"The Hour of Separation": An Analysis of First-generation College Students' Family Interactions

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Abstract:

Research suggests that interactions with family members during the academic year can impact the success of first-generation college students. However, we know little about how these students interact with members of their family. Further, we lack knowledge about how different types of interactions influence first-generation students' college experience. To investigate these questions, I will implement a study that explores the lives of first-generation students at Dartmouth College.

Specifically, I will conduct semi-structured interviews with my subjects and administer a pre-interview survey with close-ended questions. Engaging in qualitative research will help me capture the complexity of subjects' attitudes towards their family members. My quantitative research will allow me to contextualize my results in the other identities held by my first-generation subjects. I intend to implement this cross-sectional study over a ten-week term.

Studying elite college students will likely yield interesting results, as my subjects will be further removed from their family milieu than their counterparts at less-selective universities. I plan to interview subjects from different grades and racial groups to yield insights that might lay the groundwork for nationally representative studies of this subject. To produce candid interviews, participants will be selected through snowball sampling.

Given the lack of existing research on this topic, I will analyze my data through a modified grounded theory approach. Exploring this project will likely lead me to insights about forces that shape first-generation students' college success. This information could be powerfully leveraged by higher education leaders to better support these students.

Introduction:

"And ever has it been that love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation." Khalil Gibran, a Lebanese-American author, wrote these words in *The Prophet* in 1923 (4). I find his words to be timeless; I thought about them frequently when designing this study, which explores the lives of first-generation students enrolled at Dartmouth College. My subjects will likely be experiencing a profound hour of separation from their family members. The majority are not only living away from home, but also existing within a milieu that would be utterly unfamiliar to most members of their family (Dartmouth). I am curious about how this separation impacts students' interactions with their family members, and how these interactions, in turn, shape first-generation students' college experience. On a national level, most first-generation students struggle to achieve comparable outcomes in college to their continuing-generation counterparts. As a result, research on factors impacting first-generation students' lives in college could be invaluable to helping them thrive.

Who are first-generation students? Despite recent, heightened interest from researchers in first-generation students, there is no single, universally-accepted definition of this identity (Wildhagen 2015). Regardless of how first-generation status is assigned, most prior studies of these students have focused on individuals enrolled in bachelor's degree programs (Aspelmeier et al. 2012; Stephens et al. 2012; Wang 2014; Wildhagen 2015). Seeking to add to the body of research on this topic, I have chosen to concentrate on the same population. As I implement my study, I intend to use the definition of "first-generation" established by Dartmouth, which assigns this status to students if neither parent graduated from a four-year college (Hardwick 2014). I expect that this choice will facilitate the process of recruiting subjects, given that I will be using this term in a context that they would understand. However, to provide detailed context about the lives of first-generation students, I will discuss studies which use alternate definitions.

I view it as vital to learn about first-generation students' experiences in college, given the tremendous difficulties these students appear to face while enrolled. Multiple studies of first-

generation students have demonstrated that they tend to earn significantly lower GPAs than continuing-generation students (Pascarella et al. 2003; Chen 2005; Aspelmeier et al. 2012). Further, a 2011 report from UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute found a 14.7 percentage point graduation gap between first-generation students and those whose parents had higher education experience; 27.4% of students graduated from the former group, as compared to 42.1% of the latter (DeAngelo et al.). An analysis from the Pell Institute found that only 10.9% of low-income, first-generation students graduated in 6 years (Snyder, Tan and Hoffman 2004; The Pell Institute). Among first-generation students whose households were above the poverty line, 24.9% did (Snyder et al. 2004; The Pell Institute).

Within the context of these national statistics, first-generation students at Dartmouth appear to achieve far superior outcomes. Approximately 12% of undergraduates enrolled at Dartmouth are first-generation students, and the College's six-year graduation rate for first-generation students is 93% (Dartmouth 2016; Hertog and Krupp 2016). Given this, as well as the significant under-representation of first-generation students at four-year, private universities, I view the individuals in my study population as deviant cases (Radwin et al. 2013). As such, I believe that learning about their experiences will produce invaluable insights that could be used to help first-generation students across the country. Focusing on this population will also fill knowledge gaps in existing literature, as few studies of first-generation students or overlapping populations examine highly-selective colleges (Reyes 2001; Pascarella et al. 2003; Hurst 2009; Aspelmeier et al. 2012; Stephens et al. 2012; Wang 2014; Haywood and Sewell 2016).

With these objectives in mind, I intend to implement a mixed methods study over one term of the 2018-19 academic year with a group of first-generation students enrolled at Dartmouth College. By administering a survey and engaging in semi-structured interviews with my subjects, I hope to learn about how they interact with members of their family during academic terms, focusing on variables like conversation content and frequency. I also expect to

identify causal connections between dimensions of subjects' interactions with family members and aspects of their college experience, including academic achievement and health outcomes.

Literature Review:

Certain studies indicate that interactions with family members significantly impact first-generation students' college experience. Research also suggests that this relationship applies to first-generation college students more strongly than for their continuing-generation counterparts. However, surprisingly few studies have examined first-generation students' interactions with family members. As a result, it remains impossible to draw conclusions about the frequency and content of these students' interactions with their family members. We are also unable to make statements about the relationships between specific student-family interactions and academic outcomes. I intend to address this gap in the literature, and plan to analyze my data through the framework of community cultural wealth. Based on existing research, I hypothesize that my data will reveal a large amount of diversity in relationships between first-generation students and their family members.

Few to no studies have been conducted with a direct focus on first-generation college students' interactions with family members. However, certain studies indicate that the level of support these students receive from family members has a significant impact on first-generation students' academic outcomes. Haywood and Sewell's "Against All Odds" examined challenges faced by low-income, African-American male students who had not been academically successful during their first year of college; each subject ended the year with a cumulative GPA of less than 2.0 (2016). Among the subjects chosen, all but two were part of the first generation in their family to attend college (Haywood and Sewell 2016). The researchers found that: ". . . eight of the ten participants considered lack of support from both family and/or the institution as an important part of their campus experience during [their] first year" (Haywood and Sewell 2016:118). Similarly, Reyes' "Tortured Victory or Joyful Accomplishment?" illustrated the

importance of familial support for Eskimo and Latino college students (2001). Like Haywood and Sewell, Reyes did not explicitly focus on first-generation college students (2001). However, she noted that approximately 1/3rd of her subjects were part of the first generation in their family to attend college (Reyes 2001). Reyes' study examined the experiences of Latina college students in Texas and of Native students in Alaska (2001). She found that subjects within each group overwhelmingly cited support from family members as key to their academic performance. For example, Reyes stated that: "Most [Native] students identified one or more family members whose emotional and/or financial support contributed to their success" (2001:91).

In addition, certain studies indicate that first-generation students might well relate to their family members differently from their continuing-generation counterparts. Specifically, research on first-generation students and overlapping populations suggests that relationships play a larger role in these students' motivations, decision making, and values systems. First, Stephens et al.'s "Unseen Disadvantage" surveyed students enrolled in a four-year, private college about their motivations for attending the school (2012). Subjects had the opportunity to choose multiple motivating factors, which the researchers assigned to one of two categories: independent or interdependent (Stephens et al. 2012). Independent motivations included sentiments like "Become an independent thinker" and "Expand my knowledge of the world", while interdependent motivations included sentiments like "Bring honor to my family" and "Give back to my community" (Stephens et al. 2012:1188). First-generation students were twice as likely to choose interdependent motives as their continuing-generation counterparts, and chose significantly fewer independent motives (Stephens et al. 2012).

Second, Stephens et al.'s "When Choice Does Not Equal Freedom" argues that working-class individuals are more likely to value interdependence and to adapt to the needs of others when making choices (2011). This study focused on working-age adults across income groups, and engaged every subject in a choice exercise (Stephens, Fryberg, and Markus 2011). Subjects were asked to answer researchers' questions about an unrelated topic, and then given the chance

to make a decision; they could choose a "thank-you" gift for themselves or receive a gift that the researchers chose for them (Stephens et al. 2011). Working-class subjects were significantly more likely to allow the researchers to choose their gift, while middle-class and wealthier subjects overwhelmingly chose their own gift (Stephens et al. 2011). Stephens et al. draw on the data from this study to argue that working-class individuals value interdependence to a greater extent than individuals with more financial privilege (2011). The researchers propose that: ". . . agency in working-class contexts is more likely to involve a focus on others than a focus on the individual self. Given this focus on others, the opportunity to choose for oneself may not be the key to agency in working-class contexts and thus may not equal freedom" (Stephens et al. 2011). In other words, working-class subjects valued interdependence and relationships to the extent that they preferred to respond to researchers' preferences when making decisions. Research makes clear that working-class students are significantly over-represented in the national population of first-generation college students (Radwin et al. 2014). As such, "When Choice Does Not Equal Freedom" indicates that first-generation students might be more likely to value interdependence and a focus on others than their continuing-generation counterparts.

Finally, Wildhagen's "'Not Your Typical Student'" analyzed first-generation college students at a selective university, as well as events marketed towards them (2015). She observed that, during multiple events, administrators encouraged students to minimize contact with their family members (Wildhagen 2015). As a result, many of the students whom Wildhagen interviewed were in deep emotional turmoil over how they might balance college obligations with family relationships (2015). Wildhagen's research also indicated that multiple administrators at Cabot College believed first-generation students' family members would not be a productive influence (Wildhagen 2015). These administrators each expressed similar viewpoints: that these family members didn't truly understand the aims of a liberal arts education, and would be therefore unable to advise students effectively (Wildhagen 2015). That these administrators felt comfortable pursuing an intentional policy of distancing first-generation students from family

members, without considering the emotional strain this might cause, indicates a fundamental difference in values between students and administrators. Specifically, Wildhagen's research suggests that administrators valued individual decision-making more than many of the first-generation students at Cabot College. This led administrators to adopt a counselling strategy that undermined the family-oriented values of multiple first-generation students in Wildhagen's sample. Given that the majority of students at Cabot College had continuing-generation status, it is likely that administrators' values reflected those of the students with whom they were accustomed to interacting (Wildhagen 2015).

The research above strongly suggests that first-generation college students' interactions with their family members significantly impact their college experience. First, "Against All Odds" and "Tortured Victory or Joyful Accomplishment?", each of which studied a large number of first-generation students, indicated the existence of a causal relationship between support from family members and students' academic success (Reyes 2001; Haywood and Sewell 2016). In addition, existing research on interdependence and class indicates that relationships might play a large role in the motivations, decision-making, and value systems of first-generation students (Stephens et al. 2011; Stephens et al. 2012; Wildhagen 2015). As a result, interactions with family members might well impact other aspects of these students' college experience as well, such as their health and friendships. However, few to no studies provide an in-depth analysis of this subject. As such, a study exploring first-generation students' interactions with family members, with a focus on connections between these interactions and students' college experience, would help address a significant knowledge gap.

As I investigate this topic, I plan to analyze my data through the lens of Yosso's theory of community cultural wealth. Yosso first proposed this theory in her article, "Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth" (2005). Community cultural wealth draws upon insights from Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, analyzed through the lens of critical race theory (Yosso 2005). Within Bourdieu's framework,

cultural capital entails the set of mannerisms, tastes, and similarly intangible competencies that are highly valued by members of the upper class (1986). Possession of cultural capital can allow an individual to earn the respect of members of the dominant class; as such, this form of capital can be converted into economic capital (Bourdieu 1986). For example, an appreciation of fine art might allow one to mingle more effectively at a gala, helping one to secure a lucrative business deal with another attendee. Yosso argued that cultural capital reflects values esteemed by members of a largely white upper class (2005). However, Yosso also remarked that it is inherently problematic to discuss communities of color exclusively in terms of their cultural deficits; doing so implies that their cultures don't produce cultural capital which could support success (2005). Instead, Yosso argued that communities of color do produce multiple forms of capital, each of which helps people of color resist racialized oppression (2005). She defined these forms, collectively, as community cultural wealth (Yosso 2005). For example, aspirational capital allows people of color to continue believing in their goals, even when injustice makes the achievement of those goals nearly impossible (Yosso 2005).

The research above indicates that the categories of "first-generation student" and "student of color" intersect considerably (Radwin et al. 2014). As such, I hypothesize that many of my subjects will discuss family members who taught them or continue to teach them about aspects of community cultural wealth. In addition, I would be interested in exploring whether my low-income, white subjects learn about types of community cultural wealth that are particularly related to enduring poverty. I also plan to examine how the intersecting identities of my low-income, subjects of color might impact the types of community cultural wealth that they learn from family members. On the whole, when analyzing my data, I will engage in deductive coding to search for any references made to community cultural wealth. This would include instances of subjects learning, leveraging, or observing a family member leverage a related competency.

Existing research also indicates that I should expect to see substantial variation in first-generation students' interactions with their family members. This literature will inform my

analysis; I will not feel comfortable concluding that I have reached saturation until I uncover a diverse group of mechanisms mediating the relationship between first-generation students' family interactions and college experience.

Multiple studies indicate that college-related interactions between these students and their family members tend to vary considerably in content. For example, Jones' "A Place Where I Belong" focused on ten female academics, each of whom were part of the first generation in their family to attend college (2004). Each subject referenced their family relationships as a crucial factor in shaping their views of the academy (Jones 2004). However, this study also revealed that these women had very different interactions with family members on the subject of higher education. For example, as a young woman, participant "Casey" told her mother about her desire to achieve "a good education" and to avoid a life of domestic labor (Jones 2004:81). When she did so, her mother challenged her, asking if Casey thought she was superior to all of the other members of her family (Jones 2004). In contrast, "Nancy" stated that her parents were passionate about poetry and music, and were steadfastly encouraging of her desire to learn (Jones 2004:81). Similarly, Hurst's "The Path to College" analyzed 21 working class students, almost all of whom were part of the first generation in their family to attend college (2009). Hurst interviewed each subject about their pathway to college, and found that parents varied widely in their reactions to their children's educational aspirations (2009). While certain parents were supportive of their children's desires, students recalled others as being largely indifferent; within this sample, only a few parents explicitly discouraged their children from pursuing higher education (Hurst 2009). Finally, Wang's "'I'm the Only Person from Where I'm from to Go to College'" examined memorable messages that parents of first-generation students passed on to their children about college life (2014). After analyzing students' retelling of these messages, she concluded that each one could be associated with one of five themes (Wang 2014). These included prioritizing family obligations, unconditional family support, and not worrying

excessively over family obligations (Wang 2014). As such, the first-generation students in this sample clearly received highly varying messages about their college years.

Research Questions:

Within this study, I plan to investigate the following two research questions.

1)   How do first-generation college students interact with family members during academic terms?

2)   To what extent do family interactions during academic terms impact the quality of first-generation students' college experience?

I am most interested in the second question. I believe it holds greater significance for both researchers and higher education professionals, because pursuing it will likely yield clear insights about behaviors that facilitate or hinder first-generation students' success. However, I would be unable to consider potential connections between these students' family interactions and college experience without gathering data on my subjects' interactions with their family members. This need inspired my first research question.

Methods:

Mixed Methods Approach

I will implement this study through a mixed methods approach. Specifically, I will conduct one, semi-structured interview with each of my subjects (Appendix B). Subjects will also be asked to complete a quantitative, pre-interview survey (Appendix A). I will use the survey to learn about my first-generation subjects' other identities, including race, gender, and sexuality. In contrast, I plan to use each interview to collect multi-layered, richly detailed data about two subjects: my subjects' interactions with family members during academic terms and the impact of

those interactions on their college experience. This approach will likely yield data with low generalizability and moderate reliability, but high validity.

I will send each of my subjects a short survey via email one week before our scheduled interview. The survey will consist of no more than ten, close-ended questions. These questions will allow me to collect data on my first-generation subjects' other identities. Specifically, I intend to ask study participants to disclose their racial and/or ethnic identities, their gender identity, their sexuality, their religion, and their political affiliation, among other topics.

The data I collect from this survey will allow me to examine potential connections between subjects' identities and their interactions with family members. The ability to make these connections will allow me to draw richer insights from this project. Asking subjects about their identities through a pre-interview survey will serve multiple purposes. First, it will allow me to adapt my interview guide for each of my subjects. By soliciting subjects' views about the interactions between their identities and their family member interactions, I would be able to engage in more rigorous data analysis; I would have the opportunity to consider associations that I observe in the data between certain identities and certain dimensions of family interactions, while also examining the associations that my subjects believe to be real. In addition, administering the survey before the interview would allow me to more easily elicit lengthier interview responses from subjects. If I asked my subjects to disclose their demographic characteristics during our interview, most would be able to do so in a few words. As such, I fear that this approach would place subjects in the habit of offering clinical, short responses to all of my questions.

The second part of my mixed methods approach involves conducting a semi-structured interview with each subject. I plan to interview each subject for between 1 – 1.5 hours. However, I will leave a buffer of at least 30 minutes between each interview, in case a subject would be interested in speaking with me for more time. I intend to conduct interviews in an office space on campus, and I plan to be alone with each subject while the interview is taking place. I hope to

procure such a space by collaborating with the Sociology department at Dartmouth. This would enable me to conduct lengthy interviews without any fear of passers-by overhearing sensitive information. Further, given that my participants should be familiar with Dartmouth's buildings, this interview location will hopefully help them feel more comfortable in sharing information with me. During each interview, I plan to ask subjects broadly-focused, general questions about the quality of their family relationships, as well as about their college experience. Based on their responses, I might also ask more narrowly-focused questions that probed dimensions of subjects' interactions with family members and specific aspects of subjects' college experience. I will record each interview with an Olympus LS-14. During interviews, I would take a limited number of fieldnotes, theoretical notes, methodological notes, and personal notes; I would write much more comprehensive notes about each interview immediately after it had finished.

In general, individuals' relationships with their family members are nuanced, involving complicated emotions, long histories, and strongly-held viewpoints. I would be able to most effectively collect valid data on this topic through a qualitative approach – in this case, by asking subjects open-ended questions which allow them to provide detailed, narrative responses. Further, the topics I plan to discuss during each interview will allow me to obtain maximally detailed responses from subjects. Beginning each interview with broadly-focused questions will help subjects understand that I am genuinely interested in hearing their stories, not eliciting data that fits a specific, pre-conceived narrative. I hope that this approach will make subjects feel more comfortable in sharing detailed, potentially sensitive information with me. If certain subjects don't respond well to broadly-focused questions, I will be prepared to ask more specific questions and probes about my variables of interest.

Answers to my survey questions will almost certainly have high validity. Subjects would be unlikely to lie when completing the survey, as the individuals taking it would have also volunteered to speak with me for between 60 to 90 minutes. I find it unlikely that a subject would commit such a large amount of time to a study if they didn't take that commitment

seriously. Subject responses to my interview questions are also likely to have high validity. As noted above, the format of a semi-structured interview will allow me to elicit complex, detailed stories from subjects. Given that, my data will likely be an accurate reflection of subjects' perspectives on their family interactions and college life. However, this research does pose certain validity concerns. First, I would only be able to learn what students report about their own experiences. In addition, I imagine that participants might occasionally lie or omit important information about traumatic or embarrassing stories. These concerns helped motivate my decision to begin each interview with more broadly-focused questions. Allowing subjects to tell their own stories in a more informal, stream-of-consciousness style could help me better understand their lives, and thus to identify biases and omissions.

Responses to my survey are likely to be quite reliable. First, my survey will be a standardized research instrument; its content, appearance and structure will never vary, regardless of how often I administer it. By consequence, it would be impossible for variations in the research instrument to cause variations in subject responses. In addition, my survey will consist solely of close-ended questions about subjects' characteristics. Given how familiar most people are with their own demographic characteristics, it is unlikely that confusion would lead subjects to respond in different ways if they took my survey multiple times. In contrast, data from subjects' interview responses will raise serious reliability concerns. Subjects' responses might well be influenced by the tone and body language I display during our interview session. Additionally, the specific combination of probes that I choose to use during the interview might impact the responses that subjects provide. I will take multiple steps to minimize these concerns. First, before conducting any interviews, I will intentionally decide on one demeanor that I hope to exhibit during all interviews. As I begin working with participants, I will strive to stay consistent with this choice. In addition, I will ensure that each of my interview questions is clear and phrased in accessible language for my subjects. This would hopefully increase reliability, by

decreasing the probability that a subject would respond to the same question differently on different occasions.

Finally, significant generalizability concerns exist for responses from both my survey and my interviews. I will be engaging in nonprobability sampling, and, as such, will not be studying a representative sample of any population. Given this, it would be impossible to generalize from my results to any community. I will not be able to mitigate this concern. However, I intend to facilitate future, generalizable research by studying a sample whose demographic balance is reasonably similar to that of the national population of first-generation college students. As a result, this research will illuminate many of the aspects of these students' family relationships that would become evident in a representative, generalizable study.

Despite existing reliability and generalizability concerns, the mixed methods approach that I propose here is among the most effective for examining my research question. As I note within my literature review, very few studies have focused primarily on the impact of family member interactions on first-generation college students. Given this, it would be most logical for me to prioritize obtaining valid data. Doing so would facilitate the design of effective, standardized research instruments related to this topic, which would more easily produce reliable, generalizable data. Certain other methods might allow me to achieve increased validity, but would be impossible within the context of this study. For example, my interview data would more accurately reflect first-generation students' family interactions if I were to engage in sequential interviewing. By refining my interview guide as I learned more from my subjects, I would collect more relevant information during each interview. However, this method, by its nature, requires a fairly large sample size; this aspect of sequential interviewing would not be feasible for me, as I intend to complete this project during a ten-week term. Similarly, engaging in ethnographic observations would also allow me to increase the validity of my data. If I were to observe first-generation college students interacting with their family members, I would be able to draw conclusions about these relationships that weren't primarily based on subjects'

perspectives. However, I find it unlikely that subjects would allow me to observe their private interactions with family members, given the sensitive content of conversations that might ensue. Even if I were able to obtain subjects' permission, I fear that subjects might change their behaviors while I was watching them, out of a desire to avoid being seen in an unflattering light. In certain cases, ethnographers avoid this problem by staying with certain subjects long enough that subjects cease to truly notice their presence. However, I do not believe that this would be possible within the context of observing long-distance interactions. I would not be able to spend a substantial amount of time with the family members who were communicating with my subjects, so I believe it would be difficult for them to feel at ease with me. As a result, I do not believe that ethnography would produce more valid results than semi-structured interviews.

Operationalization of Variables

For my first research question, my independent variable will be students' demographic characteristics (not including first-generation status), while my dependent variable will be dimensions of students' interactions with family members during academic terms. For my second question, my independent variable will be dimensions of students' interactions with family members during academic terms, while my dependent variable will be aspects of students' college experience. My unit of analysis, for both questions, will be the individual. I will investigate non-causal associations between my variables of interest for my first research question, and anticipate observing a causal relationship between my variables for interest for the second question.

My first research question focuses on how subjects interact with family members during academic terms. I plan to operationalize my independent variable through subjects' responses to each of the questions on my pre-interview survey. First-generation status would not be included among the characteristics I consider, as it would be a trait shared by each of my subjects. I intend to operationalize my dependent variable through subjects' interview responses about their interactions with their family members. Specific topics that I view as relevant to this variable

include: the frequency with which subjects contact family members, the content of subjects'
conversations with family members, the family members with whom subjects prefer speaking,
the family members with whom subjects dread speaking, and more.

I predict that responses to both my pre-interview survey and my interview will have high
validity, which I discuss above. As such, I believe that using data from these instruments to
operationalize my variables would be an effective means of answering my research question. In
addition, it would be nearly impossible to operationalize these variables through other means. I
describe above the obstacles that I would face if I tried to observe subject conversations with
family members in-person. While I could attempt to obtain official records from subjects about
their characteristics, such as birth certificates, this would almost certainly deter levels of
participation in my study. I would be demanding that subjects take the time to find these
documents, which many might view as an inconvenience. In addition, subjects might doubt my
ability to confidentially store copies of these documents. I doubt that subjects would have similar
fears about their pre-interview survey, given that the survey would not be associated with their
name, social security number, or other personally identifying information.

I would not seek to demonstrate a causal relationship between my independent and
dependent variable, as the format of my research would prevent me from controlling for a
sufficient number of factors. I would also be unable to prove correlation between these
variables, given the small sample size of my study. Instead, I hope to find non-causal associations
between my variables of interest. I believe that doing so would help build a strong foundation
for future research on this subject by suggesting potential causal relationships between students'
characteristics and dimensions of their contact with family members.

My second research question focuses on investigating a potential relationship between
dimensions of subjects' interactions with family members and aspects of subjects' college
experience. I intend to define and operationalize my independent variable for this question
through the same procedure that I followed for the dependent variable of my first research

question. I intend to operationalize my dependent variable through interview responses about subjects' college experience. I view the following topics as related to my dependent variable: subjects' perceived level of academic achievement, subjects' mental and physical health, the quality of subjects' social relationships in college, and subjects' overall satisfaction with their college experience, among others.

As described above, I have reason to believe that subjects' interview responses will have high validity. I might be able to obtain more objective metrics of each of the topics I seek to explore, such as subjects' official transcripts and health records. However, I believe that subjects would be quite likely to view my request for these materials as invasive, for reasons discussed above. As a result, I believe that my approach in operationalizing my independent and dependent variable for this question is the most effective choice.

I do intend to explore a potential causal relationship between my independent and dependent variable for my second research question. I believe that this approach would be feasible, given my data collection method. I will ask subjects to provide detailed, narrative responses about their interactions with family members and their college experience. This approach encourages thoughtful reflection, and will likely result in subjects making insightful connections between their family interactions and their life at Dartmouth. Further, given the detailed responses often elicited in semi-structured interviews, I will likely have sufficient information to identify causal relationships between these variables myself through inductive and deductive analysis. My method does raise certain validity concerns, described above, which could hinder my ability to make causal connections between my variables of interest. However, as I have detailed in the previous section, I also intend to take multiple steps to address these issues.

For each of my research questions, my unit of analysis will be the individual. I intend to analyze individual subjects' responses about their characteristics, interactions with family members, and college experience. I would not be able to establish social interactions as my unit of analysis, because this study will not involve observing or analyzing interactions between

people. Instead, I will be exploring individuals' views of certain interactions. I view this choice as the most effective for my project. As I've discussed above, it would be nearly impossible for me to observe genuine interactions between my subjects and their family members within the context of this study.

Sampling Design

I plan to engage in both snowball and purposive sampling of first-generation undergraduate students enrolled at Dartmouth College. I will conduct most communications with subjects electronically, provide financial incentives for participation in my study, and attempt to build rapport with subjects before interviewing them. My sampling design will allow me to more easily earn my subjects' trust and obtain comprehensive, valid interview responses. My choice to sample Dartmouth students will likely yield interesting conclusions, given that my subjects, relative to the national population of first-generation college students, are deviant cases. However, my decision to engage in nonprobability sampling will create biases in my results that would be difficult for me to identify; my status as a Dartmouth College student might also make it more difficult to obtain valid interview responses from subjects.

I plan to interview 30 first-generation, undergraduate students enrolled at Dartmouth College. When selecting students for my sample, I will use the definition of "first-generation college student" discussed in my introduction. My sample will include students from each grade level. I intend to interview both male and female students, as well as students identifying with each of the following racial or ethnic categories: White, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, and Asian. I also hope to interview multiple students who identify as members of the queer community. My small sample size reflects the time constraints of my study. As I have noted above, I intend to conduct this research over the course of one, ten-week academic term at Dartmouth. However, my sample size is similar to or larger than that used by multiple other researchers who have examined the experiences of first-generation, minority, and/or low-income college students (Reyes 2001; Wang 2014; Wildhagen 2015; Haywood and Sewell 2016). Given

this, it is almost certain that interviewing 30 students will allow me to reach tentative conclusions about relationships between interactions with family members and aspects of students' college experience.

I plan to engage in a sampling design that leverages both snowball and purposive sampling. Specifically, I will select my first subjects by approaching administrators who work for Dartmouth's First Year Student Enrichment Program (FYSEP), which is dedicated to helping first-generation undergraduate students transition to college. I will request that these administrators reach out to current FYSEP participants and alumni/alumnae and ask if they might be interested in participating in my project. If FYSEP is unwilling or unable to work with me, I will find potential subjects through my own social network. Having recruited my first subjects, I will ask each one to reach out to friends or acquaintances who are first-generation students on my behalf; subjects would encourage members of their networks to participate in my study. From there, I would ask the next subjects whom I recruit to reach out to their first-generation friends, following the same procedure until I had interviewed 30 subjects. When recruiting subjects, I would carefully consider the factors of race, age, gender and sexuality, with the goal of creating a sample that was demographically similar to the national population of first-generation college students. This population skews female and is racially diverse, including significant numbers of students from the racial/ethnic categories I discuss above (Radwin et al. 2014). This population, by its nature, includes students across grades. Finally, while I have not been able to find data about the percentage of queer, first-generation students in the United States, logic dictates that these students are part of the national population of first-generation students. My decision to engage in purposive sampling reflects generalizability concerns discussed earlier. I could further address these concerns by engaging in quota sampling, but view this approach as infeasible due to my decision to engage in snowball sampling. I would likely inconvenience and alienate subjects if I asked them to abide by rigid guidelines about whom they could recruit for the study.

When sampling students, I would take multiple steps to increase the likelihood of their participation in my study. First, I plan to correspond with my subjects electronically, which reflects the communication preferences of most young adults. I will request that FYSEP administrators and subjects recruiting on my behalf provide my email to interested students. Once potential subjects contact me, I will give them the opportunity to communicate with me via email, text message, or Facebook direct message. By allowing subjects flexibility in this regard, I hope to increase the likelihood of prompt replies to my messages. When asking FYSEP administrators or potential subjects to support my study, I will emphasize benefits of my work for first-generation college students. Specifically, I will create a document that concisely outlines my discussion in the significance section and ensure that every potential participant in my study receives it. I will also offer to meet personally with administrators or potential subjects to further discuss my work and my motivations for pursuing it. I hope that these choices will help convince the individuals whom I contact about my respect for and desire to help first-generation college students. Finally, I hope to incentivize participation in my study by paying my subjects an hourly rate, which would likely be similar to salaries paid by on-campus employers.

In all, I believe that my sampling design is especially effective, given the constraints and circumstances defining this project. First, engaging in snowball sampling will facilitate the process of building trust with my subjects; the majority will participate in this study because a friend or acquaintance encouraged them to do so. As I have discussed above, the topic of one's family relationships is intensely personal. Given this, I believe that taking every step possible to build trust with subjects would be essential in convincing them to provide valid, detailed responses to my questions. In addition, I believe that sampling Dartmouth College students would yield particularly interesting results. Given Dartmouth's status as a prestigious, highly-selective institution, first-generation students who attend are likely to be quite different from the majority of first-generation college students in the United States. My use of nonprobability sampling will prevent me from obtaining generalizable data, as discussed above; however, my

analysis of deviant cases will likely yield interesting conclusions that could be used to analyze the national population of first-generation college students.

However, my sampling design does create certain limitations. First, my subjects might view me as a competitor, given that I am also an undergraduate enrolled at Dartmouth. As such, they might omit information which they viewed as embarrassing or humiliating. I hope to address this concern by engaging in snowball sampling and giving subjects the opportunity to meet with me before our interview. In addition, as I have described above, my sampling technique will prevent me from obtaining generalizable data. It will be difficult for me to identify precisely how my data is biased. The students whom I interview at Dartmouth will likely have similar demographic characteristics to those whom I do not, given my choice to engage in purposive sampling. As such, it would be quite difficult for me to leverage research on gender, race, or related identities to consider potential biases in my data. Despite this limitation, I believe that my sampling design remains the most effective way to pursue my project. As I have discussed above, obtaining valid data is a paramount concern of my study, and snowball sampling will be key to helping me achieve this goal.

Data Analysis

I intend to analyze my data by keeping a work log, writing multiple theoretical and methodological memos, and engaging in a modified grounded theory approach. My deductive coding will leverage Yosso's theory of community cultural wealth, while my inductive coding will likely focus on topics related to my independent and dependent variables.

Throughout this project, I will maintain a work log, in which I will summarize the work I do each day, reflect on challenges that arise, and record any changes that I make to my method. In addition, I intend to write multiple theoretical memos related to trends that I observe while conducting the study. I will also write multiple methodological memos about different aspects of my method, discussing ways in which they might impact the validity, reliability, and generalizability of my data. My log and memos will likely be informed by my fieldnotes,

methodological notes, personal notes, and theoretical notes. I plan to undertake this approach for multiple reasons. First, these reflections will facilitate my inductive coding by helping me reflect on what I learned from implementing the study. Further, these reflections will allow me to more effectively analyze limitations of my study; I would circumvent the possibility of forgetting problems that arose over the course of my project.

I intend to engage in both deductive and inductive coding to analyze my data. Shortly after completing an interview, I would transcribe it with the help of Express Scribe transcription assistance software. I would then enter each transcription into AtlasTi, a qualitative data management program. I intend to use this software to code my data. When coding deductively, I would design codes based on Yosso's theory of community cultural wealth. Yosso identified six types of capital that constitute community cultural wealth: aspirational, familial, social, linguistic, resistant, and navigational (Yosso 2005). She also acknowledged that other forms of community cultural wealth likely exist (Yosso 2005). When discussing Yosso's work in my literature review, I hypothesized that multiple subjects would mention family members who transmitted a form of community cultural wealth to them. To test this hypothesis, I will develop codes to identify any reference to one of the six forms of community cultural wealth noted above. I would also develop a code to label any discussion of competencies that fit Yosso's definition of community cultural wealth, but did not exist within one of her established categories.

In addition to my deductive coding, I intend to engage in inductive coding to analyze my data. Due to the dearth of research on this subject, it remains unclear which trends or topics would be the most important to examine while coding. As such, I will need to spend a significant amount of time looking for meaningful trends in my data; I believe that inductive coding will be my primary tool of data analysis. When coding inductively, I will select topics to examine based in part on my work log and memos, as noted above. I also intend to strongly consider creating codes related to my independent and dependent variables. For example, I will likely create codes related to certain dimensions of subject interactions with family members, such as conversation

frequency and content. Doing so would allow me to more easily answer my research questions. I do not plan to deductively code for topics related to my variables of interest. Given the lack of prior studies conducted in this area, I believe that I could most effectively design codes after carefully examining my data.

Research Design

I plan to engage in cross-sectional, basic, exploratory research. Strengths of my research design include its focus on an area where a large knowledge gap currently exists. Additionally, my mixed methods approach and sampling technique complement each other in certain important respects. My work will be limited by time constraints, restrictions connected to work with human subjects, conceptual difficulties, and certain incongruities between my sampling technique and mixed methods approach.

My research design is cross-sectional, as I will be observing subjects during one particular point in their lives. I believe that this aspect of my approach fits well with my time constraints. As I have noted above, I intend to pursue this research over the course of a ten-week, Dartmouth term. As such, it would be impossible for me to follow subjects over a longer period of time. My research design is basic, as my primary objective is to contribute to the existing body of academic knowledge on this topic. Given the dearth of existing studies on this subject, it would be impractical to design this project with the goal of solving a specific problem. Without further knowledge about first-generation college students' family interactions, it remains unclear which problems we might be able to solve with research in this area. Finally, my research design is exploratory. As noted above, I hope to gather information about first-generation college students for future researchers to use when designing a more extensive study. In addition, I seek to better understand the mechanisms through which these students' family interactions influence their college experience. Although I intend to investigate causal relationships between certain variables of interest, my research is not explanatory; I don't intend to produce a definitive answer to any causal question.

The key strengths of this research design include its focus on a significant, largely un-examined subject area, as well as important congruities between my method and sampling design. As I discussed within my literature review, few to no studies have been conducted on interactions between first-generation students and family members during academic terms. Given this, my study will help to fill a large knowledge gap. Further, as I will discuss in my significance section, examining this topic will likely provide higher education employees with knowledge that could be translated into impactful policies for first-generation college students. In addition, my sampling technique and mixed methods approach complement each other in certain respects, each making the other more effective. For example, a mixed methods approach requires more study participation from each subject than a single method design would. As such, individuals who do volunteer to participate will likely be exceptionally motivated to be a part of my work. Given this, it is likely that my subjects will invest meaningful effort into recruiting compatriots to join my study, enhancing the effectiveness of my snowball sampling technique. Conversely, my snowball sampling technique will help me convince subjects to make the commitment to my study that a mixed methods approach requires. Individuals within my sample will have been recruited by one of their friends, and will thus have a reason to trust in the importance of this study.

Conversely, certain limitations of my research design exist as well. First, when implementing this study, I will be restricted in the steps that I can take, because I will be working with human subjects. I detail my plans to uphold ethical principles with my subjects in the ethical considerations section. In addition, as noted above, this project is defined by serious time constraints. Based on certain scheduling factors, I need to complete it within one, ten-week Dartmouth term. This factor further limits my research design, placing constraints on aspects like my sample size and method. Conceptual limitations exist for this research as well. Specifically, my ability to engage in deductive coding is limited, due to the lack of prior research conducted on this topic. Engaging in more deductive coding would decrease the likelihood that I

would miss an important pattern in my data, as I would have a clearer idea of the most important trends to examine. Finally, certain incongruities do exist between my sampling technique and method. Snowball sampling will lead me to find subjects based on their connections to my friends or former subjects, rather than their enthusiasm for discussing life as a first-generation student. As such, I might find many subjects who were uncomfortable with claiming first-generation status, and, as such, did not respond well to my lengthier, mixed methods approach. I hope to address this issue by providing clear expectations to potential subjects about the topics that I seek to explore. This will ensure that subjects who do participate are eager to reflect on their interactions with family members and experience at Dartmouth.

Ethical Considerations:

As I conduct my study, I intend to uphold strong ethical standards based on values discussed in the Belmont Report. Specifically, I will strive to abide by its core principles of "respect for persons", "beneficence", and "justice" (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research 1978:2-4).

I intend to respect my subjects' autonomy by obtaining informed consent from each one (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research 1978). First, subjects would sign a consent form before engaging with any part of the study. Participants would have the choice to receive the form via email and sign it electronically, or to meet with me in person and sign a paper copy. The form would explain my study's objectives in accessible language, list the topics that I would ask subjects to discuss, and outline the time commitment involved. The form would also note that subjects had the right to quit at any time, and that subjects were free to refuse to answer my questions. I would repeat this section of the form orally before interviewing each of my subjects.

In addition, I would strive to act with beneficence by minimizing the risks of my study to subjects while maximizing its benefits (National Commission for the Protection of Human

Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research 1978). I believe that the greatest risk my subjects might face would be recalling traumatic memories associated with family members. To minimize this risk, I will create a list of mental health resources on campus, and distribute one copy to each participant at the end of our interview. I also intend to minimize risks to my subjects by maintaining rigorous confidentiality standards. Once a subject agrees to participate in my study, I will assign them a number and pseudonym; I will use either one of these, rather than their name, in my transcription, fieldnotes, and final report. I will also destroy interview recordings after transcribing them, and change any personally identifying details about subjects when writing my final report. I hope to maximize the benefits of my study by communicating my results to first-generation college students and administrators at Dartmouth. For example, I might deliver a presentation about my results to students and administrators. I hope that steps like this would help others more easily draw on my findings to address barriers faced by first-generation students.

Finally, I intend to carefully consider the principle of justice when implementing my study. Given that my sample will consist solely of first-generation students, my subjects will be vulnerable individuals who face serious challenges on campus. However, this decision is motivated by the core principles of my study, rather than convenience. I hope to ease my subjects' burden by paying them for their participation.

Significance:

I expect that my study will be helpful to social science researchers interested in this topic. Very little research has been conducted about the relationship between first-generation students' family interactions and aspects of their college experience. As a result, my work will help to fill a significant knowledge gap and facilitate future research on this topic. This study is especially unique for its inclusive approach. While many studies of college students' family interactions focus solely on parental relationships, I will invite subjects to discuss any of their family

members during interviews (Wang 2014; Thompson and Berenbaum 2009; Fischer et al. 2006). Further, studies of college students' interactions with family members often examine the impact of these interactions on one, specific variable, such as alcohol use or college adjustment (Wang 2014; Thompson and Berenbaum 2009; Fischer et al. 2006; Yosso 2005). In contrast, I intend to consider multiple aspects of students' college experience, including academic achievement, health outcomes, and the quality of students' friendships.

These choices will undoubtedly make my research process more time-consuming. However, they allow me to not only fill a knowledge gap, but also to produce a wealth of information that might be used to support first-generation students. My research questions are directly related students' on-campus behavior, as well as outcomes of importance to higher education leaders, such as students' academic achievement and health. Given that my data will not be generalizable, it would be impossible to create a campus program that relied exclusively on my research and fully addressed the needs of first-generation students. However, the high validity of my conclusions will make them useful for higher education administrators to consider as they refine campus counselling programs.

I am especially hopeful that higher education leaders could use my study to help first-generation students overcome culture shock in college. As I noted in my literature review, evidence indicates that these students value relationships and interdependence to a greater extent than their continuing-generation peers (Stephens et al. 2011; Stephens et al. 2012; Wildhagen 2015). Given this, it is almost certain that first-generation college students regularly have experiences on campus that undermine or contradict their views of relationships (Wildhagen 2015). My study will likely yield insights as to how family members can effectively help first-generation students navigate challenges in this unfamiliar culture.

Timeline:

As I've noted above, I intend to complete this project over the course of one, ten-week Dartmouth term. I have made this choice, because I would be interested in engaging in full-time research as a college junior before deciding whether to pursue a senior thesis. Given these considerations, please see below my anticipated timeline for this project. I plan to complete it during Dartmouth's fall, winter or spring term in the 2018-19 school year.

Planning: Pre-term break (two weeks)

- Conduct additional research to strengthen lit review

- Test questions with 1-4 students, either first-generation or student with relevant characteristics (student of color, low-income, etc.)

Collecting Data: Weeks 1-4

- Begin initial outreach to FYSEP staffers at start of Week 1

- Send follow-up email to FYSEP if no response received by end of week

- Contact first-generation student friends as needed by end of Week 1/start of Week 2

- Administer pre-interview survey w/ recruited subjects

- Engage in first round of interviews

- Coach subjects in recruiting others

- Engage in next round of interviews, etc.: should finish all 30 interviews during this period

- Keep work log, begin writing theoretical + methodological memos

Analyzing Data: Weeks 5-8

- Continue maintaining work log, writing theoretical + methodological memos

- Transcribe all interviews

- Engage in deductive + inductive coding

- Critically reflect on results of coding, reflect on most important or interesting trends seen

Writing Up Findings: Weeks 9-10

- Decide on most important conclusions to report

- Write paper discussing research project + conclusions

- Communicate research to relevant parties (first-gen students, admin) – most likely during

  Week 10

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Appendices:

Each appendix below is a research instrument that I intend to use in my study. Before implementing this project, I will test each the effectiveness of each instrument with multiple students. These individuals will be first-generation students or have characteristics that are disproportionately represented in the national population of first-generation students (i.e. racial/ethnic minority, low-income). As such, I might make changes to each instrument later on. However, the length, format, and topics discussed will almost certainly remain the same.

Appendix A: Pre-interview survey –

Please see below the pre-interview survey that I plan to administer with participants. The survey begins on the following page, to allow the reader to consider how a subject might experience the survey if they were given this instrument and asked to complete it.

Family Relationships Survey:

Thank you for agreeing to take part in my study! Before our interview, I would like to learn a little bit more about you. Your answers will help me choose the most relevant questions to ask you when we meet. This survey should take you between 5-10 minutes to complete.

Your responses are voluntary and will be confidential. Responses will not be identified by individual. Instead, all responses will be compiled together and analyzed as a group. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact Dartmouth's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects at cphs.tasks@dartmouth.edu or (603) 646-6482. If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact Uma Ramesh at Uma.M.Ramesh.20@dartmouth.edu.

1. What is your class year?

a. Class of 2022

b. Class of 2021

c. Class of 2020

d. Class of 2019

e. Other (please specify) _____

2. What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate? (Mark one answer)

a. Male

b. Female

3. Some people describe themselves as transgender when they experience a different gender identity from their sex at birth. For example, a person born into a male body, but who feels female or lives as a woman. Do you consider yourself to be transgender? (Mark one answer)

a. Yes, transgender, male to female

b. Yes, transgender, female to male

c. Yes, transgender, gender non-conforming

d. No

4. Do you consider yourself to be: (Mark one answer)

a. Heterosexual or straight

b. Gay

c. Lesbian

d. Bisexual

e. Not listed above (please specify): _____

5. What is your racial or ethnic identification? (Select all that apply)

a. American Indian or Alaska Native

b. Asian

c. Black or African American

d. Hispanic or Latino

e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

f. White

g. Other (please specify) _____

6. What is your present religion, if any?

a. Mainline Protestant

b. Evangelical Protestant

c. Historically Black Protestant

d. Roman Catholic

e. Mormon

f. Jehovah's Witness

g. Orthodox (i.e. Russian or Greek Orthodox)

h. Jewish

i. Muslim

j. Hindu

k. Atheist

l. Agnostic

m. Other (please specify) _____

n. Not sure

7. Do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or something

else?

a. Republican

b. Democrat

c. Independent

d. Something else (please specify) _____

e. Not sure

8. Which region of the country do you live in?

a. Midwest - IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI

b. Northeast - CT, DC, DE, MA, MD, ME, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT

c. Southeast - AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV

d. Southwest - AZ, NM, OK, TX

e. West - AK, CA, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY

9. Which of the following best describes the area where you live?

a. Urban

b. Suburban

c. Rural

End of survey. Thank you again for taking part in this survey! I am truly grateful for your participation.

Appendix B: Semi-structured interview guide –

<u>Introduction:</u>

Hi! Thank you so much for agreeing to take part in this project. As we've discussed before, I am interviewing you as part of a study of first-generation students at Dartmouth College. Today, I would like to learn about your relationships with members of your family. To clarify, I know that people have a lot of different family arrangements; when I'm asking you questions about your family members, please feel free to respond by using whichever definition of "family" feels most relevant to you. I also hope to ask a few questions about your experience at Dartmouth.

Before we get started, I wanted to review some important information about consent and confidentiality. Regarding consent, you are free to leave this interview at any time. You don't have to answer any questions that you're not comfortable with, and – when you are answering a question – you can tell me as many or as few details as you'd like. Regarding confidentiality, your name and any personally identifying information you share with me will not be disclosed to anyone. Do you have any questions?

1. Could you tell me about one piece of advice that a family member gave you that really changed how you view the world?
   a. Could you tell me about a situation where you thought about this piece of advice as you were making a decision?
   b. To what extent do you agree with this advice?

2. Do you find yourself thinking about your family a lot while you're at Dartmouth?
   a. If yes, what sorts of thoughts do you have about your family members?

3. Do you think most of your family members agree or disagree with your choice to study here?
   a. Do different members of your family have different opinions about this?

b. Why do you think they feel that way?

4. Do you think that your family members usually agree or disagree with the choices you've made at Dartmouth? This could include your major, what you do outside of class, who your friends are, etc.

    a. Do different members of your family have different opinions about this?

    b. Why do you think they feel that way?

5. How much do you tell your family members about your life at Dartmouth?

    a. Are there certain family members that you feel especially comfortable talking to about your life in college?

    b. Are there certain family members who you don't talk to about college at all?

6. Is there anything you would want to change about your family relationships, if you had the chance?

    a. If yes, what changes would you make?

    b. Why would it be important for you to make these changes?

7. How close do you feel, overall, to your family members?

    a. Could you tell me more about why you feel this way?

    b. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with this?

8. I've spoken to some students informally about family and relationships before this interview to prepare. Some students say that their family members are a key support to them in college and play an important role in their success. Other students say that their family members are a negative distraction and can drain them of time and energy. Does one of these narratives feel accurate for you?

    a. If neither one feels accurate, what role do you think your family members play in your success at college?

    b.   Could you tell me more about why you believe your family members play this role?

9.   Could you tell me a little bit about how you feel about your Dartmouth experience so far? This could include your academics, your friendships, or anything else that you'd like to talk about.

    a.   Would you feel comfortable with talking to me about your health at Dartmouth? This could include your physical or mental well-being.

10. Is there anything that you'd like to change about your life at Dartmouth, if you had the choice?

    a.   If yes, what changes would you make?

    b.   Why would it be important for you to make these changes?

11. How do you feel about the amount of contact you have with your family members during an average Dartmouth term?

    a.   Could you tell me more about why you feel this way?

    b.   Could you tell me more about the types of changes that would make you feel more satisfied with the amount of contact you have with family members?

12. During an average term, about how often do you find yourself in contact with any of the members of your family?

    a.   Which family members do you usually communicate with during the term?

    b.   Which topics do you tend to discuss with each person?

    c.   What platforms/technologies do you use to communicate with each person?

13. Since you've been at Dartmouth, have you changed in terms of how you communicate with family members during academic terms?

    a.   Could you tell me more about why you think these changes happened?

    b.   Do you view these changes as mostly positive, mostly negative, or neutral?

14. If you had academic problems at Dartmouth or problems with school work, is there a member of your family that you would be comfortable talking to?

    a. Do you believe that you would receive support from this family member to deal with the problems? If yes, what type?

    b. How would you present information about these problems to them? (i.e. tone, are there certain details that would be emphasized)

15. If you had health problems at Dartmouth, is there a member of your family that you would be comfortable talking to?

    a. Do you believe that you would receive support from this family member to deal with the problems? If yes, what type?

    b. How would you present information about these problems to them? (i.e. tone, are there certain details that would be emphasized)

16. If you had financial problems at Dartmouth, is there a member of your family that you would be comfortable speaking to?

    a. Do you believe that you would receive support from this family member to deal with the problems? If yes, what type?

    b. How would you present information about these problems to them? (i.e. tone, are there certain details that would be emphasized)

17. Are there any topics that you wouldn't feel comfortable discussing with any of your family members?

    a. Could you tell me more about why you feel this way?

    b. How does it make you feel to not be able to discuss these topics within your family?