[Sample Title: The Service-Learning Experiences and Outcomes of Low-Income, First-Generation College Students Utilizing Multivariate Regression Modeling]

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in the Department of [Name]
of the College of [College]

[Month YEAR]

[NAME]

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ABSTRACT

[NOTE: The abstract should tell the reader your topic, research, and major findings. The abstract is double-spaced and should not exceed one page in length. The most common length is approximately 350 words.]

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

[While your thesis or dissertation must be your intellectual property, you could not have written it without the assistance of a number of individuals and institutions. The acknowledgements page provides you with the opportunity to thank those who provided that assistance. You may include as many individuals as you desire. This is also the appropriate place to list permission to quote copyrighted material. This text should be single spaced.]

[NOTE: You may include an optional "DEDICATION" section after your Acknowledgements. It will be a separate section formatted just like this one. It should be short and to the point. This statement can be one to five sentences but is usually one or two. The Dedication is also single spaced.]

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION [HEADING 1]

[Heading Level 2 – not all headings are needed for master's theses]

[Normal] body paragraph… This section illustrates the style settings that have been made for this document template. To apply a header style, simply highlight the header text and choose the style (Header1, Header 2, etc.) that you'd like to apply. Utilizing these macros is necessary should you choose to use the automatically generated table of contents provided here. To update the Table of Contents select the "References Tab" in the Word ribbon. On the far left, you should see a "Table of Contents" button which has a dropdown that allows you to update your table. There may be some additional editing required once updated (for instance, combining the "Chapter 1" and "Introduction" texts into a single line. The first page of each chapter should have a 2" top margin – hint: use two, double-spaced returns (from the top) to create this on the first pages of each chapter. Finally, the following chapter is a truncated sample chapter utilizing the headers illustrated here. This brief sample chapter is provided to give students an example of how the formatting looks within scholarly writing. Organization of chapters will vary depending on type of Thesis and students should work with their Chair to determine the optimal structure.

[Heading Level 3]

[Heading Level 4]

[This is heading 5.] This text is formatted as "normal" on the style menu.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

[Chapter contents: The second chapter of a Thesis is almost always a Literature Review grounding the current study in extant literature with a critical examination of how past research provides theoretical and conceptual framing for the current study as well as any gaps the current study may fill.]

Chapter III

CHAPTER TITLE

Overview

[Sample text and table. Be sure to mention Institutional Review Board approval or exemption in this chapter.] This chapter begins with a brief exploration of the broader higher education context that increasing institutionalization of and research on service-learning are situated within. Service-learning is then explored in detail along with the research that has investigated the relationship between this pedagogy and student outcomes. Next, literature on Low-Income, First-Generation (LIFG) students is used to explicate the host of complex barriers these students commonly experience in their academic journeys. A critical lens is then used to illustrate the gaps in literature that give rise to persisting questions about the efficacy of service-learning as a pedagogical strategy to increase LIFG student success. These questions are further refined and undergirded with a theoretical and conceptual examination of service-learning for LIFG students which provided the foundation for this study.

Data Source

Data used in this study is part of an ongoing mixed-methods study exploring the outcomes and experiences related to participation in service-learning courses for low-income, first-generation college students. This study utilizes national, longitudinal, data from matched responses between the 2004 Freshman Survey (TFS) and 2008 College Senior Survey (CSS), administered by the Higher Education Research Institute. TFS is given to students within the first 2 weeks of their first year in higher education, and the

CSS is given to seniors in college within 6 weeks of their graduation. Low-income, first-generation students are operationalized using two items: annual family income and parental educational attainment. In a NCES report on middle- and low-income families paying for higher education, low-income is defined as annual family incomes below $30,000 (U.S. Department of Education, 2003; Choy, 2000). First-generation status is identified as students who indicate their parents' educational attainment is less than "some college." Of the 5,270 cases in the original dataset, 312 cases from 69 institutions meet the criteria of being both low-income and first generation. Of those 312 cases, 41% (n = 128) represent low-income, first-generation college students who participated in service-learning ([example] Table 1).

Table 1. *Low-Income, First-Generation Sample Demographics*

Institutional Type	No. of Institutions	No. of Students	
Public	37 (53.6%)	220 (70.5%)	
Private	32 (46.4%)	92 (29.5%)	
Total:	69	312	
	Service- Learning Participation		
Sex	No (%)	Yes (%)	Total
Male	71 (67.6%)	34 (32.4%)	105
Female	113 (54.6%)	94 (45.4%)	207
Total:	184 (100%)	128 (100%)	312
Race/Ethnicity	No (%)	Yes (%)	Total
Asian	43 (82.7%)	9 (17.3%)	52
Black	23 (48.9%)	24 (51.1%)	47
Hispanic	72 (57.1%)	54 (42.9%)	126
White	24 (55.8%)	19 (44.2%)	43
Other Race/Ethnicity	7 (50.0%)	7 (50.0%)	14
Two or More Races/Ethnicity	15 (50.0%)	15 (50.0%)	30
Total:	184 (59.0%)	128 (41.0%)	312

Summary

OLS blocked regression was conducted for each of the three outcome variables. Of the three regression analyses, participation in service-learning is a statistically significant predictor only for GPA. Table 2 (found in Appendix B) includes the results of the regression predicting college GPA. As this table shows the participation in service-learning courses has a positive ($\beta = 0.528$) relationship with college GPA. The full model accounts for 23.2% of the variance in this variable. Because of the blocked nature of this analysis, we see that service-learning, as a single item, increases the model's overall R^2 by 4.0%. It is also interesting to note that of the three outcomes, that college GPA, though still a self-reported item, is a much less subject measurement. Whereas the other outcomes ask students to perceive their skills and growth, this item asks students to report a more objective figure. Consistent with other literature, students' pre-college characteristics account for that largest amount of variance in the model (11.2%) and students' high school GPA ($\beta = 0.343$) is also a significant positive predictor of college GPA. Finally, it should also be noted that Hispanic ($\beta = -0.928$) and Black ($\beta = -0.873$) race/ethnicity descriptors are both significant, negative, predictors of college GPA. This finding indicates that even when financial (low-income) and cultural (first-generation) capital are roughly held constant, there appears to be a systemic racial inequity in GPA attainment for these subpopulations.

While not in the original conceptualization of the study, several *ad hoc* measures were taken in response to the initial finding that service-learning is not a significant predictor for CSS Civic Awareness Scores and Cognitive Diversity Scores. Regression analyses were run on each of the individual survey items that make up the Cognitive

Diversity Scale. In each of these analyses service-learning was not a significant predictor. This contrasts with prior research that indicates that service-learning increases exposure to diversity and the cognitive development (Batchelder & Root, 1994; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Osborne, Hammerich, Hensley, 1998). Since each of these items are self-reported by college seniors just prior to graduation, this may simply be a limitation of the data. Examination of these items shows that most students tend to rate themselves high on each of these questions; concordantly, there is very little variation present, which explains why almost no independent variables were significant predictors in either of the regression models. College seniors' perception that they have grown in critical thinking, analytical problem solving, knowledge of and ability to get along with people from different races/ethnicities while in college are an expected outcomes that virtually all institutions of higher education strive for. Additionally, research indicates that students may have difficulties self-assessing these subjective measures (Gonyea, 2005; Porter, 2011). Interestingly however, regression analyses of CSS Civic Awareness Scores and of Cognitive Diversity Scores conducted for the larger overall sample of college students results in models where service-learning is a very significant ($p < 0.001$), positive, predictor of both of these outcomes.

Chapter IV

CHAPTER TITLE

[Chapter contents: The fourth chapter of a Thesis commonly focuses upon the findings of the study. Tables and figures are typically used in this chapter, but do not repeat contents in tables or figures in the narrative – simply summarize the material before the table or figure is shown.]

Chapter V

CONCLUSION

[Chapter contents: The fifth chapter of a Thesis is almost always a conclusion including a brief overview of the study, limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research. A student can have more than five chapters as long as the last chapter concludes the Thesis.]

REFERENCES

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Cresswell, J. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

And so on…

[Note: For VSU Graduate School purposes, cap book titles in text and in references.]

APPENDIX A:

Table 2: Results for Blocked Regression Model Predicting GPA for

Low-Income, First-Generation Students

[NOTE: Supplemental material should be placed in appendices. Supplemental material includes survey questions, permission letters/e-mails, detailed data (results), etc. You need a separate appendix for each type of material presented. Some style manuals allow you to place tables, figures, and other graphical representations in an appendix, rather than dispersed throughout your text. Each appendix should have a cover page that identifies it. Reference the cover sheet page number in the Table of Contents. Center the title on the page. A copy of your IRB/IACUC approval or exemption (if applicable) must be included here. Be sure to mention the IRB or IACUC in your "Methodology" chapter.]

Table 2. *Results for Blocked Regression Model Predicting GPA for Low-Income, First-Generation Students*

Variables	M1		M2		M3		M4	
Student Pre-College Characteristics	B	*p*	B	*p*	B	*p*	B	*p*
(Constant)	6.080	.000	3.892	.000	3.240	.021	5.508	.001
Male	-.223	.286	-.265	.201	-.270	.196	-.234	.265
Asian	-.300	.433	-.391	.291	-.392	.290	-.304	.410
Black	-.960	.020*	-.968	.014*	-.947	.015*	-.873	.025*
Hispanic	-1.087	.002*	-1.067	.001*	-1.058	.001*	-.966	.003*
Other Race/Ethnicity	-.607	.252	-.403	.435	-.368	.477	-.327	.524
Two or More Races/Ethnicities	-1.175	.009	-1.085	.014	-1.031	.014	-1.017	.016
TFS View: Racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America	.126	.659	.222	.441	.250	.405	.232	.448
TFS View: Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society	.115	.578	.159	.419	.152	.440	.120	.539
TFS View: Colleges should prohibit racist/sexist speech on campus	-.179	.347	-.124	.501	-.126	.495	-.197	.290
TFS View: Same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status	-.040	.863	.073	.731	.092	.671	.115	.594
TFS View: Affirmative action in college admission should be abolished	.112	.610	.077	.716	.084	.696	.127	.549
Student Pre-College Experiences								
What was your average grade in high school?			.315	.000**	.313	.000**	.329	.000**
Act in Past Year: Performed community service as part of a class			-.275	.044	-.260	.065	-.257	.067
Act in Past Year: Performed volunteer work			.121	.395	.106	.470	.110	.450
Did your high school require community service for graduation?			.150	.494	.148	.504	.129	.562
Student College Characteristics								
Primary undergraduate major aggregated					-.010	.626	-.006	.762
Full-Time					.744	.535	.797	.500
Institutional Characteristics								
Public Institution							-.390	.081
Institutional Selectivity							-.002	.042
Service-Learning								
Participation in Service-Learning Course(s)								
Change in R^2	0.112		0.060		0.001		0.019	
R^2	0.112		0.172		0.173		0.192	

APPENDIX B:

Institutional Review Board Approval (or Exemption)

A copy of your IRB or IACUC approval or exemption, or the oversight screening form goes after the appendix cover sheet. Students should keep the original.

APPENDIX C:

Helpful Tips

HELPFUL TIPS:
(Not a part of your Thesis!)

1. Be sure all pages have a 1.5" left margin.
2. The first page of each chapter has a 2" top margin - other pages have a 1" top.
3. The bottom and right margins are 1".
4. Page numbering is bottom center...no running head in this document.
5. Set your paragraph settings to single or double spacing, not multiple...with no extra blank lines between paragraphs (this is the default setting in Word - do not use).
6. Spacing after a period ending a sentence – two spaces.
7. When centering chapter titles (Chapter I, Chapter II, etc.) at the 2" mark, be sure to use the "center" button on the toolbar rather than the tab key.
8. NO bold-faced type anywhere in the document EXCEPT on the signature page (i.e., headings on the left of the page only). However, if material in your appendices have bold-faced text, that's okay.
9. Tables and/or Figures: do not include a list of tables of figures if you have less than three of each. Try not to use more than 15 of each – too many can clutter the narrative.
10. Figures – place titles *underneath* the figure, notes are single spaced; Tables – place titles *above* the table, with one blank line separating the table and the title. Figures and tables can be in color or black/white.
11. For our purposes, when writing of units of time (years, months, weeks, days, hours, seconds, minutes, etc.), use numbers instead of spelling out (e.g., 6 years, 35 years, 7 months, 12 weeks, 30 minutes, 1 hour, 24 seconds, etc.). Use Arabic numbers when referring to chapters in text (e.g., In Chapter 1, the Definition of Terms included…). But use Roman numerals in the Table of Contents and chapter headings.
12. For our purposes, in the References, we ask students to capitalize the first letter of each word in Book titles.
13. For the Table of Contents - use leaders and page numbers (do not include "p.").
14. When using = < > + symbols, place one space before and one space after each. For example, n=45 should read as n = 45; p<.05 should be p < .05.
15. Include a copy of your IRB approval or exemption as an appendix (mention it in the Methodology chapter and include in the Table of Contents).
16. When discussing percentages, use either the symbol (%) or the word (percentage). Be consistent with use – don't interchange!
17. Watch out for that pesky quotation mark – be sure all are the same font and style to open quote and end quote.

These are a few tips for EDD, SLPD, and DPA students. Some of the Graduate School's requirements will supersede style requirements (APA, MLA, APSA, Chicago, etc.) for consistency's sake across all disciplines.

More information can be found at: http://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/thesis-and-dissertation-information.php