**IRB Proposal Synopsys**

Contextualizing Latinas and Latinos in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Majors

1. I will interview sixteen Latina and Latino undergraduate students at Texas State University who are majoring in a Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) field. The term Latina or Latino implies that participants will self-identify as having familial roots from any Latin American country. This group is not defined as a special class. There are many organizations and programs specifically geared towards increasing diversity in STEM fields. I am hoping that by contacting these organizations and programs I will be able to find participants willing to participate.
2. Recruitment will entail advertisements in newspapers, leaflets and flyers, as well as contacting student organizations targeted towards Latinas and/or Latinos as well as those that aim towards increasing diversity in STEM programs. Participants will be recruited by use of the attached recruitment letter. I will obtain written consent from participants using the attached consent form that participants will have to read and sign prior to beginning the interview. Participants will also be given a copy of this consent form.
3. I will be employing qualitative face-to-face tape-recorded interviews for this study. I will ask some preliminary background questions to determine age, major, nationality of origin and descent, sex, and socio-economic status that will help me situate the subject within a particular social and identity context. Other questions will approach the educational experiences of Latina and Latino students that led up to their decision to declare themselves as STEM majors, what motivates them to study a STEM field, and what challenges, if any, they face in those fields (see attached interview guide). These open-ended questions are intended to spark a conversation about what it means to be a Latina or Latino in a STEM field. Interviews will be approximately 45 minutes, although depending on the participant’s eagerness to share specifics associated with personal accounts, they may last as long as an hour and fifteen minutes. Interviews will all be recorded and transcribed but will remain anonymous. The use of pseudonyms during the transcription and data analysis portions of the study will ensure anonymity.
4. The focus of this study is to approach an understanding of the experiences Latinas and Latinos face studying STEM subjects. There is no potential harm, psychological or otherwise, for students participating in this study. All recorded interviews will be labeled with an identification number and pseudonyms will be used in the data analysis portion of the study to ensure anonymity. All data will be kept under lock and key and/or in password protected computers. All interviews, hardcopy and recordings, will have an identification number. Transcriptions and data analysis will use pseudonyms. Thus, personal information on tape-recorded interviews will not be linked with transcriptions or any documentation. Participants will be allowed to stop the interview process at any point without prejudice or jeopardy to their standing with Texas State University. I have not considered any alternative methods for this study.
5. I intend to limit potential risk to participants by creating an environment through the interview process in which the participant is allowed to express her or himself freely without fear of judgment or retaliation. Ideally, the process will be empowering for participants, however, should a participant become emotionally distressed, the consent form will include contact information for the counseling center on their campus. Any costs of counseling will be the responsibility of the participant. Confidentiality safeguards include the use of pseudonyms and codes assigned to participants as opposed to the use of their real name. Also, other types of personal information such as city, state or country of origin will either be changed or completely omitted from transcriptions, data analysis, and notes.
6. The benefits to society involve achieving an understanding of the experiences of Latinas and Latinos in STEM fields. By encouraging participants to explore their experiences as emerging scientists, participants may come to a better understanding of the challenges they face and voice their issues and concerns as Latina and Latino students.
7. No monetary or other compensation will be offered to participants.
8. There are no risks or benefits to participants who choose to take part in this study. This study does not present any risks to society while the benefits, namely, contributing to the body of pedagogical knowledge about college students in STEM fields, will produce a better understanding of what is necessary for students to succeed in STEM fields.
9. This project involves specifically the experiences of individual STEM majors of Latin American descent at Texas State University, rather than agencies or sites. While I will contact organizations that sometimes will require me to attend meetings, I will not be working on behalf of any organizations. For this reason, approval from these organizations will be informal, precluding the necessity of written approval.
10. This project will fulfill my thesis requirement for a Master’s degree in sociology. Dr. Gloria Martinez-Ramos will be acting as supervising faculty member as well as thesis committee chairperson.
11. Dr. Gloria Martinez-Ramos, acting as thesis committee chairperson and supervising faculty member, has approved my thesis proposal and methodology for obtaining participants and conducting interviews. She has also approved my synopsis and consent form. Dr. Martinez-Ramos can be reached at 512-245-2470 or by email at [gmartinez@txstate.edu](mailto:gmartinez@txstate.edu)
12. This project has not been reviewed by any other IRB.
13. Dr. Gloria Martinez-Ramos will have access to unpublished materials pertaining to this study. Other members of my thesis committee will also have access to these materials. Additionally, I intend to present and/or publish my findings at academic conferences or in academic journals. In the event that I present or publish my findings, attendees at conferences or those with access to the academic journals will have access to the published or Master’s thesis results. Finally, study participants are given the opportunity to read a summary of the study.