Minimal Risk 2018: The project is not federally funded or supported and has been deemed to be no more than minimal risk.
- **Special Determinations:** None

This project has been reviewed and approved by the IRB or designee. All documents referenced in this submission have been reviewed and approved. The University of Arizona maintains a Federalwide Assurance (FWA) with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) (FWA #00004218). This Institution assures that all of its activities related to human subjects research, regardless of the source of support, will be guided by the Belmont Report and applicable regulations according to 45 CFR 46.111 and/or 21 CFR Part 50. Modifications may be needed for Minimal Risk research. Please refer to the [Guidance Exempt/Minimal Risk Research](#) for a list of changes that would require a Modification submission. All research procedures should be conducted according to the approved protocol and the policies and guidance of the IRB. The Principal Investigator should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that affect the protocol and report any unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others. Please refer to [Guidance Investigators Responsibility after IRB Approval, Reporting New Information, and Exempt/Minimal Risk Research](#).

We value your feedback and would appreciate you taking the time to complete our survey about your experience with the IRB staff:

[https://uarizona.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_ehQ04WxNA06b42i](https://uarizona.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ehQ04WxNA06b42i).

If questions arise at any time during your study, please email the general IRB inbox at [VPR-IRB@arizona.edu](mailto:VPR-IRB@arizona.edu).



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