

Acculturation and Academic Success among First and Second Generation Immigrant Students at UGA

Dr. Sayamon Singto (Division of Academic Enhancement), Justin Jeffery (International Student Life), Dr. Dominique Quarles (Office of Institutional Diversity)

This qualitative research project explores the connection between acculturation and educational attainment in first and second generation immigrant students at UGA. Our goal is to identify factors contributing to their success in college. In particular, we seek to understand students' cultural and social capital (e.g., languages, family cultural resources, schooling and life experiences, sociocultural networks and connections, etc.) that they might draw upon to adapt to U.S. society and achieve their educational goals at UGA. This project will also inquire into the roles of student cultural organizations on campus in providing different types of support that enable immigrant students to continue developing a strong cultural identity and a sense of belonging at UGA.

Acculturation occurs when individuals come into continuous contact with two or more cultural groups, which results in cultural and psychological changes (Berry, 2005). The ways in which individuals experience these changes may cause acculturative stress, which can negatively affect their physical and mental health (Berry, Kim, Minde & Mok, 1987). For immigrant college students, these changes may also have an impact on their academic success, depending on acculturation strategies that students adopt (Moní, Mealy, Del Ama, & Conway, 2018). As such, it is important to understand students' acculturative process and coping behaviors in order for the University to provide appropriate types of support and intervention that can mitigate adverse effects of acculturation, and in turn enable students to achieve their academic goals at UGA.

This project explores acculturation trajectories and identifies certain variables that may influence the patterns of success and struggles among first and second generation immigrant students at UGA. Our ultimate goal is to contribute to the University community's effort to provide appropriate support and intervention to enable students to succeed academically and to continue to develop their cultural identity during their time at UGA.