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Pre-Boomer Students On Campus: An Exploratory Study of How Students Born Before 1946 Experience the Youth-Oriented Campus Culture at UNM

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PRE-BOOMER STUDENTS ON CAMPUS

**An Exploratory Study of How Students Born Before 1946 Experience the Youth-
Oriented Campus Culture at UNM**

By

Elinor Sue Coates

B.S., Management, Golden Gate University, Cum Laude, 1979
M.P.A., University of San Francisco, 1984

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
Organizational Learning and Instructional Technologies

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all Pre-Boomer Students everywhere, and especially to the fourteen who volunteered to participate in my study. Their contribution was extraordinary and my gratitude is boundless.

Acknowledgements

Dr. Patsy Boverie chaired the committee that admitted me to the OLIT PhD program, and served as chair of my dissertation committee. She was also my chief booster, and it was she who suggested I build a new dissertation out of my TED Talk after we had to abandon my original topic due to illness. She shepherded my efforts, constantly reminding me not to change the world, just to demonstrate ability to do research.

Dr. Lawrence Roybal served on my committee through thick and thin, devoting an hour almost every week helping me develop interviewing skills and practicing the organizational culture model that was the core of my earlier topic. He never missed an opportunity to offer encouragement and support, both as Director of the Graduate Resource Center and as Interim Vice President of Equity and Diversity, where his expertise and experience contributed immensely to both my studies.

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ABSTRACT

Older learners have been studied thoroughly, except for those born before 1946, preceding the post-war "population bulge" (Carlson, 2008; Laditka, Fischer, Laditka, & Segal, 2004; Verstynen, 2011). Most such studies define "older" as over 25 or over 40, and fail to separate the subject group from those who came later. Defining a group by numerical age is problematic because it changes every year and soon omits the group's defining life experiences (Pilcher, 1994), which for this group include the Great Depression, World War II, the polio epidemic, and life before television. To address that gap this critical ethnography explored the experience of Pre-Boomers at UNM. Through qualitative analysis of data collected from volunteer participants in semi-structured interviews and a focus group, supplemented with the author's own observations as both pre-boomer and researcher, and contextual literature, an understanding of students born before 1946 and of their perceptions about the campus culture emerged. In 2017 a total of 212 individual Pre-Boomers were

enrolled at all loads and levels at UNM. Of those, 23 were enrolled for degrees, some are enjoying retirement, and some are employed or self-employed or preparing for a career change to keep working. The study participants are active in the campus community and contribute their "living history" experience to classroom discussions, enriching traditional students' learning experience. They described little significant age discrimination although some reported occasionally feeling invisible or irrelevant. Future studies should examine why other Pre-Boomers have not enrolled and whether factors that discouraged them should be addressed.

Keywords: ageism, older students, campus culture, passive bullying, older workforce.

Table of Contents

List of Figures.....	xi
List of Tables	xii
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Rationale and Significance	1
Context.....	1
Organizational culture.....	4
Networks among older students.....	7
Context of Policy and Legal Framework	8
Federal law	8
State law.....	8
UNM policies.....	9
Problem.....	11
Purpose.....	14
Research Questions.....	15
Research Approach	16
Researcher's Role and Assumptions	16
Organization of the Dissertation	17
Operational Definitions of Terms Used Here	18
Chapter Two: Literature Review	20
Overview of Research.....	21
What are the campus experiences of students born before 1946?	24

How do students born before 1946 feel about being excluded or included, neglected or respected?	29
How do students feel about the University's support of their pursuit of learning?.....	34
Tuition Discount	38
What Pre-Boomer Students contribute to the campus culture	39
Why Pre-Boomer Students enrolled, and their job prospects after graduation	39
Theoretical Framework.....	40
Literature About Conducting Critical Ethnography	42
Conclusion	43
Chapter Three: Research Methods	44
Purpose and Research Questions	44
Rationale for Qualitative Research Design.....	45
Rationale for Critical Ethnography Method	46
The Research Sample.....	46
Recruitment.....	47
Interview participants.....	48
Focus group.....	49
Information Needed To Conduct the Study	51
Overview of Research Design	52
IRB Approval.....	53
Data Collection Methods	54
Methods for Data Analysis and Synthesis	55
Ethical Considerations	55

Issues of Trustworthiness.....	56
Limitations and Delimitations.....	56
Timeline for the Study	57
Chapter Summary	58
Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis.....	59
Findings From Interviews and Focus Group	60
First Research Question: What are the experiences on campus of students born before 1946?.....	61
Second Research Question: How do Pre-Boomer Students feel the university supports their pursuit of learning?	70
Third Research Question: How does their life experience contribute to the campus culture?.....	76
Findings From Enrollment Management Data	82
Method of Analysis.....	84
Description and Analysis of the Participants	84
Sample size	85
Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations	87
Implications of Findings	88
Cost of pursuing a degree	89
Accessibility.....	89
Advisement and late career counseling.....	90
Prior Recommendations.....	91
Recommendations for Further Study	91

References	95
List of Appendices.....	101
Appendix A -- TED Talk Script.....	102
Appendix B₁ -- E-Mail Recruitment.....	106
Appendix B₂ -- IRB-Approved Consent Form	107
Appendix C -- Record of Individual and Group Interviews #1116690-1.....	108
Appendix D₁ -- Request To Enrollment Management Team For Head-Count Data ...	109
Appendix D₂ -- Enrollment Management Division Report	110
Appendix D₃ -- Enrollment Statistics Posted on UNM Website	111
Appendix E -- IRB Ruling.....	112

List of Figures

Figure 1. University's discrimination policy at https://oeo.unm.edu/rights/discrimination/index.html	10
Figure 2. Illustration of inconsistent nomenclature for generational cohorts.	22
Figure 3. Adapting Maslow's Hierarchy of needs to Simi & Matusitz article.....	30
Figure 4. Focus group room arrangement.....	50

List of Tables

Table 1. Student census, selected groups, Fall 2017.....	6
Table 2. Examples of stereotypical comments	13
Table 3. Summary of Pew Report data	37
Table 4. Overview of data needed	51

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter introduces an examination of how students born before 1946 experience the modern university campus, as they seek higher education in a youth-oriented culture. The topic emerged from my TED Talk at TEDxABQ-Women in October 2016, the transcript of which is in Appendix A (Coates, 2016). Preparing for that Talk revealed the paucity of research about this generation in institutions of higher education. This critical ethnography explores what older students experience in the youth-oriented culture on campus, and to what extent an age-specific movement or advocacy appeals to them.

Rationale and Significance

The reason for performing this study is to bring transparency to the cohort of students born before 1946, how their life experience enriches the campus culture, and how they experience the youth-oriented culture on campus, both in pursuing their goal of earning a degree or professional credential for whatever reason and in learning for the sake of learning.

The significance of the study is that the population is aging and life expectancy is increasing (although the opioid epidemic may impact these statements). Retirement is postponed as people stay in the workforce or return to the workforce (Carlson, 2008). Average age of most groups in the student census has not changed significantly over the past five years, but it may increase over the next several years as the post-war "Boomer" generation ages, if the epidemic is controlled. The study provides foundational information for the University to prepare for such changes which will affect the campus culture.

Context

As the U.S. population ages, the largest generation in history (Carlson, 2008) begins to reach age 70, and a consensus of most resources indicates that life expectancy in

developed countries such as the U.S. ranges from 70s to 90s, people remain active and engaged well-past traditional retirement age. This study showed that little is known about the age group born before 1946, which is characterized by shared memories and experiences that include the Great Depression, the wartime economy, the polio epidemic, a segregated society, and the early post-war cultural upheaval before television. The age group born after 1945 shares a very different set of defining memories, so the end of World War II is a generally accepted divider between these two historical cohorts. Yet the two age groups are usually combined in statistical and sociological studies discussing older people.

Nomenclature is problematic, since the word *generation* strictly means kinship, and the word *cohort* strictly means an age group with shared life experiences (Pilcher, 1994), (Carlson, 2008). Common terms for pre-war people, such as "Silent Generation", have no specificity, and other terms are also applied to this group, such as "traditionalists", "veterans", "swingers", "matures", "lucky few", etc. This is the only age group with such a variety of labels and of age ranges.

Some people dislike descriptive terms such as "Elderly" and "Oldest Old" because they imply a frailty or vulnerability that does not apply to UNM students born before 1946. Defining a group by numerical age, such as "over 70", is problematic because it changes every year and soon omits the group's defining life experiences. Therefore, this study refers to students born before 1946 as "Pre-Boomer Students" and its sample of participants refute any stereotype of frailty.

To further refute the term "elderly", consider contemporaries of the Pre-Boomer Students including such currently active public figures as Warren Buffet, Senator John McCain, Senator Dianne Feinstein, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, civil rights leader and

Member of Congress John Lewis, Michael Bloomberg, Dan Rather, Harry Belafonte, Shirley MacLaine, Willie Nelson, Carol Burnett, Dick Van Dyke, Johnny Mathis, and Robert Redford. This study focuses on the Pre-Boomer Students on the University of New Mexico (UNM) campus, and addresses how these students experience the youth-oriented campus culture. This study makes no attempt to generalize its findings to other campuses or to non-campus environments, which will be suggested in Chapter Five for further research.

Workforce data suggest that employers value the experience older workers bring to their organization's knowledge base (Dewhurst, 2015) but that many employers "avoid employing older workers" (Schniter & Shields, 2014). Colleges and universities welcome older students in programs such as Lifelong Learning, The UNM Osher Institute, ElderHostel, The Oasis Institute, and Continuing Education. Older learners have been studied thoroughly (Carlson, 2008) except for the specific age group born before 1946, preceding the "population bulge" that occurred after the end of World War II. Later generations have no memory of the pre-war era, but studies about older learners bunch them all together. Thus, the campus experience of students who enroll in colleges and universities after age 70 is not documented and the institution has no basis on which to prepare for the sudden surge that will occur as the post-war generation reaches age 70. As a result, the "Pre-Boomer Students" have become invisible.

At least two dynamics are in play: One is that the population is aging as life-expectancy is increasing. The other is that retirement age is delayed, as evidenced by the rules for collecting Social Security benefits and other pension plans and the condition of the United States economy keeping people in the workforce longer than was typical in the past. People reaching age 70 may not be ready for retirement, may indeed remain in the workforce

for ten or fifteen more years, either as employees or self-employed, and may be seeking advanced education to support that. A recent emphasis on vocational training instead of university degree for job preparation feeds into both of those dynamics. This phenomenon of overlapping dynamics may begin impacting the University's approach to student recruitment such that a policy adjustment may be appropriate. These introductory views are pursued in subsequent chapters.

Organizational culture. Based on informal observations and conversations as well as available data (Appendix D), this study assumes that the campus community is primarily oriented to the 18-25 age group, as reflected in the average statistics posted online, and in the student organizations and student activities. Support for this assumption is presented in subsequent sections. Such a youth-oriented culture appears generally oriented to traditional students, under 25 years of age, with little or no professional experience, and still developing physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Organizational culture has been defined in summary as:

... a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned [over time] by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein, 2010)

Contemplating this view of what organizational culture is, coupled with the orientation of campus culture to people aged 18-25, further supports the invisibility of students born before 1946.

Since the University of New Mexico (UNM) is a "minority-serving institution" because it serves a large Hispanic and Native American population, it is important to recognize that organizational culture is quite different from other uses of the term "culture" such as are related to ethnicity, gender, or geography, although those characteristics may influence an organization's culture. This study is focused only on age and the age-related campus culture. Undoubtedly, some minority students are older and some older students are minorities, but this study is about age, not minorities. Chapter Five will discuss this opportunity for future research.

Statistics reports posted online, for both undergraduate and graduate combined, show the average age in Spring 2017 at UNM for part time students was 32.14 and full time was 23.34, which is almost unchanged over five years. The UNM policy on Discrimination includes "Age (40 and over)" as a protected class. Forty is the threshold set by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and validity of applying it to the student body is unknown.

According to data posted on UNM's website (Appendix D₃), which displays average age and headcount data for the most recent five years, the average age of students at UNM as of September 8, 2017 is as follows:

Table 1. Student census, selected groups, Fall 2017

Level and Load	Average Age	Headcount
Non-degree undergraduate	25.37	234
All undergraduate	23.14	18,913
Non-degree graduate	40.17	895
Graduate Programs	33.30	4,017
All part time students	32.15	7,783
All full time students	22.87	18,495
Grand Total, all students	25.62	26,278

The degree program with the highest average age is Doctor of Nursing Practice at 50.09, but I found no age range on which that average is calculated. These data support the assumption of orientation to the 18-25 age group; a few of the averages have fluctuated slightly over the past five years.

Through sororities, fraternities, and other student organizations, strong ties develop among sub-groups on campus, each with discernable cultures such as ethnicity, religion, professional interests, or politics, for example. The list of chartered organizations at UNM is found at https://unm-community.symplicity.com/index.php?s=student_group&au=&ck=. No data are readily available for profiling the organizational culture of these groups, and only two of those that appear in the list of sanctioned organizations refer to older students, without defining "older". Glancing through *The Daily Lobo* reveals that social activities appeal mostly, but not exclusively, to the 18-25 age group, as does advertising. These informal impressions also support assuming a youth-oriented culture.

Networks among older students. No formal networks exist on campus that are specifically engaged in connecting students born before 1946 with each other. Repeated reports suggest that prior efforts failed. In 2017, Interim President Abdallah vowed to "focus on campus climate and culture ... rekindling a culture of trust and respect for the various actors and constituencies" (Abdallah, 2017). To date, no program is in place specifically for middle-aged students let alone Pre-Boomer Students. There are chartered student organizations designated for ethnic groups, religious groups, veterans, and gender groups, but not for age groups.

The Association of Non-Traditional Students (ANTS) has a broad range of interests allowing anyone who self-proclaims non-conformity to join. Their web page states: "Membership is open to any student registered at UNM. Typically members are adults pursuing a career change, students returning after time away from college, transfer students, and first-time adult college students." Their website is not up to date and previous efforts to contact them produced no results.

Lifelong Learners was chartered in Fall 2016 and never got off the ground. How well it represents students born before 1946 remains to be seen since it also does not specify an age range of interest. This study examines whether these students have or want networks.

Social activities on campus, such as the mid-week movies offered in the SUB at very affordable prices, are generally appealing to those aged 18-25 but occasionally offer 1950s-era films. Notable exceptions are Popejoy Hall, which offers a significant student discount for all ages, and free or low-cost concerts in Keller Hall, and Landmark Musicals in Rodey Hall. The only age-related benefit offered to UNM students is the senior-citizen discount for students age 65+, and there is no apparent effort to connect with these students as a group.

My personal experience is that using the senior citizen discount may mean not being able to get into courses required for the degree if they fill up before the first day of class. I also forfeited the discount in order to attend full time, and reducing my load to save money (a very significant savings) meant delaying graduation. Sometimes the student can successfully ask a professor to hold a seat until the first day of class in order to register under the rules for the discount, even though the discount is intended for a space-available basis, and it seems most suitable for students with flexible schedules. Research (Thompson, 2003) indicates that for most senior citizens seeking degrees, cost is not a significant factor. Thompson reports that some universities are abandoning the senior citizen discount because of its impact on funding.

Context of Policy and Legal Framework

Federal law. Equal Employment Opportunity legislation in America prohibits employers from discriminating against the specified list of people's characteristics, including age which is defined as over 40. Younger applicants and workers are covered by protective legislation such the Child Labor Law and are not addressed here. There is no protection in the law for workers who are past retirement age, whatever that is, although there may be some case law which was not pursued here. There is no age-related protection for students. Employers are agile at avoiding the prohibition on age discrimination (Gullette, 2013), and employers who offer tuition assistance as an employee benefit are free to restrict it to younger workers, although they are advised (Zetlin, 1997) to avoid those restrictions if they want to motivate older workers.

State law. The Rule in New Mexico ("New Mexico Administrative Code, Reduced tuition for senior citizens," 2005) says students over age 65 may enroll in any course at a

public university or college that has space available as of the first day of class, and are charged only \$5.00 per credit hour, plus any applicable student fees. The senior discount students may not be counted in determining whether a class attains the minimum number of students required to proceed. The institution may not count these students in enrollment reports submitted to the state. It is not clear whether these students are included in the University's census reports posted online and summarized earlier.

UNM policies. The University's senior discount policy clearly states the registration restrictions as provided by state rules, but the policy does not disclose whether students using the senior discount are excluded from published statistical data. Research suggests that students would consider this exclusion as demeaning (Thompson, 2003).

The University's equal opportunity policy applies to employment, enrollment, and other purposes. It appears at <https://oeo.unm.edu/rights/discrimination/index.html> and is shown in Figure 1, which is two screenshots put together for better viewing:

<p>What is Discrimination?</p> <p>Discrimination is partiality or bias in the treatment of a person or group that is unfair or illegal. Discrimination is treating someone differently based on a protected class (see list, right).</p> <p>Not all discrimination is illegal. One can be subject to unfair treatment that is not illegal under University policy or state or federal law, for example, being treated unfairly because someone doesn't like you or because of your political affiliations.</p> <p>Differential Treatment</p> <p>Differential treatment means treating someone differently than similarly situated individuals because of that person's protected class status.</p> <p>Hostile Environment</p> <p>The creation of a hostile environment happens when an individual is subject to severe and/or frequent conduct based on protected class status that creates a hostile, intimidating or offensive work, educational or living environment that unreasonably interferes with that individual's employment or educational performance.</p> <p>Not every instance of treating someone differently constitutes discrimination. For example, treating two employees differently because of differences in performance is not discrimination.</p>	<p>Protected Classes</p> <p>Discrimination is treating someone differently based on a civil rights protected class. A protected class is a group of people protected against discrimination by University policy or by state and federal law. At UNM, the following are considered protected classes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Age (40 and over) ● Ancestry/National Origin ● Color/Race ● Gender Identity ● Genetic information ● Medical Condition ● Mental/Physical Disability ● Pregnancy ● Religion ● Sex/Sexual Harassment ● Sexual Orientation ● Spousal Affiliation ● Veteran Status
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Figure 1. University's discrimination policy at <https://oeo.unm.edu/rights/discrimination/index.html>

In implementing the discrimination policy, the University focus is on ethnicity, gender, and disability but not age. Some policies about student age originated in the 1960s when life expectancy was ten years younger than it is now, and reaching retirement age meant enjoying recreation and relaxation, not staying employed to make ends meet.

The list of protected classes includes "Age (over 40)" which is also the federal Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) standard. There is no specific mention of students between age 40 and 65, or over 65, but "older" students are encouraged to utilize Career Resources advisors. In President Frank's town hall meeting on September 22, 2016, officials stated that data are not collected to support questions about age within the student body. Contrary to that statement, birth date appears on each student's "Unofficial Transcript", and average age

data appear in published reports, so such questions could have been answered. The requested data were provided as discussed in Chapter Three, and excerpts appear in Appendix D.

Problem

As the healthy population ages, and more people continue working beyond traditional retirement age, little is known about how working Pre-Boomer Students are perceived in their classwork or their jobs. Most of the studies of people born before 1946 are about their medical care, their dementia, their living arrangement, and their financial needs. No directly-relevant studies about students born before 1946 emerged in the literature search.

The University's diversity, inclusion, and anti-bullying efforts address gender, ethnicity, and disability, as well as sexual harassment, but ignore age bias regarding its oldest students. My personal experience in class is that professors omit those born before World War II when discussing generational characteristics, and the neglected students experience some degree of disrespect or exclusion. However, when I pointed out the omission, most seemed surprised and readily corrected their lectures. In spite of increasing life expectancy, delayed retirement, and people re-entering the workforce after retirement, the common bias seems to be that anyone over 70 is done and irrelevant, and the only job available to them is WalMart greeter (Tergesen, 2016). On the contrary, many "lifelong learners" are enrolled at UNM and at the start of this study at least seven were known to be seeking degrees after age 75. Actual data show that 23 students born before 1946 were enrolled for degrees in 2017. This study of Pre-Boomer students can provide a foundation for such policy updates when the University is ready to update its policies about age-discrimination.

Neither the University nor the U. S. Census Bureau captures statistics on people born before 1946 as a distinct group, so little is known about Pre-Boomer Students. One Census

report separates "Elderly 65-74" from "Oldest Old 85+" and defines "Working Age" as 20-64. Their data are strictly age-related, without regard to generational or cohort-related issues discussed earlier. This study of Pre-Boomer Students could be used to raise awareness, suggesting clear definitions in the modern context. Traditionally, age 65+ was considered retirement age, but Social Security has already increased that. Retirement communities often specify eligibility age at 55 (see online real estate listings). AARP now recruits members at age 50 and changed its name from "American Association of Retired People" to AARP and adopted the phrase "Real Possibilities", although it still lobbies for retirement issues such as protecting Social Security and Medicare. In any case, almost all data combine the pre-1946 group with the so-called "baby boomers", which skews policies and programs in favor of the population bulge that occurred after 1945. As the Boomers age, their influence is felt by their very numbers, overwhelming those who preceded the "boom" and are now over 72.

When discussions about active oldsters omit the pre-boomers or combine them with the larger boomer group, this treatment can sometimes border on unintentional micro-aggression or passive bullying by marginalizing a specific segment of the student population. To clarify what micro-aggression related to age looks like, examples that would not be tolerated in other socio-economic groups include:

Table 2. Examples of stereotypical comments

Comments actually experienced	Comparable comments not usually tolerated
"You have to show your ID when you place your order if you want the senior discount."	You can't eat here with that scarf wrapped around your head.
"You are how old? You sure don't look it!"	You look too fat for the seat.
"My, you look great!"	You sure are pretty/handsome.
"You sure are active for someone your age."	You sure are active for someone with no legs.
"Why would you want a degree at your age?"	Employers don't hire anyone over 65 anyhow.
"What will you do with your degree?"	You don't need a degree after you retire.
"You don't have a computer, do you?"	People your age can't learn computer software

Census Bureau data are reported in groups, such as "over 60" or "over 65", which are currently skewed by including the post-war group known as "Baby Boomers" and the pre-war group together. Therefore, the data are not representative of the Target Population for this study, which is the portion who pre-date the Baby Boomers.

The UNM Registrar's published data do not report by specific age or age range or birth year, but only by average age, and how the average is calculated is not disclosed. To establish a Target Population for this study, two data points were requested from the Registrar's office, degree-seeking students born in 1941 or before (which is 7), and the earliest birth year in that group is 1933. Since this request produced less than a reasonable number of participants, the definition of Target Population for this study was expanded to include all students born before 1946. Meanwhile, an informal statistic came to light: about 120 students over age 70 were enrolled, about 80 of which were non-degree. This provided a

better degree of confidence that a reasonable sample could be found. After the study was approved by IRB, which included the data request in Appendix D₁, the Reporting Team at Enrollment Management Division provided the detailed data shown in Appendix D₂, and the email list for contacting a total of 212 students born before 1946.

The author issued an open invitation (Appendix B₁) for participants who met the eligibility criteria of being enrolled at UNM, having been born before 1946, and executing the consent form (Appendix B₂). The first fifteen respondents were scheduled for interviews and six of those also volunteered for a follow-up focus group.

Purpose

This critical ethnography fills the contextual gap by examining the experiences of an apparently neglected age group through semi-structured interviews and a focus group. Through qualitative analysis of data collected, an understanding of the oldest students' perceptions about the campus culture emerged. The purpose of the study was to utilize this information for improving the Pre-Boomer Students' experience on campus and to advocate for University policy development to address inclusiveness and protection from possible age-related discrimination.

To address the problem, the study examined how participants' early memories affected their later participation in higher education, how they perceived both positive and negative treatment by others including marginalization or passive bullying or micro-aggression. In addition, this study examined how participants' memories enhanced others' experience on campus, and how they perceived the University's support of their age group. With these understandings of the population, the university can evaluate its policies, procedures, and practices in order to ensure a reasonable comfort level for acceptance of

older students as productive, contributing members of society. The study can lay a foundation for creating a culture of respect and inclusion for older Lobos, in preparation for the anticipated influx of students over age 70, and can also inform future studies.

Research Questions

Given that purpose, this exploratory study pursued the following questions:

1. What are the experiences on campus of students born before 1946?
 - What measures have they observed to prevent, or protect from, examples of passive bullying or discrimination?
 - How do they feel about being excluded or included, neglected or respected?
2. How do Pre-Boomer Students feel the university supports their pursuit of learning?
 - How well are faculty and staff trained to understand what older adult learners need?
 - What age-related resources are available on campus, such as late-career counseling, adult residences separate from adolescent lifestyle, appropriate technology support, healthy food-court choices, blue-zone parking spaces, accessible rest rooms, etc.
3. How does Pre-Boomer Students' life experience contribute to the campus culture?
 - What do Pre-Boomer Students remember of events and societal conditions that occurred before the majority of the campus community was born?
 - Are Pre-Boomer Students encouraged to share such memories, and how are these memories received -- welcomed or resented or ignored?

Research Approach

A critical ethnographic approach to qualitative study occurred in three phases. Phase One, the Enrollment Management Reporting Team identified the population of 212 students born before 1946 and provided their email addresses. Phase Two, an invitation was distributed by email to the eligible population seeking volunteers. Nineteen of that list responded expressing interest in the study and the first fifteen volunteers were scheduled for individual interviews, comprising the Sample. One withdrew and the fourteen participants executed the approved consent form and were assigned de-identified numbers and received a \$25 LoboCash card. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcripts were member-checked and qualitatively analyzed for themes and patterns that led to conclusions about the problem statement.

Phase Three consisted of my observations over the past six years as a Pre-Boomer Student enrolled for this doctorate, as well as observations during interviews and focus group. My student observations as documented in personal journals and class notes were collected for the data analysis portion of the study. Observations that occurred in the focus group and interviews were noted on the interview form at the time, supplemented by a few follow-up emails.

Triangulation was achieved through the interviews, focus group, observations, and literature.

The research methods are described in Chapter Three.

Researcher's Role and Assumptions

As a doctoral candidate born in 1939, the researcher is a Pre-Boomer Student. Having studied organizational culture for five years, I have observed that the UNM campus

culture is oriented to the 18-25 age group. Thus, I conduct this study as a key informant as well as researcher.

Another assumption underlying this study is based on my personal experience in which professors neglected to include the "silent generation" in presenting generational issues, and students who identified themselves as "older learners" were twenty to thirty years younger, thus treating the "Pre-Boomer Students" as invisible or irrelevant, a form of marginalization that may be considered passive bullying or micro-aggression even though unintentional. Only one such incident felt hostile to me, while other such incidents were readily resolved.

This study was inspired by the TED Talk I presented at TEDxABQ-Women in October 2016 (Appendix A). The Talk clearly expresses an "axe to grind" or "chip on the shoulder" attitude about age discrimination and age-related bullying, but the study is intended to exclude those biases.

Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation consists of five chapters and accompanying appendices and references, organized according to APA and guided by instructions in the Bloomberg & Volpe textbook (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Chapter One has provided an introduction to the study and its context. Chapter Two reviews the literature that is relevant and identifies the gap. Chapter Three thoroughly describes the research methods used in conducting this study, along with a summary of the timeline. Chapter Four discusses the results of the data collection and analysis in Findings and Analysis. Chapter Five contains Discussion including Conclusions, Limitations, and Recommendations. Following the final chapter are the References and Appendices.

Operational Definitions of Terms Used Here

A challenge in analyzing the literature about senior-citizen students is that there is no consensus at all as to defining terms used for this age group.

Degree-seeking. Not a recognized term, in this document it means any UNM student currently enrolled in a degree program, or having submitted an application for admission to a degree program. The term used in context may also include any student pursuing a professional credential or enrolled in mandatory continuing education units for maintenance of a professional license. Participants self-identify their student status.

Elderly. The term "elderly" is variously defined in the literature, or not at all, so in some studies it is difficult to determine who the target population is. The Census Bureau in its report "Aging in the United States" refers to "Elderly" as 65+ and "Oldest Old" as 85+. "Elderly" in context often implies frailty without designating a numerical age. Some people consider these terms demeaning and even insulting. To address this ambiguity, participants were asked to indicate their definition and all rejected the term "elderly".

Generation vs. Cohort. Although the term *generation* is often used synonymously with *cohort* in social science, the terms are not properly the same. Mannheim's 1923 essay, as reviewed by Jane Pilcher of Leicester University (Pilcher, 1994), may have limitations regarding 21st Century America, but is frequently cited as "the seminal theoretical treatment of generations as a sociological phenomenon". He describes generation as a "kinship relationship", whereas cohort means "people within a delineated population who experience the same significant events within a given period of time". Some people reportedly object to the generational nicknames as demeaning. Therefore, this study refers to "age groups", operationally defined by birth years at twenty-year intervals, with minimal nomenclature, to

avoid the various definitions used by demographers, historians, statisticians, and commentators. This study is limited to the Pre-Boomer Students, those born between 1925 and 1945.

Non-traditional. A term often used to include anyone over age 25, which loses its value for this study. A thorough search of the UNM websites produced no definition, and contextual descriptions include almost anyone except freshmen entering immediately after graduating high school with no distinguishing characteristics.

Older. U.S. Dept. of Labor, Women's Bureau, defines "older people" as 55+. "Older learners" are typically over 25 or a variety of other thresholds. In context, "Older" is simply a comparison to younger people.

Pre-Boomer Students. People born before 1946, and, for this study, those enrolled in higher education. This age group has variously been called "the silent generation" or "the lucky few", and is the smallest age group in recent U.S. history.

Working age. The U.S. Dept. of Commerce, National Institute on Aging, defines "working age" as 20-64.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In order to overcome ambiguities in terminology, this researcher has adopted the term "Pre-Boomer Students" for enrolled students born before 1946. This chapter reviews the literature as it pertains to the Pre-Boomer Students at UNM.

The literature search focused on these research questions:

1. What are the experiences on campus of students born before 1946?
 - What measures have they observed to prevent, or protect from, examples of passive bullying or discrimination?
 - How do they feel about being excluded or included, neglected or respected?
2. How do Pre-Boomers feel the university supports their pursuit of learning?
 - How well are faculty and staff trained to understand what older adult learners need?
 - What age-related resources are available on campus, such as late-career counseling, adult residences separate from adolescent lifestyle, appropriate technology support, healthy food-court choices, blue-zone parking spaces, accessible rest rooms, etc.
3. How does Pre-Boomers' life experience contribute to the campus culture?
 - What do Pre-Boomer Students remember of events and societal conditions that occurred before the majority of the campus community was born?
 - Are Pre-Boomer Students encouraged to share such memories, and how are these memories received -- welcomed or resented or ignored?

Overview of Research

In spite of aggressive searching in academic journals through all databases available in UNM Library eJournal Finder, as well as Google Scholar, and the popular press, and by following other writers' citations, and after consulting the librarian, almost nothing was found that is specific to the purpose of this study. Some findings by others can be applied tangentially and they are reviewed here. Sadly, many studies actually perpetuate stereotypes about students older than typically found on campuses; one in particular (Laditka et al., 2004) compares upper-class undergraduates and graduate students to students in an on-campus Elder Hostel program, incorrectly implying that the Elder Hostel students are typical of students over seventy seeking degrees or professional credentials.

In a study of the high school class of 1958, Ortner presents data on 234 classmates, of whom eighty three did not originally go to college and of those, 25 returned and finished later. She does not report how much later, or at what age, they returned. There may have been others who returned but still did not finish. Her book is very comprehensive and one of the few works about people in this specific age group, so it was disappointing to find less than one page about older adult learners (Ortner, 2005).

A comprehensive analysis of the generation or cohort born before 1946 (Carlson, 2008) never mentions education later in life. He characterizes people who work after typical retirement age as "pensioners' labor market" (pp. 169-170) and no distinction is made between those who choose to keep working and those who must keep working. The author is identified with Florida State University's Center for Demography and Population Health, and is hampered by relying on public data such as Census Bureau reports. He has, like so many

other writers, ignored or neglected those who return to college or university to pursue or maintain a credential after traditional retirement age.

Not only that, Carlson also addressed the variety of nomenclature and acknowledged there is no consensus in the literature as to what to call this group. A Canadian military officer (Taylor, 2008) presents the following chart, which he derived from work by a U.S. military officer. It displays how the labels and categories were applied by various sources he found, and he did not find Carlson's term "Lucky Few":

Table 1 – Generational Cohorts by Chronology (adapted from Skibo³³) (source references in text)

Sources	Generational Cohort Labels											
Adams*	Pre-Boomers (un to 1945)			Baby Boomers (1946-1965)		Generation X (1965-1980)						
Foot*	Depression & WWII (1930-1946)			Baby Boomers (1947-1966)		Baby Busters (1967-1979)	Baby Boom Echo (1980-1995)		Millenium Busters (1996-2010)			
Barnard <i>et al</i> *						Generation X (1968-1982)						
Smola & Sutton	WWIIers (1909-1933)		Swingers (1934-1945)	Boomers (1946-1964)		Generation X (1965-1978)		Millenials (1979-1994)				
Jurkiewicz & Bradley		Matures (1925-1942)		Boomers (1943-1960)		Generation X (1961-1981)						
Lancaster & Stillman	Traditionalists (1900-1945)			Baby Boomers (1946-1964)		Generation X (1965-1980)		Millenials (1981-1999)				
Zemke <i>et al</i>		Veterans (1922-1943)		Baby Boomers (1943-1960)		Generation X (1960-1980)		Nexters (after 1980)				
Deal		Silents (1925-1945)		Early&Late Boomers (1946-1963)		Early&Late Xers (1964-1986)						
Environics*	Elders (un to 1945)			Baby Boomers (1946-1964)		Generation X (1965-1980)		Generation Y (after 1980)				
Sirona									Generation Z (after 1995)			
*Canadian sources	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	

³³ Stephanie M. Skibo, "An Analysis of Generational Differences among Active Duty Members" (MSc thesis, Air Force Institute of Technology), 5.

Figure 2. Illustration of inconsistent nomenclature for generational cohorts.

In demographic research about this small portion of The Smallest Generation, empirical data are invisible. On the contrary, one of the most encouraging articles (Hersh,

2001) reports on a survey of professional mathematicians, mostly age 60+ at that time, who were still active as faculty and researchers but not as students. They complained that their professional community did not value their work as highly as younger people's work was, but they kept going anyway.

Most researchers recognize the impact of the aging population on all aspects of society, but their view of "aging population" typically includes the Baby Boomers who currently (2018) range in age from 50 to 70, and either exclude those born before 1946 or combine them together. The focus of these studies is on such needs as nursing homes, meals, household assistance, hobbies, and pass-times in retirement. Studies of the "Boomer" generation overshadow those who beat the rush -- those born before 1946 -- who are still active contributing members of society as individuals, but as a group are increasingly invisible. The tendency in published information about "older" students is to set the age of interest at 25 or 40 or 65, but nothing was found that specifically addresses students over age 70; they are simply lumped together with the next younger overwhelmingly large generation. As this type of invisible bias emerged in the literature search, it is also discussed here.

A notable bias appears in most of the literature on ageism, specifically studies about old age. People in their seventies who pursue education at any level are not discussed at all in the research journals nor even in one of the most comprehensive of edited books about ageism (Nelson, 2004). Reports in the popular press treat such people as so rare as to be worthy of headlines (Garske, 2013), (Watt, 2015), as if there is nobody else doing what they did. The fact is, what nobody is doing is researching and reporting the educational pursuits of people in their seventies and eighties.

Newspaper accounts in England (Ross, 2013), (Urquhart, 2013), and (Latchman, 2013) reported that the UK Minister of Higher Education encouraged older learners to enroll in university courses. He spoke of the pressure to continue getting "retrained and upskilled". He has eliminated the age limit on student loans. Detractors seem to think people at retirement age would not want to take on such a commitment. Supporters endorse the move to improve employability and productivity for this age group. Latchman says, "society's prejudices against older learners need to be tackled too".

What are the campus experiences of students born before 1946?

The only comprehensive study of older learners' experience on campus is Pam Verstynen's dissertation (Verstynen, 2011). She interviewed her participants on a wide range of perceptions, as expressed in the words they used, and reports significant findings. However, her subjects were between the ages of 50 and 64 at the time of the study, which would include some born before 1946. Some of her results may also apply to the current study, such as older students' feelings of isolation, and juggling work and school demands, and age-related sensitivity training for staff and faculty.

Only one study was found that specifically addresses this age group (Laditka et al., 2004), which was conducted on one college campus in suburban New York. It compares students ages 21-34 enrolled in traditional graduate and upper-undergraduate classes, and those ages 75-85 enrolled in Elder Hostel courses on campus. The raters were grouped by age and gender, and the study investigated differences within and between those groups. The study focuses on respondents' attitudes about aging, and it found that "older raters had more positive views toward older targets compared with younger or middle age raters", and that they had more positive traits than negative ones regarding their own aging (p.416), but none

of the traits reported either group's experience as students on campus. The article's references contain no titles about students age 70+ but are mostly about younger people's attitudes toward "the aged" which generally referred to frail people needing assistance in daily living.

Another study (McCausland et al., 2015) sought "to investigate if chronological age sparks negative expectancies thus initiating a self-fulfilling prophecy in technology training interactions". The study found that trainers who perceived the trainee's age to be older than themselves had lower expectations of the trainee's potential and provided a lower-level of training, thus exhibiting a self-fulfilling prophecy. The authors suggest that older students outside this highly controlled experiment might be similarly denied the same quality training as younger students. This study does not examine the student population, but only carefully selected younger students whose image was artificially manipulated to simulate older students, and does not address the meaning of the term "older". The study's finding that training which is subject to widely available stereotypes not only does not eliminate competency gaps but actually contributes to them, contrary to what training is supposed to do.

In an Australian study (Rubin et al., 2016), a convenience survey was issued to all students to study age and gender differences in learning approach. It is not clear whether Pre-Boomers were included in their study. Instead of specific age ranges, they refer to "younger" and "older" as relative terms because they considered age a continuous variable rather than a categorical variable. Their summary of other research as foundation for their study describes intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as related to degree of surface learning and deep learning. They suggest that "older students engage in less surface learning and more

deep learning because they are motivated more by intrinsic goals than by extrinsic, career-oriented goals" than younger students.

A Canadian study (Thompson, 2003) examined tuition policies with conflicting but interesting experience by students using, or deciding not to use, senior discounts. Thompson reviews several studies conducted in Canada and the United States. Tuition discounts for students over a certain age, usually 60 or 65, ranged from 0% to 100%, with or without other restrictions. That is, they offered no discount, or some discount or completely free tuition. Some institutions are phasing out such benefits, reportedly because the student's financial need is not established and/or the school's revenues are negatively impacted. Thompson questions the common assumption that the major barrier to senior citizen's enrolling in learning activities is cost. He states, "studies in the United States have consistently reported that tuition costs have not been found to be a significant deterrent, nor has tuition-waiver been shown to be a significant incentive for older learners" (p.69). Thompson cites Lamdin and Fugate (1997) with a significant finding, that "there is something degrading about the second-class status that accompanies older adults being allowed to take the places remaining after 'regular' students have been accommodated". Another case cited by Thompson complained that the waiver or discount "was a sort of discrimination based on age which assumed that if you are 60 or older, you were without means to pay for your own courses." Thompson's study does find that many senior citizens are enrolled at regular rates for reasons such as wanting to avoid the age-related stigma attached to the discount, or the restrictions are too burdensome, or simply that they are financially able to pay full rate. Also, the study found that some university administrators are seeking revenue-generating students and thus refrain from visibly promoting the senior-citizen discount. Thompson does not mention *Free*

Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) as a criterion for awarding the senior citizen discount as with financial assistance. Other issues related to tuition discounts at UNM are discussed in Chapter One.

Zhang (Zhang et al., 2006) reports on portrayals of older adults in advertising and how these portrayals are associated with older adults' place in society. The authors cite several studies that found that older people are severely under-represented in media advertising as compared to their proportion in the total population. When older people are seen primarily in pharmaceutical ads, the public's perception associates aging with poor health (p.278), even if the older person is portrayed in a positive light. Another article (Hilt, 1992) examined how elderly people use television as a news source, but again, no mention of students on campus, and the Hilt study pre-dates internet-based news sources so its applicability today is doubtful. Although the Zhang article, which appeared in the *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, does not mention older students, there may be implications for applying their findings to the campus community. Indeed there are no "old-looking" students pictured on the UNM website, suggesting that Zhang's findings have broader applicability than TV ads.

The paucity of research about this age group as serious students contrasts with reports in the popular press. The first known effort to organize older students at UNM was reported in the *Daily Lobo* (Sparber, 1977) when the reporter interviewed a 44-year old student named Madeline Betts. She had received an invitation to sorority rush, which convinced her that UNM "is geared to the 18-year-old". Numerous other *Daily Lobo* articles over the years report efforts to accommodate "older students" whatever that means (e.g., 12/5/1980,

11/27/1978, 3/24/1982, 4/14/1975, 4/14/1983, 11/17/1981, 2/13/1975). There were no reports that these efforts succeeded.

In May 2013, San Diego media published a report (Garske, 2013) of Wally Taibleson graduating from CalState San Marcos with his third Master's at age 90. He first attended college in 1993 at the age of 70, earning his bachelor's degree in history. His son is quoted in the article: "College helps him stay sharp. He's insatiable and curious and a true example of a lifelong learner". Mr. Taibleson stated in the interview that his motto is "As long as you're learning, you're not old."

Their World is an organization whose motto is "a brighter future for every child". On May 15, 2015, Ewan Watt, their online editor (Watt, 2015), posted an article titled "Oldest school students show it's never too late to learn." He reported on Rosa Salgado who graduated from college at 79. Ma Xiuxian of China entered her first ever school class at 102. Priscilla Sitienei of Kenya enrolled in first grade at age 85. Kimani Maruge of Kenya went to primary school for the first time at 84. Akasease Kofi Boakye Yiadom of Ghana graduated from college at 99. Allan Stewart of Australia completed a law degree at 91 and then received his masters at 97. Philip Kizito of Uganda re-entered school at 75. The editor's flowery language reflects his buy-in to common stereotypes, such as "the ripe old age of 79", and "learning at an advanced age", as if these examples are otherwise unheard-of, and as if 79 is either a ripe old or advanced age as viewed by those who are there. No research appeared to support such media reports about learners older than 70 achieving educational credentials.

How do students born before 1946 feel about being excluded or included, neglected or respected?

This section discusses how discriminating against significantly older students occurs and how passive bullying affects older learners, creates a sense of isolation and exclusion, treats them as invisible, and perpetuates myths and biases. Of particular concern is simple neglect, as if the student is invisible in class, such as when the lecture focuses on younger generations only, which I have observed in my classes. Research about adult learners exemplifies this type of neglect.

A common theme is that terms like "non-traditional student" and "adult learner" are applied broadly to include everybody over age 25, or who are returning to school after a year's interruption, or have job or family obligations (Wyatt, 2011). Most of these studies either exclude the senior-citizen students specifically, or subsume them within the entire population of all ages over 25 so they are invisible. Authors of "Adult Learners in Transition" (Compton, Cox, & Laanan, 2006) bemoan the difficulties with these terms, then offer advice to institutions for accommodating adult learners of all ages. Wyatt also recommends services for "students aged 25 and above". They do not mention the oldest learners and do not encourage institutions to adapt the advice so as to motivate Pre-Boomer Students to enroll and graduate.

One of the best articles (Simi & Matusitz, 2016) is both specific to the topic and very well documented. It provides a detailed description, with sources, of marginalization of adult learners age 25+, and challenges increase with age. Although ageism is fairly well documented and mitigated in the workplace, mature (meaning 25+) college students are largely invisible. The mature students bring life experiences into the college community,

which younger students do not yet understand. This gap tends to distance them from each other. The article goes on to point out many of the differences and applies social closure theory. This is the research framework which "posits that specific parties (i.e., in-groups) gain benefits by closing off favorable circumstances to others (i.e., out-groups)". They suggest a Maslowian view (see Figure 3) in that older minorities must address well-being, salary, and prior educational prospects before they can address lifelong learning decisions, just as Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" found that food, shelter and safety had to be provided before the higher-level needs could be achieved. Simi and Matusitz say that his stratification tends to further marginalize the older minority learners. Although not all older students experience discrimination, this and other reports are adamant that it does exist.

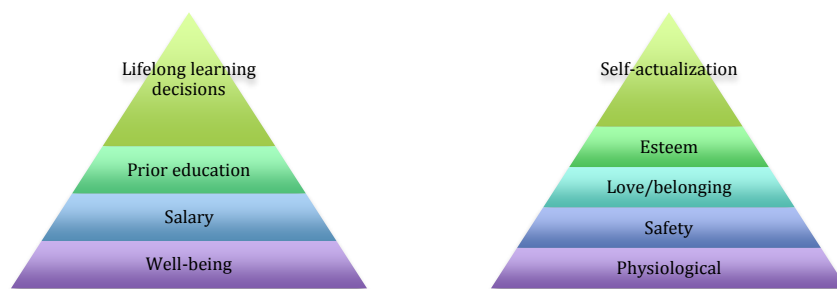


Figure 3. Adapting Maslow's Hierarchy of needs to Simi & Matusitz article

In another Canadian study (Panacci, 2015), career-related goals of older adults motivate them to learn. They are less likely to participate in campus activities outside the classroom because they already have an established lifestyle, unlike the younger students. Panacci relates to the research question about Pre-Boomer Students' experience on campus, although they do not specifically mention students over age 70.

An Australian psychotherapist reported in an *Energetics* article (Boyd, 2016) that a type of "bullying by silence, marginalisation and omission, is a powerful and damaging type

of bullying". He refers to it as a "form of mind violence against its victim", and as "a subtle and silent undermining campaign", even as "character assassination". Boyd goes on to say, "It is harder to identify, prove, get witnesses for, and so get support for." Boyd describes specifically how the process affects not only the victim but others who might have been supportive until the "negative belief system" about the individual has also been applied to them. Thus the bullied person becomes even more isolated, and if this occurs in the campus environment, the person becomes so discouraged as to drop out of school.

In discussing organizational bullying, three faculty at UNM's Anderson School of Management (Hood, Jacobson, & Van Buren III, 2011) identify five types. One type is isolation, which includes physical and social isolation as well as withholding of information. Examples include relational bullying, damaging a person's friendship networks, indirect bullying, rumor spreading and other forms of social manipulation. The authors declare that "organizations have an ethical responsibility to protect employees from bullying..." and the article pursues the effect of organizational culture on whether such behavior is tolerated. There is no mention of the academic environment specifically or students of any age, although the authors are all academic faculty. The lead author was consulted about this Pre-Boomer Students study and said she knew of no bullying research specific to students born before 1946.

If a student seeks counseling assistance at the Student Health and Counseling Service (SHAC), a survey follows each session or each semester, which asks whether the student had considered dropping out of school and whether the session helped the student stay in school. Because of The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), it will be impossible to know how many students born before 1946 have sought help for age-related

bullying, which is not specified on the survey, although respondents have text boxes in which to describe any negative experiences at SHAC. It is interesting to note that SHAC accepts several insurance plans but not Medicare, so students over 65 must pay their own fees, an obscure form of discrimination, although the fees are generously subsidized by the State of New Mexico. In other states, educational institutions may contract with Medicare but for such a small portion of the student population here, it may not be cost-effective.

The power of the "in-group" (Dovidio, Gaertner, Ufkes, Saguy, & Pearson, 2016) can lead to subtler forms of bias which "dramatically influences the achievements and well-being of members of ... traditionally disadvantaged groups". They suggest that members of low-status groups may attempt to "pass" in order to avoid some of the discrimination. This study did not inquire into whether Pre-Boomer Students engage in age-defying adaptations in order to be accepted in what they may perceive as a youth-oriented campus culture.

Generational stereotyping is risky, says Workforce Magazine (Sullivan, 2008), because "offering the wrong motivators to individuals sends a message that you don't understand their needs and goals." Grouping people by age alone ignores their different cultural values, educational backgrounds, and other characteristics. The author advocates treating each employee as an individual, and paying attention to their individual needs and preferences, because grouping them arbitrarily for efficiency is actually less effective. Sullivan does not cite research but is cited by another author (Bytheway, 2005), who advocates strongly against open-ended age categories such as "60 and over", and recommends other ways of focusing research such as "historically located generations" in "personal experience and social relations" which is similar to Mannheim's "cohort" approach

(Pilcher, 1994). Sullivan also is addressing concepts similar to Simi (Simi & Matusitz, 2016) discussed earlier.

A community college president (Snyder, 2013) tailors programs for late-career students, such as accelerated format of four 10-week terms, so the students get back into the workforce quickly in higher-paying jobs than they had before. He says universities should prepare to receive transfer students from community colleges, such as by having a special office dedicated to helping middle-age and older students.

In an article about the UK Age Discrimination Law (Dewhurst, 2015), a senior lecturer in employment law at the University of Manchester, cites a Johns Hopkins University professor who asserts that assumptions that older workers are less productive than younger workers are not reflective of the true potential of older workers. Dewhurst describes how employers circumvent the age discrimination law or reduce the awards if employees' claims succeed. Her very thoroughly documented report never mentions education or older people's learning ability, such as might re-train older workers to improve their performance when it is perceived to have declined.

A UNM doctoral graduate (Verstynen, 2011) reported that some of her participants reported experiencing ageism, such as not feeling "welcomed by the younger people in the classroom". Her dissertation studies students whose ages ranged between 50 and 64 at the time of the study. She reports numerous references to feeling isolated, lost, overlooked, neglected, not fitting in on campus, and various forms of discouraging remarks. If this happened to people over fifty, it is safe to declare that students over seventy would surely have experienced it also. Verstynen's dissertation (p.140) concludes with these recommendations:

There should be an organization with a physical location for older students to mingle among other students in their situation. This organization should house a well-run facility geared to academics. The director should be someone trained by the university, meeting qualifications to hold the position, to respond to students in a professional manner when they request help to negotiate various departments in the university. The area should provide a relaxing atmosphere where students might choose to simply rest or engage with others sharing their experiences at the university.

This recommendation warrants another look and is discussed further in Chapter 5.

An article with almost 75 references (Colvin, 2013) provides a comprehensive review of one female student's re-entry experience, compared with the findings of current studies. Her concept of "older students" is centered around the Baby Boomers with no mention of the over-70 student population. She returned to pursue a PhD sometime around age 60 and cites many studies supporting her experience. She found the campus to still harbor old barriers that make assimilation difficult.

How do students feel about the University's support of their pursuit of learning?

This section discusses older learners, how they learn and what they need, as well as barriers to learning, access to learning, and the University's role in the barriers and access.

Verstynen, in discussing how older adults learn, (Verstynen, 2011) states, "Findings seem to suggest that group support, training, experiencing testing and then retesting, all help the older adult regain cognitive performance. These findings are from studies with the 'oldest old', those from 75 years and older. (Craik, 1999)". Verstynen thoroughly discusses what students over age 50 say about their experience as freshman college students. Her research

indicates that the 50+ students "have the cognitive skills to succeed providing that their health remains good". Her findings might apply to the 70+ students as well but to date there is no comparable study to address that. Participants in the present study were mostly graduate students who motivated themselves to pursue a career change or new interests.

An Australian study (Rubin et al., 2016) clarifies differences between deep and surface learning approaches in higher education students, and age and gender differences in utilizing these approaches. For example, younger students are more likely to utilize surface learning to serve an instrumental approach to reach a specific goal such as to get a job; older students are more likely to utilize deeper learning to serve intrinsic goals, learning for the sake of gaining knowledge itself. Rubin's team also looked at differences in gender, and the interaction of age and gender in determining satisfaction. Contrary to prior research results, Rubin finds that, "If 'ideal learners' are expected to be active, independent, critical, and inquisitive students who go beyond the set curriculum, then older women should be regarded as more ideal than younger women and men of all ages." He also finds that older women are more satisfied with their degree than all the other groups, and therefore, institutions can improve their metrics by focusing recruitment on older women.

Another viewpoint (Crawford, 2004) declares, "The literature supports the idea that adults are very capable of learning well into their seventies" and that although some may experience a degree of decline, others may not. He cautions that "faculty that choose to ignore learner differences run the inherent risk of mediocrity in their teaching". Such faculty should be cautioned that they may be approaching the newer concept of bullying by exclusion discussed above.

Further support for the ability of senior citizens to continue learning is *The Mature Mind*, a book (Cohen, 2006) by the renowned psychiatrist and gerontologist, Gene Cohen, who "draws from more than thirty years of research to show that surprising positive changes in our brains have the powerful potential to enhance, not diminish, our lives after fifty." Dr. Cohen founded The Center on Aging, Health & Humanities at George Washington University in 1994, where he served as Director until he died of cancer at age 65 in 2009.

Pew Research Center (M. Anderson & Perrin, 2017) reports on seniors' use of technology devices, based mainly on surveys conducted September 29 to November 6, 2016. The main barrier to adoption seems to be their own low confidence and perceived need for help, but once they do get online they use their devices frequently to almost constantly. Some of the Pew reports contain conflicting information. For example one chart is headed "Tech use is especially limited among those ages 75 and up", while the graph shows a huge proportion of them use technology, which hardly seems "especially limited". Such a comment might support the McCausland study cited above in which trainer perceptions influenced learner outcomes; perhaps that finding applies to researchers as well. The following table is a summary of some Pew report data:

Table 3. Summary of Pew Report data

Sample size:	Age:	65-69	70-74	75-79	80+	Notes
Sample <i>n</i> of US adults: 3015 of which 740 are over 65		285	185	116	154	60% of all 65+ are actually 70+
Seniors who own a cellphone		95%	93%	63%	58%	Not all are smartphones
Seniors who use the internet		82%	75%	60%	44%	That is 67% of all over age 65, up from 14% in 2000
Seniors who use social media		47%	41%	24%	17%	All 65+ is 34%, up from 27% in 2013

While Pew reports that internet use is increasing among seniors, their data on barriers to adoption are not broken down in the same age grouping. They report the margin of error is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points and add a cautionary note that difficulties in surveys could introduce additional error or bias. The Pew report makes no mention of seniors' using technology for education, and the report gives no clue to whether anyone in the sample was currently in college. Moreover, this Pew report focuses on age 65 and up, and only occasionally do their reports separate older seniors from younger seniors. The limited value of this report illustrates how little attention is given to Pre-Boomer Students in the literature, but it shows that seniors can and do learn, and can and do use technology.

Volumes of literature report that cognition declines after age fifty, with wide variations in speed and degree of decline. However, it appears that for some there is little or no decline. There is no support for an assumption that 70+ students can not succeed or have a significantly more difficult time succeeding.

Ten years ago, ASTD (now re-named Association for Talent Development) published *Adult Learning Basics* (Rothwell, 2008) which tabulates adult learners by age group, the

oldest of which was "65 years or older" at that time. That group is now 75 or older and would fit the current study, but no update to Rothwell's data has been found. Very few of the people studied participated in adult education, according to the data shown, but far more of them participated in informal learning activities for personal interest. Rothwell cautions against making generalizations or assuming any characteristics apply to all.

Tuition Discount. The senior citizens tuition discount is the only known program designated for a specific age group at UNM. Large numbers of students nationwide (Thompson, 2003) take advantage of tuition assistance programs, which are separate from financial aid, but their age ranges are not published. Scholarships and loans are available, some of which specify eligibility age limits. (For example, see a Google search for "Older Students? Education Grants & School Scholarships for Women Over 25, 30, 40 & 50".) Not found in published data is whether students in this age range are eligible for student loans even if they would want to incur such a debt.

Most universities offer a tuition discount for senior citizen students over a certain age such as 60 or 65 (Thompson, 2003). The senior citizens discount at the University of New Mexico as mandated by state rule ("New Mexico Administrative Code, Reduced tuition for senior citizens," 2005) applies to students 65 and older who do not attempt to register for anything until the first day of class each semester, and then register for no more than six units. The discount is not automatic; the student must request it. Any attempt to register earlier, or for more than six units, renders the student ineligible for the discount. The rule also states that students utilizing the senior citizen discount are not included in statistical data reported to the state, on which state funding to the university is based. This reporting requirement

implies second class status for such students and the policy may be negatively affecting University revenues.

What Pre-Boomer Students contribute to the campus culture. Little was found in the literature except standard adult learning texts (Rothwell, 2008) pp. 24-26, and (Creswell, 2013) pp.21, 36-37. They describe Social Constructivism and other Constructivist variations as how new ideas can be incorporated into what the adult student already knows, encouraging assimilation. When discussion is encouraged in the classroom, and older learners (of any age) can contribute their experience with what is being taught, the whole class benefits. Rothwell defines "adult" learners as those who are mentally mature as well as those over age 21, and does not address re-entry, post-retirement, or second-career re-training. He does emphasize (p.2) how quickly the "half-life" of knowledge is falling and how often knowledge turns over in a worker's life.

In advice to faculty at Ryerson University, Michelle Schwartz (Schwartz, 2006) implies that how well mixed-age classes integrate is the instructor's responsibility. Teaching techniques such as rotating seating arrangements, and small-group discussion, and fielding questions, can help older students feel respected.

This question was probed at length with the interview subjects, and is discussed in Chapter Four.

Why Pre-Boomer Students enrolled, and their job prospects after graduation. Verstynen explored why women over fifty entered college for the first time but no literature specifically addressed the objectives of the present study. Participants were asked about their reason for being here, and whether they plan to seek employment or promotions, and whether they might face more age-related challenges. Chapter Four discusses their responses.

There is considerable literature on intergenerational workforce issues (Taylor, 2008) (Zetlin, 1997) (Schniter & Shields, 2014). Most of it is about transfer of knowledge to younger employees by those ready to retire. Some professional publications address how and why to deliberately remove their oldest employees from the workforce. By contrast, no literature was found that addresses how to attract Pre-Boomers to enroll in college or what their job prospects might be.

One article from American Management Association provides concise instructions about how to motivate older workers, and acknowledges that "they're pretty much ignored by their bosses" (Zetlin, 1997). This article supports a need for the University to provide late-career counseling to its older Students.

Most employers provide pre-retirement counseling but rarely do we see employers providing re-training to keep their oldest employees. The literature reflects a significant bias, even passive bullying, in making blatant assumptions that the oldest employees are not up to date as to technology and cannot or will not learn. The literature refutes these assumptions but still reports widespread adoption of them.

Theoretical Framework

This section discusses literature about the research approach. My positionality as a doctoral student who enrolled at age 70 is especially suited to an ethnographic approach. While observing the campus culture for six years, I discovered the apparent marginalization of the oldest students although I paid little attention to it until my fifth year. However, this type of reflective observation does not meet the rigor of "observational and participatory methods of generating qualitative data" (Mason, 2002) that the term usually intends as

collecting data while immersed. Whether this distinction matters will be discussed in analyzing the data.

A key feature of critical ethnography (Creswell, 2013) is that it describes and interprets the shared patterns of a group's culture, to advocate for the marginalized. Creswell (p.94) suggests, "critical ethnographers might study schools that serve to overlook the needs of underrepresented groups." In this case, the underrepresented group is the Pre-Boomer Students at UNM, and the study is value-laden, carrying many of the components that Creswell says are typical of critical ethnography. Creswell cites Jim Thomas's *Doing critical ethnography* (1993) for this advocacy style of research (Thomas, 1993).

A comprehensive how-to guide (Madison, 2012), which also cites Thomas, contains cases, instructions, and examples, based on the author's extensive experience in the field. She states (p.5), "Critical ethnography begins with an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular *lived* domain." She discusses the importance of positionality in such a study (pp.7-8) and she cautions (pp.197-8) that "autoethnography" is sometimes little more than confession, not rising to the challenge of critical ethnography which must raise awareness and offer alternatives to what is not acceptable.

Added to this, Sharan Merriam (Merriam, 2009) emphasizes that "the lens of culture must be used" in an ethnographic study and that "immersion in the site as a participant observer is the primary method of data collection". This study of Pre-Boomer Students at UNM utilizes my own positionality and six years of studying organizational culture after age 70 with the intent of returning to the workforce after graduation.

Literature About Conducting Critical Ethnography

Literature about how to conduct interviews in this context includes the following. Merriam (Merriam, 2009) cites Thomas Spradley's *The Ethnographic Interview (1979)* as a classic in the field, which is available from Amazon, used, and a 247-page e-book edition from Waveland Press was issued in 2016. A few pages from the book about interviewing an informant (Spradley, 1979), scanned by faculty at Evergreen State College in Washington, turned up and are saved. Also, a presentation based on the book, posted by Professor Foote at Colorado University, provides a summary of Spradley's interviewing technique. A chapter from Harvey Russell Bernard's 2006 edition (Bernard, 2006) was used in a 2016 Key Informant class at UNM as a useful resource for this interview technique.

Literature on how to conduct critical ethnography includes Sherry Ortner's description of how she conducted her research (Ortner, 2005) into her high school class fifty years after graduation, and examines this pre-war cohort in detail. Jim Thomas's little book, *Doing Critical Ethnography* (Thomas, 1993), is another first-hand description of his own studies of prisons, and how stereotypical thinking is built into the social structure of the institution. This is the book cited by Creswell as definitive. The only textbook that surfaced in this search (Madison, 2012) begins with a compelling description of why our work as critical ethnographers matters, and proceeds with 200 pages of instructions for how to conduct the study.

A helpful history of how critical ethnography developed is provided by a former UNM Professor (G. L. Anderson, 1989), who explains that "critical ethnographers aim to generate insights, to explain events, and to seek understanding". The history helps the researcher understand current practices and avoid obsolete ones. His paper also states,

"Unlike other interpretivist research, the overriding goal of critical ethnography is to free individuals from sources of domination and repression", which is a bit melodramatic for a college campus. In a footnote, he adds, "...ideally all critical ethnography is interested in the intersection of class, race, and gender", with no mention of ageism.

Conclusion

The result of the literature search is that the gap is more like a chasm. There simply is no published research that focuses on the experience on campus of degree-seeking students born before 1946 -- the Pre-Boomer Students.

Chapter Three: Research Methods

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this critical ethnographic study is to develop new information for improving the Pre-Boomer Students' experience on campus and to advocate for University policy development to address inclusiveness and protection from possible age-related discrimination. The result may be to improve relationships between and among the generations on campus, to support University policy for inclusiveness, in preparation for an anticipated influx of students over age 70.

To address the purpose and understand the perceptions of both younger and older students with regard to the group referred to as Pre-Boomer Students, the research will consider the following three questions:

1. What are the experiences on campus of students born before 1946?
 - What measures have they observed to prevent, or protect from, examples of passive bullying or discrimination?
 - How do they feel about being excluded or included, neglected or respected?
2. How do they feel the university supports their pursuit of learning?
 - How well are faculty and staff trained to understand what older adult learners need?
 - What age-related resources are available on campus, such as late-career counseling, adult residences separate from adolescent lifestyle, appropriate technology support, healthy food-court choices, blue-zone parking spaces, accessible rest rooms, etc.
3. How does their life experience contribute to the campus culture?

- What do Pre-Boomer Students remember of events and societal conditions that occurred before the majority of the campus community was born?
- Are Pre-Boomer Students encouraged to share such memories, and how are these memories received -- welcomed or resented or ignored?

This chapter describes the research method including discussions around the rationale for the research approach, a summary of the information needed and from what sources, an overview of the research design, the methods of data collection, the plan for analysis and synthesis of data, and considerations related to ethics, trustworthiness, and limitations. A brief summary concludes the chapter with a timeline.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

As clearly expressed by Bloomberg & Volpe (2012), "Qualitative research is grounded in an essentially constructivist philosophical position, in the sense that it is concerned with how the complexities of the socio-cultural world are experienced, interpreted, and understood in a particular context and at a particular point in time." A quantitative approach would be unlikely to achieve the experiential purpose of this study. There is so little data on the age group of interest, and so little literature about this age group in the campus context, and a hypothesis to test would be so limited, as to question the value of such a study. A qualitative approach, on the other hand, is specifically concerned with this context at this time, and allows the understanding to emerge from the participants' narratives. It is the most appropriate methodology to address the research questions. Future studies might be able to define and test hypotheses using the data that emerges from this study.

Rationale for Critical Ethnography Method

Ethnography is focused "on human society and culture" (Merriam, 2009) and "to understand the culture of a group, one must spend time with the group being studied". She continues, "to be an ethnographic study, the lens of culture must be used to understand the phenomenon." Further, she explains, "critical ethnography attempts to interpret the culture but also to expose cultural systems that oppress and marginalize certain groups of people." For this study, an ethnographic approach is the natural outcome of having spent six years embedded in the campus community as a Pre-Boomer Student, studying organizational culture. Do the Pre-Boomer Students as a group consider themselves marginalized or disrespected or discriminated against? That was a question that begged to be asked, and was examined as the data emerged.

As Creswell points out, the literature is deficient in knowing how this group even has a culture. Childhood experience informs adult behavior, and pre-war and depression-era memories of childhood form a different culture than memories of children born later (Carlson, 2008), as also revealed in conversations during this study. This study examined how those early memories affect Pre-Boomer Students' campus experience and whether they want to be empowered or even recognized.

This study sought to address these key components of a critical ethnography (Creswell, 2013): "a value-laden orientation, empowering people by giving them more authority, challenging the status quo, and addressing concerns about power and control".

The Research Sample

The research population from which the sample was drawn consisted of students born before 1946, both those seeking degrees or professional credentials and those enrolled in

individual courses including auditors. The original plan was based on not knowing how many such students there were. It involved several steps to recruit and filter an appropriate size sample. It turned out to be much simpler.

Recruitment. Perhaps the most important part of conducting a qualitative research project is the sampling plan (Mason, 2002). The approved form of announcement and invitation was to have been published in *The Daily Lobo* and posted around campus. Campus leaders would be asked to issue the invitation to their listserves. How many would respond to an invitation and execute the Consent was unknown. If too few responded, personal appeals would go out to individuals known to fit the criteria. If too many responded, eligibility filters would be employed to achieve a manageable number. Such was the original plan.

A preliminary inquiry to the Registrar determined that the number of students over age 75 enrolled in degree programs in Spring 2017 was seven. A subsequent estimate was 120 students over age 70 of which 40 were seeking degrees. These estimates suggested there would not be enough for a viable study, and some faculty urged broadening the study's age range. Since that would be a different study, with a different cohort with different shared memories and experiences, broadening the age range was not appropriate. Instead the sampling plan was revised and approved by IRB.

The research design had included variations for additional interviews and focus groups if too many people responded, but that didn't happen. The one variation that did survive was to convene a follow-up focus group in which interviewees could pursue the Research Questions together, and six of the interview Participants accepted that invitation. This flexibility is mentioned by Creswell citing Marshall and Rossman, who "note that

sampling can change during a study and that researchers need to be flexible" (Creswell, 2013).

In order to find the accurate number of UNM students who are Pre-Boomer Students, The Reporting Team at Enrollment Management Division was approached with an IRB-approved data request (Appendix D₁). Enrollment Management Reporting Team produced not only the statistical data requested, but also the entire list of 212 students whose transcript showed birth year before 1946, with email addresses for all but twelve. This official list was a manageable number that would allow a better method than an open invitation via Student ListServe or published in the Daily Lobo. Experience of other researchers indicated that students get so many surveys they tend to ignore them, and selected lists are not much better.

The IRB-approved Invitation To Participate (Appendix B₁) was sent to the entire research population of 200 via email, fifteen volunteers responded within 48 hours, and four more a few days later. All interview participants were de-identified in the order received by assigning each person a research number from a randomized list. This "participant log" has been kept in a sealed envelope.

Interview participants. Fifteen individual interview appointments were scheduled during September and October 2017. Study rooms at Zimmerman Library were reserved for two hours each on twelve different days, in the name of "Pre-Boomers Research Study". In addition, one interview was conducted at Fine Arts Library, and one at UNM-West Campus. One person withdrew, leaving fourteen participants.

A "Record of individual and group interviews" (Appendix C) lists sixteen discussion topics that address the three Research Questions, and documents the interviewer's

observations and notes, as well as the date and time and the location of each interview. The participant's name does not appear on this record, only the assigned random number.

At the beginning of each interview, the participant executed the approved consent form (Appendix B₂), authorized the audio recording, and acknowledged the right to withdraw. The signed consent forms have also been kept in a sealed envelope separate from the participant log. The interviewer explained the process, and asked each participant whether he or she would be interested in a one-time follow-up focus group with other interview participants. Six participants attended the focus group on March 23. The participants provided their perceptions and opinions about the sixteen discussion topics and the interviewer encouraged participants to share their stories as well. As interviewer, I engaged each participant in conversation about each topic, sometimes probing for more detail, sometimes sharing personal experiences relevant to the topic, and thus demonstrated being a Pre-Boomer myself.

The plan was to transcribe each interview the same day and send it to the participant for member-checking. That plan was overly optimistic, and transcription took several weeks. All of the transcripts were sent to participants on March 10 including an invitation to the focus group. Three participants sent corrections within a few days, and six agreed to the focus group on March 23.

Focus group. The group met in Room B40 in the Zimmerman basement at 4:30 in the afternoon. The following diagram shows the room arrangement.

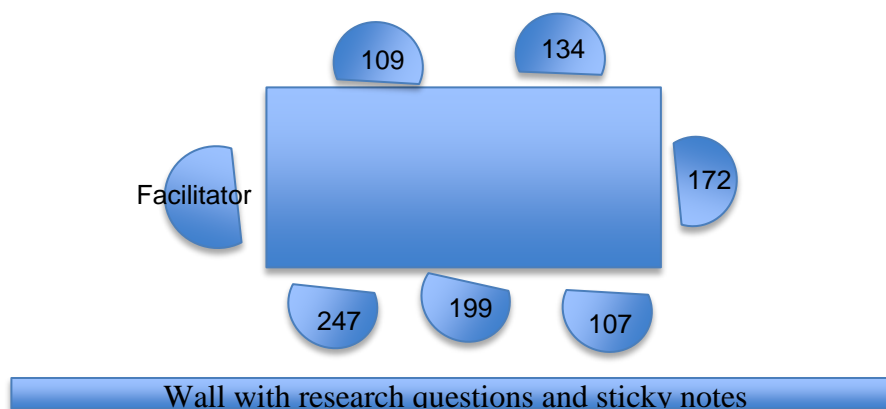


Figure 4. Focus group room arrangement

Participants signed an attendance form that acknowledged continuation of the consent form previously signed. That attendance list was added to the sealed envelope with the consent forms. This session utilized the "sticky wall" method of facilitating the discussion. Each of the three Research Questions was posted on the wall of the room, and participants were given 6x8-inch Post-It notes to write their words and phrases on. The group discussed the participants' notes for Question #1, then the process was repeated for #2, and then for #3. The result of this discussion is presented in Chapter Four. The entire session was recorded and transcribed. The transcript was sent to all six participants for member-checking.

Compensation. Each Pre-Boomer Student who completed the focus group or interview received a \$25 LoboCash card. The card value was intended to establish a significant incentive for Pre-Boomer Students to participate in the study. A budget of \$1,000 was set aside for these cards, and the actual total cost was \$500 for the fourteen interviews and six focus group people. Participants who attended both received two cards. All expressed appreciation of this gesture.

Information Needed To Conduct the Study

Table 4 shows each type of information needed, how it was acquired, from whom, and why it was needed to support the study. These data, and collection methods, are further described in subsequent sections.

Table 4. Overview of data needed

Type of data	How to acquire	From whom	Why needed, what question it addresses
Student Population, all students enrolled at any level	Published data	Registrar or Office of Institutional Analytics	Establish the context of youth-oriented campus
Pre-Boomer population	Request after IRB approval	Enrollment Management Reporting Team	Establish the study population
UNM-approved recruitment/invitation	Issued by email to Pre-Boomer population	Volunteer participants	Required by IRB to protect participants' rights
UNM-approved Consent for interviews and/or focus groups	In person at start of each session	All focus group participants and interviewees	Required by IRB to protect participants' rights
Distribution of statistical data among respondents among degree, non-degree, and professional credential	Request from Enrollment Management Team	Enrollment Management Reporting Team	To differentiate between those committed to a goal from general learners
Use of senior discount for tuition, what Pre-Boomer Students think of it	Ask participants in Interview or Focus Group	All participants	To support the discussion of Overview and Context.
Use or importance of age-specific social community for each generation	Ask participants in Interview or Focus Group	All Participants	To support claim of a youth-oriented campus culture
Perceptions about what age is old	Ask participants in Interview or Focus Group	All respondents	To clarify the research phenomenon
Perceptions by students of how faculty and staff treat Pre-Boomer Students	Ask participants in Interview or Focus Group	All Participants	To support claim of a youth-oriented campus culture
Techniques used by Pre-Boomer Students for integrating into the youth-oriented culture	Ask participants in Interview or Focus Group	All Participants	To support the research purpose

Type of data	How to acquire	From whom	Why needed, what question it addresses
Statistics on students born before 1946 and on all students utilizing the senior citizen discount and whether what is not reported to the State is included in headcount statistics posted on UNM's website	Per request in Appendix D	Enrollment Management Reporting Team emrt@unm.edu	To establish the scope of the perceived problem and to get accurate data
Policies and practices regarding inclusiveness for students born before 1946 and regarding recognition of passive bullying or other marginalization	Collect by email or in-person request	Office of Equity and Inclusion	To establish whether perceptions are valid

The nature of ethnography is that topics discussed in interviews and focus groups are open-ended to gain as rich an understanding as possible of Pre-Boomer Students' experience on campus and how well they feel integrated into the campus community without being marginalized or discriminated against.

Overview of Research Design

This qualitative, critical ethnographic, study is in three phases.

1. The recruitment invitation email to Pre-Boomer students identified by Enrollment Management Reporting Team
2. The interview and focus group for those who responded to the invitation and executed the consent form
3. Data collected from other sources including observation notes in Appendix C, Data in Appendix D, literature, and researcher's own experience as a fellow pre-boomer student.

The interviews and focus group were conducted in semi-structured style, generally according to the outlines in Appendix C and as instructed in standard textbooks for key informant interviews (Bernard, 2006) Chapter 9, and (Madison, 2012) Chapters 2 & 3.

Collecting data from sources other than participants occurred throughout, including the following:

- a compilation extracted from my personal journal about this phenomenon while enrolled as a student from 2010 to 2016, retroactively serving as an embedded observer/informant
- my observations during the focus groups and interviews
- data from University officials which was not available prior to IRB approval of the study, including registration headcount by age groups and enrollment status, see Appendix D; also mandatory policies, informal practices, and historical information as available
- data on students utilizing the Senior Citizen tuition discount was planned but not available

Phases One and Two were sequential, while Phase Three was continuous.

IRB Approval

As soon as the faculty committee approved the proposal, the protocol and related documents were submitted to the Office of Institutional Review Board for approval. One pre-submittal consultation with IRB staff occurred, and corrections were submitted as required. IRB Approval, which is in Appendix E, was effective September 6, 2017, with the designation "Exempt - no further oversight required".

Data Collection Methods

Sequential steps in data collection were:

- Secure IRB approval of the research protocol before beginning any work
- Request and receive statistical data from Enrollment Management Reporting Team
- Receive list of Pre-Boomer Students with email addresses
- Issue invitation to the pre-qualified list of all Pre-Boomer students
- Receive email responses from those who volunteer to participate
- Arrange appointments for interviews with each volunteer
- Conduct fourteen interviews and invite each participant to attend focus group
- Conduct one focus group with six participants
- Audio-record and transcribe all interviews and focus group and provide transcripts for member-checking.
- Collect relevant reflections from journals of embedded observer/informant (this researcher) from 2010 to 2017.
- Not sequential but ongoing, collect data from University to establish context.

The two primary sources of data were the transcripts of interview and focus group participants and observation notes. Additional sources of data included:

- my observations and reflections during six years as a Pre-Boomer Student
- my observations during interviews and focus groups
- campus documents such as statistical data, *The Daily Lobo*, and historical information
- literature as discussed in Chapter Two

The Consent forms were properly secured and all participants were de-identified by use of random numbers, so use of responses in subsequent transcriptions and other written materials cannot be attributed to any one individual, even when reported in context containing other responses that, in the aggregate could identify an individual. Participants were not prohibited from identifying themselves later as having participated in the study, but they must not identify each other without permission -- everyone must respect everyone else's anonymity. Participants all expressed understanding of this courtesy.

Methods for Data Analysis and Synthesis

Transcripts of interviews and focus group were furnished to participants for member-checking and were corrected before being analyzed. Data analysis relied on searching for themes and patterns to interpret for producing findings. The mix of enrollment status provided texture although this was not a correlation study.

Coding was performed manually, generally following *The Coding Manual For Qualitative Researchers* (Saldana, 2013). Saldana (p. 9) cites Russ Bernard (Bernard, 2011) in stating analysis is "the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place". Madison describes the coding and logging method as a "meaningful and conscious enactment of learning" (Madison, 2012). The analysis was about identifying patterns and interpreting what they mean, and it was done in the context of critical ethnology.

Ethical Considerations

There was no vulnerable population. All participants were registered adult students at UNM. All participants executed the UNM-approved Informed Consent document. All participants were anonymous, de-identified with random numerical pseudonyms, and any

identifying features are excluded from the report. Characteristics such as gender, race, health, or disability, where mentioned in the interview transcripts, were only summarized in discussion. No sensitive information was requested, nor is sexual orientation, criminal record, family status. This study was about a specific age group, and their memories of a specific time period, so they did reveal their birth year or age voluntarily.

Issues of Trustworthiness

The semi-structured interview format in Exhibit C was straightforward. Triangulation was achieved by utilizing six sources of data: focus group transcription and observation, interview transcriptions and observation notes, member-checking of transcriptions, my current and embedded observations as a fellow pre-boomer student, University data, and the literature. Raters were not separately identified as such, since the entire study was about each individual's perceptions of their own campus experience, which was not measured.

Limitations and Delimitations

The research design was limited to students enrolled at UNM who were born before 1946, as identified by the University's Enrollment Management Reporting Team. Respondents volunteered to participate and executed the approved consent form, and their responses were de-identified. Thus risks that cannot be controlled for include participants breaking another participant's anonymity, or a participant's behavior disrupting a focus group (which did not happen). When participants revealed personal information about medical or health issues during the recorded sessions, those details were edited out of the report and analysis.

Enrollment Management Reporting Team was asked to provide basic headcount data about students whose birth year is before 1946 but without revealing anyone's identity or identifying characteristics. Separately, the Team provided the email list of 200 enrolled students born before 1946. In the interest of de-identifying participants, there is no cross-reference between those two sets of data.

Additional limitations include that there is no certainty these fourteen accurately represent the 212, and why the other 198 did not respond is unknown. Regarding the six interview participants who also volunteered for the focus group, how well they represent the other twelve is also not clear. The U.S. Census Bureau does not separate this age group in their published data, although Carlson relied heavily on Census data in his discussion of this age group, which he calls "The Lucky Few" (Carlson, 2008). So, how well this study represents all Pre-Boomer students nationwide is unknown.

Timeline for the Study

University policy prohibits a Candidate from defending the dissertation in the same semester as the Proposal Hearing. The Proposal Hearing occurred July 24, 2017. IRB approval was effective September 6, 2017. Recruitment occurred September 21, 2017. Volunteers responded within two or three days and interviews were scheduled one per day from September 26 through October 13. Transcribing was interrupted by some health issues and resumed in late January. All transcripts were sent to participants for member-checking on March 10. The March 10 transmittal message included the focus group invitation and the focus group occurred March 23. The focus group transcript was sent to the six participants for member-checking on March 29. Dissertation Defense occurred April 20 and all fourteen participants attended.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has described a research design based on semi-structured interviews and one focus group in which participants were pre-qualified by Enrollment Management Reporting Team as to birth year between 1928 and 1945 and currently enrolled. The first fifteen volunteers were selected as participants and de-identified with random numbers. Participants discussed their definition of "old", and the reason they enrolled at this age, and their utilization of the senior citizen tuition discount, as well as semi-structured topics that cover the Research Questions. The study sought to learn how these particular students experience the campus environment, and the impact of their early memories of the Great Depression and World War II on their experience as Pre-Boomer Students in the 21st Century.

The data collected in this study was analyzed qualitatively with a critical ethnography approach to learn how the Pre-Boomer Student students are accepted into the campus community and what advocacy they need or want in order to mitigate any marginalization or discrimination they reported.

The findings and implications are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

This chapter reports the findings resulting from the data collected in individual interviews with fourteen participants, one focus group of six participants, the researcher's observations as a key informant, enrollment data collected from published reports and Registrar, and information from additional sources supplementing the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The purpose of the study is to utilize this new information for improving the Pre-Boomer Students' experience on campus and to advocate for University policy development to address inclusiveness and protection from possible age-related discrimination or passive bullying.

The critical ethnography approach examines the experience of a somewhat neglected age group of students born before 1946, sometimes called the "Silent Generation" because they had the lowest birth rate and have been studied the least (Carlson, 2008). Through qualitative analysis of data collected, a scientific understanding of these students' perceptions about the campus culture emerged and provided foundation for describing and interpreting the shared patterns of the group's culture to advocate for any who feel marginalized or underrepresented (Creswell, 2013).

The study examined how participants' early memories affect their later participation in higher education, how they perceive both positive and negative treatment by others, whether they experienced marginalization or passive bullying or micro-aggression (Hood et al., 2011), as well as how their memories enhance others' experience on campus, and how they perceive the University's support of their age group. With this understanding of the population, the university can evaluate its policies, procedures, and practices in order to ensure a reasonable comfort level for acceptance of oldest students as productive,

contributing members of society. The study can lay a foundation for creating a culture of respect and inclusion for older Lobos, in preparation for the anticipated influx of the next age group, and can inform future studies.

To address this purpose, the study focused on the research questions by addressing the sixteen semi-structured interview discussion topics.

Findings From Interviews and Focus Group

The interviews and focus group followed pre-established guidelines without adhering to a rigid script. By employing a more conversational style, the researcher achieved a discussion that elicited very rich data about each individual's experience and opinions. Most of the sessions were sixty to ninety minutes long; the longest was two hours and ten minutes, and the shortest was forty-five minutes. Twelve interviews and the focus group were conducted in a study room in Zimmerman basement, one interview in Fine Arts Library, and one interview at West Campus. All were recorded and transcribed. Member-checking produced only a few corrections and supplemental information.

This chapter presents the results of those inquiries. Each original Research Question had two explanatory sub-questions, and the interview guide (Appendix C) contained eighteen discussion topics for probing the Research Questions. Some of the conversations between interviewer and participant ranged beyond the purpose of this study, including protected information, and the interviews did not adhere rigidly to the sequence in the interview guide, so what follows in this chapter is arranged as the discussion topics pertain to each of the original Research Questions. The actual transcripts and interview guides are maintained separately, and only summaries and extracts appear here.

The reference to "students over 70" refers to their age when this study was proposed in 2016, but because age changes as time passes, the decision to re-define the population as "students born before 1946" allows maintaining the original population or cohort throughout the study. Since there is no consensus on the name of this population group, the term "Pre-Boomers" was adopted to differentiate clearly from the so-called Baby Boom generation born after World War II. The reason for this specificity is what Mannheim refers to as shared memories and experiences of a cohort instead of familial relationships of generations (Pilcher, 1994). This study views the late Depression Era and the Wartime as a very different childhood from the post-war period. Thus, World War II created a significant break in the American economy and culture that separated the Pre-Boomers from the Boomers, resulting in different shared memories and experience (Carlson, 2008).

Two of the Participants, who were born in the last year or two of World War II, reported that they identified more with the Boomers than with the pre-war children. So, the division, while significant, is not inviolate.

First Research Question: What are the experiences on campus of students born before 1946?

- What measures have they observed to prevent, or protect from, examples of passive bullying or discrimination?
- How do they feel about being excluded or included, neglected or respected?

1. What words describe your experience on campus, how you feel you are perceived?

Most descriptions of experience on campus did not directly address these sub-topics but discussions about their actual pursuit of learning did reveal some subtle bias that Pre-Boomers have to navigate. Most reported that they did not experience or observe any

specific discrimination based on age. Many Participants reported feeling invisible but most reported feeling respected. Only a few reported incidents of being mistreated, and one degree student mentioned an instructor who said, "you are just here for your own entertainment" which was taken as an insult.

In talking about their experience on campus, the Participants described what would likely be the same for any age group. They admire the campus in terms such as "park-like" and "a park with buildings". Even those with a current educational goal say they intend to continue hanging out on the grounds and enjoying the trees and other plantings. Some utilize facilities such as Johnson Center pool or gym, although none specifically mentioned the track or tennis courts. Several enjoy performances at Popejoy but most consider that venue too expensive; some were unaware of student discounts for events in the "Popejoy Presents" series. According to the Popejoy website, that discount is 40% off upon presentation of student ID card, if enrolled in 6 or more credit hours in a degree-granting program, and limited to 2 seats per event. Most participants admire the libraries and were not aware that the College of University Libraries and Learning Sciences is a degree-granting unit; at least one was interested in learning about the cross-discipline degrees offered in this College. The only Participant who mentioned eating on campus lives in student housing and occasionally dines at La Posada. Only one mentioned occasionally attending Mid-Week Movies in the SUB. Most Participants happily take advantage of the city bus pass. Those who park in campus garages found the pre-paid system too costly because of having to estimate how much time to pay for, and then forfeit any over-payment or be fined for under-payment. This tends to discourage the one-to-one get-togethers that they value. Most participants seemed

reluctant to use "blue zone" permits for handicap parking, considering themselves to be able-bodied, but objecting to the distance from regular parking to their destinations.

When asked what words or phrases they would use to describe their experience on campus, some examples they offered were: playing with 20-year-olds, playing indoors, respect, disrespect, well-treated, mutual, left out, polite and respectful, multi-cultural, open, reach out, multi-generational, from a time in the past, invigorating, interesting, enlightening, frustrating, basically friendly, bureaucratic, eye-opener, invisible, make your own way, satisfying, very positive, re-awakening of dormant gray cells, refreshing. This wide array of words reflects their wide array of experience on campus.

There seemed to be a contrast between the West Campus and the Main Campus, possibly attributable to size. No one commented on the North Campus (medical and legal), and other campuses were not represented in this volunteer sample, although there are Pre-Boomer Students at other UNM campuses. The West Campus atmosphere was perceived as being non-bureaucratic with person-to-person individuality, small, welcoming, and friendly, but there was a serious concern that it is being downsized and turned over to the UNM Sandoval Regional Medical Center. On Main Campus, most areas got positive marks although some individuals reported negative incidents. At least one Participant said CNM is easier to navigate than UNM.

Participant #199 dramatically related this story: "When I'm in class I'm taking my notes with a fountain pen or a pencil. One history class I took, the professor told the kids, you cannot download the information of this course onto your electronic devices because the files are too big. You will have to download it onto your computers. She said you can download it, print it out, or you can just read it from the computer and take notes. So really

quick, #2 pencil, done! So, two weeks into the class, she goes: quiz. And she was rather charitable because what she did was, broke it up into quiz groups of four, and she handed out the questionnaire to each group, and what did they do, they grab their electronic devices, iPods and phones, thinking that was powerful enough to do this. Nothing. Now they're screwed. Okay. I had a messenger bag with my stuff in it. I reached into my messenger bag, took out a legal pad. Notes! All three of them looked at each other, like, okay, get your own old guy, he's ours, he took notes. They said 'he took notes', more or less Joe is with us okay, don't care how old he is, he is with us. And I got them through it. So that enhanced my credibility and integrated me into the group. So the second quiz she did the same thing and the three kids from the previous group said, oh good Joe's with us. The teacher knew and she goes, 'oh Joe you are auditing the class so you don't have to take the quiz, you can leave'. Absolute silence. They were screwed. They didn't learn to take notes after the first time, they thought Joe would be around because Joe will take notes. With a pencil." So, this Participant demonstrated the lesson rather than speaking it.

Otherwise, Participants' experience in classes was unremarkable. Generally they were treated like any other student. Even the auditors usually completed all assignments but most did not take the tests. Most made an effort not to monopolize the class discussion, but participated in study groups.

Most Participants were not worried about age-discrimination because they are well aware they are non-traditional and do not expect or want special treatment. In the interviews and focus group there was considerable discussion about what "non-traditional" means. The accepted definition seems to be "anyone who is not traditional", and "traditional" is not

defined. Most Participants found a consensus in defining "traditional" as 18-25 years old with no specific demographics.

2. Why and how did you decide to enroll as a university student at this point in life?

When asked why they enrolled at this time in life, almost all said they want to keep learning, some are seeking a degree and for some of those it is an additional degree. At least one is changing careers and has just finished a Bachelors degree, is enrolling in a Masters, and plans to pursue a Doctorate.

Participant #119 said, "I did get extra degrees. I have two Masters degrees and I've worked toward a third, more than halfway through a third Masters before I decided that wasn't what I wanted to do. Then I started auditing. So I've audited in three states, including New Mexico. It is a lifestyle. And I used to teach, also, in the junior college level. So school has just always been normal part of my life. There have been times when I was not in school but it's much more normal and fulfilling for me to be in school. I love to learn. I love to be around young people. That's a very important point for me, being around younger people, which includes the professors, in the fifties, that's younger than I am and I still find that stimulating. So the really young kids, of course, with their freshness and their enthusiasm and their energy. I just love all that. I really don't like to be around -- excuse me, you're not in that category -- old people. You know what I mean."

Participant #172 said: "Curiosity and desire to learn about things I hadn't had time to take in the engineering curriculum. In fact, one of the things I like about the courses I take is they give you the entree to understand enough to be able to look around and find other sources of information, and the time to do it, and with the internet and libraries all online,

you can look at scholarly papers, popular press, you can really dig in and find out about a lot of things."

Participant #210 said: " So it just wound up being a personal thing, and I was very blunt about that with people when I was applying and who gave me the approvals actually to go into the program, and my professor who was ramrodding this whole thing. They know I don't need a PhD, I'm not going into a professional program, I'm not going to be a member of some committee that requires it or any such thing. It's just me. It's sort of the culmination of a life's effort. I figure I deserve one. And apparently enough of the right people agreed with me. So, here I am struggling with Chapter Four of my dissertation."

Participant #235 said: "Well I got my PhD at seventy-five. I'm amazed, let's put it this way, for your second question. They make it financially feasible. There are lot of perks, I have a bus pass and I can use the library, and you know, it's wonderful. And the quality has increased for the most part. I was in fields where the faculty was really good. The History department, in Latin America, I think is superb. And I take Anthropology has caught on and History has caught on as I mentioned. And it's a pleasure. The kids are accepting. I've been auditing since the PhD. Yeah, this is just for fun."

Participant #247 described her thought process this way: "my mentor from graduate school said to me, 'well you're just here for your own entertainment, right?' And so I said, 'no', and he said, 'well, you have all of your productive years behind you, you know, instead of in front of you'. And so I got to thinking about that, and I thought, well, how do I plan to use this information, what can I do to put back, because I've always been not just a taker, if I get something, I want to put something back in the pot. And so since then I have made some plans of my own about what will happen when I finish my masters, and then I have a plan for

a PhD. So, I will put something back. But I thought, I wonder, does everybody see me as taking up space? You know, when there could be somebody else in that chair that could contribute a lot more. And so there are times when I feel real guilty about that, about taking up the space. And then I think, well, I'm a taxpayer, this is a public institution, I pay cash for my classes every semester, it's two or three thousand dollars. And so what's wrong with that. When we were young there was a thing that went 'you are a child of the universe, you have a right to be here'. And so when I feel that I don't have a right to be here, I remember that. I have a right to be here, in spite of what people may think. And so I try to contribute to classes. But you're right about professors. I had a linguistics professor who was talking about the word 'cool' and how it entered the lexicon. And I said I remember when the word first became popular, and how it was associated with jazz musicians and African Americans, and nice people did not use this word. My mother didn't ever like me using this word, and she to this day will not. But I kept trying to work it into the conversation, so I could be cool with my students, and he was like, 'I'm sure we don't need to know that part', and I said 'no this is where this word came from', and here we are 50-60 years later, we're still using it. It's still part of people's vocabularies. And he was like 'don't pay any attention to her'. He didn't actually say that but his attitude was like 'you don't need to know this part, I'm sure you have nothing to contribute, my version of this is the correct version...'. But sometimes I feel like I am invisible sometimes, or I feel like I'm marginalized more than anything. I used to feel that way. The other day in a class I asked some students a question, I said I'm having a hard time finding search words for this phenomenon in Spanish words. And they said, Oh tell us, and they were very helpful, and they said 'this is what this is called and you can search on these terms'. And a non-native speaker said 'I've been wondering that same question, that's a

great idea'. And everybody was very helpful. But that's the first time that's happened in a while."

Other reasons included interest in a subject, to avoid casinos and television, to travel, to remain current, to study a different subject, to be around younger people, and for professional development or personal challenge. One participant simply said "I can't stop".

3. What types of social activities offered on campus appeal to you, or what is missing?

No one expressed interest in social clubs or social activities. They like attending lectures, seminars, plays and films. One or two mentioned the getaway travel tours. Mostly their campus-related social activity was in one-to-one get-togethers before or after class. Several stated they had plenty of social life at home among non-campus friends. For one Participant, competing in Senior Olympics was an example of a non-campus activity.

Participant #109 said, "Most of the social activities are for people fifty years younger than I am, so that's hard to plug into. I have a very simple relationship with the university". Participant #226 said, " I generally end up with two or three guys, we sit around before class or after class and talk".

Participant #199 said: "I live in student housing, so I'm immersed in the university experience. I attend social activities in student housing as well. One or two days a week I go over to Posada to eat. And one of the gals would talk, they love Lela [his service dog] because she goes everywhere. And this gal goes, 'I love your shirt'. So you see as long as you really try to remain current, okay, then you're fine."

The other Participants have their own lifestyle off-campus but enjoy attending on-campus lectures, seminars, theatrical and musical performances, and other such events. Several were interested in the announcement of OILS-Expo, for example. Most of the

participants attended the Defense of this dissertation, six months after these interviews took place, demonstrating their interest in the study as well as other campus events.

4. How do class materials appeal to you, or do they miss the mark for you?

Depending on the subject matter, some materials are not age-appropriate for us, but in some subjects it doesn't matter. Supplemental materials provided by the professors are generally helpful. Most participants felt that classroom interaction was especially helpful, and some were uncomfortable with computerized classes while others mastered the technology with ease. Several participants complained that the books are very expensive, but one reported that used books were all marked up with somebody else's notes, which was distracting.

Some professors provide materials in Reserves or DropBox, while others deliver printouts in class, and the participants did not express a preference. One participant took the time to erase penciled notes in library books, which she thought library staff should be doing.

Participant #247 described this experience about class materials: "One of the things they use to teach Spanish is young people going shopping, how to invite your girlfriend to the movies, how to order out, how to go to the restaurant, how to do young people's things. There's no kids, no babies involved in this, no parents interaction, that kind of thing. How they would include people like me going to the library or trying to find out where the museum was. That's not there. Even how to find a Bridge group to play cards, or even Bingo, which is the old people's game. How to find cultural activities, that kind of thing, is not there. I always felt really silly answering all these young people questions. It was sort of embarrassing for all of us. I was embarrassed to answer all these questions, because I didn't care in the first place."

Generally, participants thought the materials were sufficiently intellectual and appropriate, not condescending, although designed for the traditional age range. Quizzes, exams, and projects varied with each professor's teaching style and the Pre-Boomer Students seemed comfortable with that. Textbooks might be published for traditional age students, but faculty could supplement them with generic-age materials that would include the entire class.

Second Research Question: How do Pre-Boomer Students feel the university supports their pursuit of learning?

- How well are faculty and staff trained to understand what older adult learners need?
- What age-related resources are available on campus, such as late-career counseling, adult residences separate from adolescent lifestyle, appropriate technology support, healthy food-court choices, blue-zone parking spaces, accessible rest rooms, etc.

5. How do you think the university supports your pursuit of learning, what services have you found useful, what do you think is missing that you need?

The participants had several recommendations for improvements (see Chapter 5) but on the whole they felt they could ask for what they needed and it might take a little digging to find the right resources. Their pros and cons are summarized here.

The West Campus staff is outstanding, very helpful, courteous, and patient. The IT helpers are excellent. The food is good, both La Posada and SUB, and the libraries are wonderful. The choice of courses offered is rich and class schedules are generally satisfactory. One benefit they especially appreciate is access to printers all over the campus.

Several comments indicated this group of students would benefit from an ombudsman or advocate to ensure their needs are met or to help them more efficiently find the resources they need, and orientation to senior citizen services could be added to the new-student

orientations each semester. Some suggestions applied to students of any age, such as prompt elevator maintenance; the Zimmerman elevators were out of order most of the time these interviews were conducted, and signage is inadequate for finding alternate access. Other suggestions could be added to teacher orientation, such as making sure that green chalkboards are clean and legible.

Parking and transportation came up in several topics. Participants found campus parking to be expensive and inconvenient, and the parking lot shuttle is considered uncomfortable and inconvenient. One participant had trouble climbing on and off the shuttle, which does not "kneel" like city buses, and needed help when carrying books, but could not rely on finding a blue zone space closer to class. Another participant relied on the blue zone permit to park in meter spaces and walk short distances to classes. Parking in garages and at pay-station meters is risky because if you estimate incorrectly how long you will stay, you either forfeit the overpayment or pay a fine, and this curtails spontaneous interactions on campus.

Participants reported that some facilities have shortcomings, such as unreliable elevators (the Visitor parking garage near Popejoy, for example), dark spooky areas on campus, classroom acoustics and air conditioning, broken surfaces on pathways and sidewalks, and inadequate restrooms.

6. What descriptive terms would you use to characterize the campus culture?

In order to understand how Pre-Boomers experience the youth-oriented campus culture, this discussion topic focused on the "youth-oriented" part. Participants acknowledged that universities are designed for the traditional students, those in ages eighteen to twenty five, and their purpose is to prepare these young people for their first

career. The challenge for Pre-Boomers is that they have completed one or more careers over half a century and are pursuing additional education, either changing to a different career or finally having time to explore other areas of interest. The smaller population has to give way to the larger population, and these participants generally have the maturity and the life experience to navigate that difference. They reported that this campus accommodates both age groups quite well. They expressed surprise that the University doesn't more actively recruit senior-citizen students.

Participant #134 said this: "The groups of people that I've met in my various departments, are all very inspiring and I think that has to do with the multi-cultural aspect of New Mexico. Because in general I've found that most of the people that I've met in New Mexico were very open and friendly and sort of reach out to you, and that's the experience that I've had with the university here. This is inter-disciplinary studies. And so my main thing was to try to find a Masters program, because in fitness that's the basic level of professionalism. So I ended up finding health education, which is health and community health. Yeah, it's a separate field of study in the Department of Education. And all the professors I've found are like in their upper fifties, and they are interested in the same types of things that I am interested in. So I've found it very encouraging and I've been I think very successful in educational pursuits. So far."

Some of the descriptions these participants offered included: Interested, helpful, pleasant, convenient, any accolade, smaller classes, gorgeous campus, inclusive, left-leaning, youth-oriented, peaceful, energetic, a big park, typical university, complex groups, friendly, both respectful and disrespectful, serious, focused to topic, communality.

7. What have you observed or experienced that would be considered age discrimination?

The participants struggled to find examples of age discrimination, but several had experienced feeling invisible. Their words ranged from "very accommodating" to "excluded". Sometimes they felt that classmates or teachers were "tolerating us", and perhaps some terms of respect were a disguise for ageism or marginalization. An example one participant gave was that auditors were not called on in class, another felt that he was called on too often to contribute his perspective. For the most part they recognized that the campus culture is what it is, and it was up to them to adapt.

Some of their suggestions are presented in Chapter 5, such as an ombudsman or late-career advisor, and age-appropriate materials to supplement traditional-age textbooks, and sensitivity training for faculty and staff which is generally limited to gender and ethnicity could be expanded to include age.

8. How do you define "old" or "elderly", in terms of a specific age, or words?

The interviews turned into conversations when this topic was discussed. Most participants used humor or sarcasm because words like "elderly" typically signify fragility or frailty or feebleness and these people clearly are not. One man said, "elderly means decrepit and I'm not". One woman stated firmly "I'm still nine...I'm just the year when all of a sudden my head started working, so I've been sort of set in that ever since, where everything is still complicated and fascinating but I'm figuring it out." Another said, "I'm sweet sixteen with sixty years experience".

Everyone in this sample objects to being termed "elderly", which they consider to mean "frail", but could not agree on a word they felt comfortable being called. So they

generally avoid descriptive adjectives or make jokes about age. One said, "I don't care what you call me, just don't ignore me".

This conversation was often combined with discussing what term should apply to people born before 1946. Some thought "pre-boomer" satisfactorily distinguishes us from the Baby Boomers and others didn't think that was important. Some preferred other words, such as "elder" which denotes a position of respect and wisdom, as opposed to "elderly" which denotes frailty. Some of the participants seemed to be unconcerned about being labeled by others and laughed at other people's misconceptions and stereotypes. Nobody came up with specific definitions.

9. How well does the university's policy of diversity and inclusion apply to Pre-Boomers?

Since age discrimination is prohibited at 40 or 45, the Participants felt it is not even close to protecting the Pre-Boomers. The policies and procedures focus on the very young, and these participants concur that today's young people seem to need guidance and protection until they learn how to behave. The recent round of mandatory training focused on sexual harassment, and the mature folks had grown up in an era when this was taught in the home or the middle school. They were dismayed that this training was necessary but were glad the need had been met.

The policy does not address passive bullying, marginalization, and other non-aggressive action, and there is no specific recourse for being neglected or ignored. The participants generally concurred in this view and felt there was nothing to be done. Most had not actually experienced feeling excluded on campus and admitted that might have been because they didn't expect inclusion. They felt that inclusion should be core culture and not

policy. One participant suggested that being omitted from the protected class list is a form of neglect, and perhaps visibility would be one antidote. Again the ombudsman idea came up.

10. If you perceive aspects of campus culture that are uncomfortable, what do you do?

Most participants felt little or no discomfort, and when they did, they described the experience as rare or someone else's problem. When it happened, they triage it, fly above it, make waves, or use avoidance techniques.

The degree-seeking students have mixed experience but all are complimentary about the Registrar's office when they go for help. Occasionally they encounter faculty or staff who don't take them seriously, and are reluctant to make space in a full class. One Participant, who is pursuing advanced degrees in a new career path, has accumulated so many credits that there is some difficulty allocating them to the Bachelor's degree, so she can enroll in a Master's program. Although most auditors say they can navigate on their own, it would appear that no one is prepared to advise the degree-seeking Pre-Boomer students. This lack was mentioned in a previous study (Verstynen, 2011) and if it has been addressed, it is still not visible. These Participants are well-aware that the University resources are designed for the largest proportion of the students, but would appreciate having Advisement counselors trained in late-career issues.

Voices about faculty and staff were mixed. Participants offered specific stories about their experiences with exceptionally helpful faculty and staff as well as their exceptionally difficult experiences, and they felt the former outweighed the latter. These students were not prone to whine and in general were very grateful for the opportunity to continue their education. They raised issues with acoustics in the classrooms and often preferred to sit in the front row. One issue was raised, that when green chalkboards are not clean they are

difficult to read. Another issue was raised, that when projectors are used against whiteboards instead of a screen or painted wall, the glare makes the image hard to read. When the setting sun shines in the windows, these students know to lower the shades themselves if the younger students are too shy to do so. They report that experienced professors seem to know these things, but some inexperienced TAs do not.

Most of the participants do not consider themselves disabled or handicapped and do not want blue-zone parking privileges. One reported significant difficulty with the campus shuttle buses, especially the parking lot bus, which is very difficult to climb into. Some consider the parking garage elevators to be unreliable so they seek parking on the street. Most of these students are sufficiently fit to enjoy walking around campus. One rides a scooter and says the recent change requiring scooters to park with motorcycles instead of with bicycles is unfair and expensive. Many commented that skateboarders are far more dangerous than scooters.

A few of the Participants consider themselves technologically challenged and would like to have help with the computerized systems. They reported being able to learn when they had someone to show them what they need to know. One recommended the tech support booth in the UNM Bookstore, and two others had high commendation for library staff. The challenge was finding someone to patiently teach it to them. Other Participants had kept up with technology and one or two felt they were more adept than their instructors.

Third Research Question: How does their life experience contribute to the campus culture?

- What do Pre-Boomer Students remember of events and societal conditions that occurred before the majority of the campus community was born?

- Are Pre-Boomer Students encouraged to share such memories, and how are these memories received -- welcomed or resented or ignored?

11. How does your own life experience contribute to the campus culture?

The Participants were almost all accomplished story-tellers and had little difficulty sharing their memories. They reported that their contributions were generally well-received. Some of the auditors felt hesitant to monopolize class discussion, or refrained out of respect for younger instructors. Some of the Participants considered themselves role models, demonstrating proper study habits and classroom behavior, especially one who was still teaching and felt particularly obligated to complete all class assignments. Another was glad to share his books and others offered advice when asked. But they generally thought they had nothing to contribute to the campus culture except as discussed in the next topic.

These examples remind the Pre-Boomers that experiences they remember are valuable ancient history to the traditional students. One Participant reminded the focus group that we weren't born with this knowledge and that we may have been older than today's students when we learned these things, so it is inappropriate to think it's their fault they don't yet know what we know.

Participants gave different examples of how they "give back". One likes to share his books with the younger students. Another "can ask the uncomfortable question or make a comment others are afraid to ask." The "class's old guy" shared his story earlier, about demonstrating the technique of taking notes on paper. Some Participants did not think they had anything to contribute to the campus culture, or hadn't thought about it before and couldn't come up with examples. One Participant said "I think I absorb way more than I give back."

12. What memories from your youth do you share with younger students today?

Some of the Participants referred to themselves as "living history" and gave examples such as the Watergate scandal, the assassinations of the 1960s, the Civil Rights movement and the Women's Lib movement. One related a class assignment that involved listening to a portion of one of the "Watergate" tapes and a student who had never heard of Watergate asked why that recording was important. The Participants believed today's students are not being taught about these historical events and consider that to be a major lack in today's education.

One Participant had shared in class about a long-ago experience as an exchange student, and was invited to be a guest speaker in a later class session, which both the students and the instructor wanted to hear about. Another Participant had described to a class that in 1969 he had sent an Aerogram to his fiancée overseas and it took three weeks for her reply to reach him, and one of the students in all seriousness asked "well why didn't you just Skype her?" When he related this story in this study's focus group, the other participants joined in his amusement.

Participant #247 and the interviewer enjoyed this exchange about shared memories:

P: But our parents had come through the Depression.

I: That's right, and we had the Depression culture.

P: We did, and this was "Eat it up, wear it out, make it do or do without".

I: If I don't need it, don't buy it, if I can't carry it, don't buy it.

P: And I do that to this day, and I'm sure you do too.

I: See we have these memories, the Boomers don't have any clue.

P: They grew up in more affluent times, maybe their parents wanted to shield them.

I: There was that whole wanting to do things differently.

P: I think their values are not my values as far as what they want to buy and so on.

I: People kept asking me why I want to do this study this way, and why not include everybody over sixty or 65, and I said "because it's a different culture".

P: Yes it is.

I: And the people who are younger than that don't get it. It's such a pleasure for me to talk to somebody who gets that.

P: Yes, I get that.

13. What else would you like to say about Pre-Boomer Students on campus?

Participants would like to see all ages pictured on the University web pages, not just the traditional-age students, to more accurately present a diverse student body. Most felt that the university's policy on diversity and inclusion ignores this age group but they generally had no issue with it.

Additional comments included that studying beats crossword puzzles for staying mentally alert, as does being around young people.

14. How about an on-going "community of practice" or student advocacy group?

Participants expressed little or no interest in joining an age-related student group or an ongoing community of practice for this age group. The words they used included: Doesn't matter, maybe, not against it, no time for it, mostly no.

Participants related that existing groups that purport to serve senior citizens on campus are not hospitable. The interviewer described an effort a couple of years earlier to organize a group called "Lifelong Learners" that was intended for students over 65 but its charter did not stipulate that. Several participants asked about the Association for Non-

Traditional Students (ANTS) and others described a lack of hospitable reception there too. Most have plenty of friends their own age and actually prefer interacting with younger people on campus.

15. What name would you like to have adopted for the pre-boomer students?

When asked what they would prefer this generational cohort be called, about half were content with Pre-Boomers but a few preferred something more distinctive, such as Traditionalists, Founders, Survivors, or Elders. In each interview, the researcher displayed the Taylor and Skibo chart, which is reproduced in Chapter Two, and asked the Participant which of the names shown for the cohort born before 1946, or what other nomenclature, they preferred. Two other names appear in the literature but not on the chart, Silents and Lucky Few. Most participants had no preference and no objection to "Pre-Boomers". One disliked "Pre-Boomers" because it relies on the larger group for identity and he thought this group should have its own name, but could not decide which to pick.

16. Do you use the senior citizen discount for tuition, or other benefits?

The individual interview participants and the focus group participants had considerable discussion about the Senior Citizen Discount program. There were misunderstandings about who is eligible and how to navigate the limitations. Several Participants had figured it out and several had not. The interviewer provided the following to facilitate the discussion:

- Any registered student of age 65 or more is eligible.
- The student may be enrolled in a degree program or not.
- The student may be enrolled for credit or not for credit.
- The student is limited to 6 credit hours per semester.

- The student may not attempt to enroll in anything before the first day of class
- On or after first day of class, the student may register for wait-list in a class that is full
- Students utilizing the senior citizen discount are not included in head-count reports
- Students may be assessed departmental fees, student associations, or other fees.

The Pre-Boomers who are auditing are enthusiastic about the tuition discount program, but those who are enrolled in a degree program find it frustrating and some have opted out of the discount in order to take a full-time load or to get into required classes that fill up before the first day. One degree-seeking Participant had to apply for student loans in order to pay the full tuition. One Veteran had succeeded in securing a full scholarship from the VA in spite of his age. Several Participants expressed the opinion that the legislation and policy should be updated, and suggested that auditors may be content with the space-available policy that does not include them in the reports to the state, but degree-seeking students should be counted even if they are using the discount. These findings are pursued in Chapter 5.

According to Policy D-40, "A student wishing to audit a course must be formally enrolled at the University either in regular or in non-degree status and must pay the full tuition rate for the course." The policy goes on with other stipulations. Participants reported that, as auditors, they enrolled on the senior citizen discount and were not required to pay the "full tuition rate". They also reported that some instructors were not familiar with the "Enrollment Authorization Card" that is required.

Other benefits that participants enjoyed are dining at La Posada, swimming or exercising at Johnson Gym, the free bus pass, various student discounts available around town, and they especially like to use the libraries.

17. Other comments?

Some of the Participants had served in the military long ago, and were interested in VA scholarships available to senior citizens. One Participant is a Vietnam Vet and is currently receiving a scholarship for full tuition and books. He is proud that this produces more revenue for the University than the Senior Citizen Discount and believes such benefits should be more visible. Other veterans were referred to the Student Veterans of UNM for advice.

One participant especially likes Dr. Abdallah's letters, some read the Daily Lobo and wish it were still daily. One occasionally attends the old movies in the SUB.

One participant expressed concern about the special tax assessed on Rio Rancho residents, which was supposed to support the UNM West Campus, but apparently was diverted to the Sandoval Regional Medical Center. The interviewer did not pursue this participant's perception to validate its accuracy.

Findings From Enrollment Management Data

As shown in Appendix D₃, UNM enrollment has declined 8.26% year by year to 26,278 in 2017. Learning of this decline, the participants were surprised that the university doesn't more vigorously recruit senior citizens. Just under one percent (.85%) are Pre-Boomers and students using the Senior Citizen Discount are not included in the head count report to the state, but it is unclear whether they are included in the data posted on the UNM website. Over half the Participants reported utilizing the discount except when it restricted enrolling in required classes or carrying a full load. These factors would impact the significance of the overall enrollment decline.

Also, the Baby Boom generation has reached age 65 and has become eligible for the senior citizen discount. The data on this expansion are not collected or analyzed in this study; suffice it to say that if the students utilizing the discount are increasing, they are not being counted in enrollment data because the state law prohibits that. Enrollment might not really be declining. Registrar was unable to provide tuition discount data except to say that every student over age 65 is flagged as eligible, but whether and when they use it varies.

The Enrollment Management Reporting Team produced the statistics requested for each birth year in the Pre-Boomer cohort and for each of the three semesters of 2017 (see Appendix D₂). The Team also provided the actual total number of individuals born before 1946 who were enrolled at any time during the three semesters of 2017; that total is 212. The earliest birth year on campus is 1928, and the latest birth year of interest in this study is 1945. Enrollment is distributed more sparsely in the earlier years and more densely in the later years, which was expected.

The number of Pre-Boomer students enrolled in each of the three semesters in Calendar Year 2017 varies as students adjust their schedules. Five are enrolled full time in at least one semester, and up to 23 are enrolled in degree programs. Up to 79 are enrolled for credit and another 60 are enrolled not-for-credit. It is likely but not proven that the 23 enrolled in degree programs are included in the 79 enrolled for credit. The challenge in counting these students is that it is common for a person to take both a credit course and a not-for-credit course in the same semester, or to attend full time in one semester and part time in another semester, or for a student to enroll as undergrad in spring semester and then as a graduate student in fall semester. So simple addition would capture the same student more than once.

The study did not collect data on which departments or programs these students are enrolled in because, as indicated in participant interviews, they tend to select courses that interest them and may accumulate a cross-discipline transcript. Also, auditors are not expected to declare a major or affiliate with a department.

This exploratory study did not pursue any similarity between student data and U.S. Census data.

Method of Analysis

During the interviews, the researcher made notes on the interview form (Appendix C) and included those notes in this manuscript. A second set of notes was extracted from the interview transcripts, and a third set from the focus group transcript and "sticky wall" notes, and these were added to the summary of participant data. The result was to collect a set of notes from three sources for each of the sixteen discussion topics. This Chapter contains summaries of these sixteen discussions. There was no attempt to attribute Participants' opinions to their personal characteristics and no obvious patterns of that sort emerged. The interviews all followed the semi-structured format with flexibility much like a conversation, in which the interviewer as a fellow Pre-Boomer shared stories and experiences with the participants. This positionality elicited richer contributions from the participants than a sterile survey-type interview could have done.

Description and Analysis of the Participants

The list of enrolled students born before 1946, provided by Enrollment Management Reporting Team provides only email addresses, and gender was not included in the data request. The names on the outgoing emails appear to be about evenly divided between female

and male. Some names could be either, some are only a first initial, and not all 212 enrolled individuals had valid email addresses. No demographic data were requested or collected.

The invitation went out by email, and a copy was posted on several kiosks and bulletin boards around campus. There was no attempt to publish it more broadly. Within two days, fifteen volunteers had responded and interviews were scheduled. A few more trickled in but were not interviewed, and one of the original fifteen dropped out. All participants were de-identified for the record, but sitting face to face in a private study room in the library allowed for some demographic details to be collected by observation.

Ten of the fourteen are men, four are women. One woman is black, and one says she is not Hispanic but her name is. One of the men identified as having PTSD, not from military combat, and has a service dog. One of the men identified as being on the Autism spectrum. One of the women identified as having un-named disabilities, and one woman competes in the Senior Olympics. All were at least 71 years of age at the time of the interviews. Two of the participants, both men, identified as military veterans, and one of them got a VA scholarship. All were apparently American-born and all spoke fluent English. Several were studying other languages, French and Spanish in particular, one Russian. At least three of the participants are enrolled in degree programs, and all but two or three utilize the tuition discount when they can afford to wait.

Sample size. The fourteen who volunteered became a convenience sample of about 7%, representing the 2017 population of 212 UNM students born before 1946. Total student population is 26,278 of which Pre-Boomers are 0.8%.

Would a larger sample from this limited population have made any difference? It does not appear likely but a future study might broaden the scope or add other campuses to increase the population of pre-1946 students. This study was not intended to be all-inclusive.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

This study arose from personal experience of the student researcher and expanded to develop knowledge about all students born before 1946. This purpose involved setting aside one person's perceptions and biases to explore the experience of the entire student population in this age group. It also involved setting aside some perceptions and biases of faculty and staff who believed there weren't enough people to study.

Since there were no previous studies of this specific group for this specific purpose, the best approach was an exploratory study. Since a possible explanation for assuming there weren't enough people to study appeared to be marginalization and potential passive bullying, the best theoretical framework was a critical ethnology. Further, with the student researcher's background in organizational culture and using ethical theory for problem-solving, this study would focus on how these students experience the typically youth-oriented culture of the university campus and how they handle anything that might be uncomfortable.

Three research questions, each with two explanatory points, guided the pursuit of this study:

What are the experiences on campus of students born before 1946?

- What measures have they observed to prevent, or protect from, examples of passive bullying or discrimination?
- How do they feel about being excluded or included, neglected or respected?

How do they feel the university supports their pursuit of learning?

- How well are faculty and staff trained to understand what older adult learners need?

- What age-related resources are available on campus, such as late-career counseling, adult residences separate from adolescent lifestyle, appropriate technology support, healthy food-court choices, blue-zone parking spaces, accessible rest rooms, etc.

How does their life experience contribute to the campus culture?

- What do Pre-Boomer Students remember of events and societal conditions that occurred before the majority of the campus community was born?
- Are Pre-Boomer Students encouraged to share such memories, and how are these memories received -- welcomed or resented or ignored?

To pursue the overarching question of how students born before 1946 experience the youth-oriented campus culture at UNM, and these three main sub-questions, a plan emerged to conduct as many interviews as possible to explore sixteen discussion topics and anything else the participants considered pertinent. The data to be gathered would be personal opinions and perceptions, which are not very measurable, so it would be a qualitative approach, seeking themes and patterns in the participants' statements. The researcher, also a member of the defined student population, would engage in conversations with the participants, and that approach proved to produce very rich data, unlike a typical structured interview which would elicit answers to specific questions. All of the prepared discussion topics were addressed in all of the interviews, not by controlling the agenda but by loosening up and sharing experiences and living history as well as current perceptions.

Implications of Findings

These students are here because they want to be. They have addressed the following challenges, which bear further examination in future studies:

Being taken seriously. One participant is changing careers, has transferred from CNM, is finishing a bachelors and enrolling in a Masters, intending to pursue a doctorate, and struggled to get approval for student loans. Another is pursuing a second doctorate. Some are pursuing studies to qualify them for professional work such as photography or art. Several participants, but not all, reported feeling invisible. Most faculty and staff are supportive once the student communicates his or her commitment to learning, but some need sensitivity training. The university should not be limited to providing only the sensitivity training mandated by the Department of Justice, but should take the initiative to raise awareness of students in this cohort and the one following.

Cost of pursuing a degree. Those who have the funds pay the full tuition and fees in order to register before the classes they need are full. Those who don't have the funds cannot find financial aid, which is mostly limited to people under forty. Those who rely on the senior citizen discount are hampered by the limitations in the state rules and university policy. Those who had any opinion on this topic believe the legislation should be updated and that recommendation is discussed in the next section.

Accessibility. All of the participants were ambulatory but some had limitations that meant they avoid stairs and rely on elevators, which they considered to be unreliable. The campus shuttle bus is very difficult to climb into and seats in the front are not always available, unlike the city buses which have "kneeling" apparatus and seats reserved for seniors. Parking on campus is limited and expensive. Those who have "blue zone" permits often have difficulty finding a vacancy. The walkways on campus are dangerous, both from sidewalk surfers (skateboards) and poor lighting; also one complaint about signage because like most college campuses it is easy to get lost.

Advisement and late career counseling. Almost all participants wanted someone to turn to when they needed help, such as navigating electronic access to study materials. For the most part they are persistent and found their own mentors.

One example of inter-generational workforce, from this interviewer's own experience, is a large corporation that implemented a reduction-in-force (RIF) by requiring all employees in a department to complete a new university-based training program if they wanted to keep their jobs. Some older people jumped at the opportunity and participated vigorously in the classes, while others let the company lay them off. It was both challenging and rewarding to teach a class in which ages ranged from 25 to 65 and educational background ranged from 10th grade to doctorate but all were motivated to complete the course. It is a significant opportunity for the University's career counseling group to aggressively offer late-career counseling and prepare its Pre-Boomer Student graduates for today's workplace challenges.

The interviews explored Participants' perceptions of whether faculty, staff, and other students consider them serious students, and this type of marginalization is important to know about. Some take courses for academic credit or CEU without intending to achieve a degree or certificate, or to try out their learning skills before making a commitment and they might re-enroll in a degree program later. Some audit the courses they are interested in to broaden their own knowledge. All levels and loads are valuable to know about because their perceptions about campus culture provide richness to the study. These different perceptions shed light on the Pre-Boomer Students' experience in the youth-oriented campus culture.

In general, the participants don't want special treatment, and think their complaints apply to all students.

Prior Recommendations

In exploring the language of older adult learners as they begin a bachelor's degree program, Dr. Pam Verstynen offered a number of implications and recommendations (Verstynen, 2011). Her recommendation for remediation workshops and an organization with a physical location seems similar to the wonderful Graduate Resource Center we already have, but would include undergraduates. Her idea would be more than a Graduate Student Commons, and more age-specific than the Association of Non-Traditional Students, and would likely be able to counteract many symptoms of passive bullying discussed by Hood, et al. (2011)

Participants in the present study expressed little interest in such an organization, partly because they had not found one and gave up. They are not joiners. But if there were a small office designated specifically to what the community college president (Snyder, 2013) recommends, and staffed with a qualified faculty advisor to guide the students who are eligible for the senior citizen discount, these Participants would have appreciated having somewhere to get advice. One participant in this study begged for an advisor to help her sort out the credits she had accumulated and wrap up her bachelor's degree and enroll in her master's program.

Recommendations for Further Study

This study was intended to advocate for a campus culture hospitable for Pre-Boomers and prepare for the influx of Boomers. A few recommendations rise to the top.

It would appear that one thing universities can do to support Pre-Boomer Students' learning is to provide remedial training in technology use, just as remedial classes in math and English are offered to ethnic minorities.

The lack of research about 70+ students seems to reinforce the unfair and discriminatory assumptions that tend to exclude and marginalize this age group on campus. This study inquires into these assumptions and encourages future studies to test them.

A follow-up study of the population identified here could attempt to reach the other 195 who did not respond to the call for volunteers, and inquire into what their perceptions and opinions would be. We know that 23 of the students born before 1946 are enrolled for a degree, yet only four or five of those participated in this study. We did not try hard to solicit participants in this exploratory study and the others should be approached again, as well as the same cohort at other schools.

In early planning discussions about this study classmates expressed some interest in how faculty and staff perceive the students in this age group, which is a variable that might influence the campus culture. These perceptions were not pursued in depth although some participants described experiences with faculty or staff that shed some light on how they perceive Pre-Boomer Students.

The issue of how organizational culture in the workplace affects the oldest workers is a different study for another day. Stories abound in which a Reduction In Force (RIF) seems intended to clear out the more expensive older workers and keep the less expensive younger ones, but contrary stories indicate the experience and wisdom of older workers have value. It is a significant opportunity for the University's career counseling group to aggressively offer late-career counseling and prepare its Pre-Boomer Student graduates for today's workplace challenges.

The university should urge the legislature to update the rules for senior citizen tuition and recognition. Prohibiting the universities from including these students in the data reports

would seem to have a significant impact on revenue. These participants talked about a mid-level tuition policy for New Mexico residents over 65 who are pursuing a degree, which would be a reduced rate without the limitations that apply to the \$5/hour tuition for non-credit students. A study of the legislation and its background, and the implications of changing it, would be very valuable in supporting University policy on tuition.

The interviews explored their perceptions of whether faculty, staff, and other students consider them serious students, and this type of marginalization is important to know about. Some take courses for academic credit or CEU without intending to achieve a degree or certificate, or to try out their learning skills before making a commitment, and they might re-enroll in a degree program later. Some audit the courses they are interested in to broaden their own knowledge. All levels and loads are valuable to know about because their perceptions about campus culture provide richness to the study. A statistical analysis of differences in trends, in each of these discussions might shed light on the Pre-Boomer Students' experience and guide future recruitment to older students.

Any study about students who exceed the typical retirement age but intend to stay in the workforce would be helpful. The University should aggressively market its programs for older learners in the workplace and end the misconception that learning after 65 or 75 is limited to hobbyists but instead is a real opportunity to stay employed and productive.

Any study that recognizes Pre-Boomers in particular would break new ground as both the workforce and the population as a whole enjoy extended life expectancy and improved health prospects. Most studies found in this research were about frail elderly and their needs for housing, health care, and pensions, when in fact the able-bodied and active people who

remember World War II have not been studied effectively. A study about who funds studies and what their vested interests are would also be helpful.

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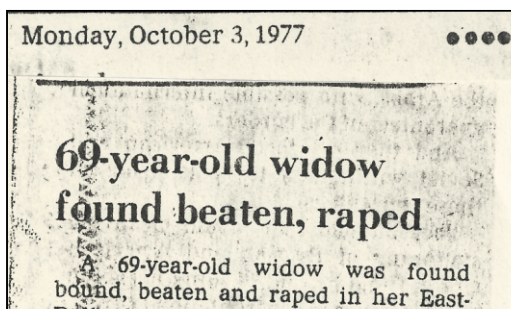
List of Appendices

Appendix A -- TED Talk Script.....	102
Appendix B₁ -- E-Mail Recruitment.....	106
Appendix B₂ -- IRB-Approved Consent Form.....	107
Appendix C -- Record of Individual and Group Interviews #1116690-1.....	108
Appendix D₁ -- Request To Enrollment Management Team For Head-Count Data ...	109
Appendix D₂ -- Enrollment Management Division Report.....	110
Appendix D₃ -- Enrollment Statistics Posted on UNM Website	111
Appendix E -- IRB Ruling.....	112

Appendix A -- TED Talk Script

NOT DONE YET by Sue Coates***TEDxABQ-Women, October 28, 2016***

This chip on my shoulder started forty years ago, when my mother was 69, she was beaten senseless, raped, and left for dead. I found out the next day, hopped the red-eye, found her still on the gurney in ER, unrecognizably bruised and semi-conscious, nearly two days after the assault. **They hadn't decided whether to admit her, thought she was too old to survive, probably waiting for her to die.** Well, I got her admitted and after six long weeks in the trauma ward, she was discharged for convalescence.



Why am I telling you this? Her first words when she came to three days later were "oh my god I've got to call my boss". She was horrified that she hadn't shown up for two days where she'd been working ever since earning her bachelor's degree at age 60. Elderly?? No!!

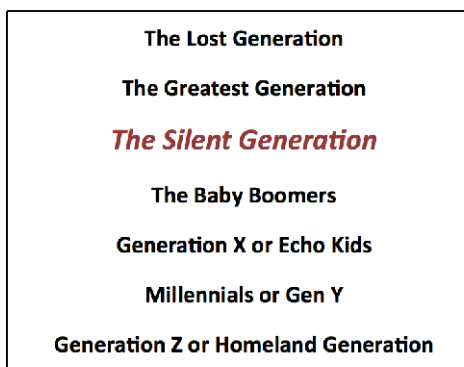
Not only did she survive this brutal assault, she regained enough mobility to work part time at the local library, getting around with a cane. Eight years later she was run over by a careless driver. Another skull fracture. Both legs shattered. Once again they thought she was too old and fragile to survive surgery. **But she wasn't done yet.** Spent the next fifteen years in a wheelchair, continued memorizing and reciting poetry, and corresponding with her friends. As her vision failed, she dictated her letters for me to type, verbatim. She was determined to see the New Millenium and she did. A few days after New Years at age 93½, she woke up from a nap, looked around, and said "I'm so sorry this is taking so long", and drew her last breath.

In spite of being treated as a useless wreck of an elderly widow, she was still fearless and clever and stubborn. And a survivor.

Inspired by my mother's example, I earned my bachelors degree at age 40. Going back to school in middle age is difficult, especially while working full time, but I kept at it and earned a Masters at age 45. And Mama came to my graduation.



When I retired – for the second time -- at age 70, I enrolled as a doctoral student at UNM, where I am ABD after five years of classes. I love being a student again, but do you realize how older people on campus are perceived by younger people? That's my dissertation topic.



Let me ask you this:

Why do lectures about the generations refer to millennials, echo kids, gen-Y, gen-X, boomers ... not those of us who beat the rush, before the Boom? Why do professors forget about the Silent Generation as if we're all gone?? We're not gone and we're not done yet.

We were born during The Great Depression, we experienced the Second World War as kids -- my mother used to say "sister finish your plate, think of all the starving children in Europe" -- the current disaster in Syria and Africa is certainly not new. Neither is "recycling", that we called "salvage for the war effort". Local-grown food we called "victory garden". Wasn't I a cute little kid.

We experienced the polio epidemic and took the first vaccines for it. Some of us lost brothers or uncles in "the forgotten war" in Korea. As teenagers, we desegregated schools, buses, lunch-counters. And drinking fountains, restrooms, train stations. And we are still contributing members of society.



I want to tell you a story. One day in 1956 my mother took me out of school and we went to federal court to observe Thurgood Marshall representing the NAACP against the Dallas School Board, and lost. The next day the school principal made me serve a "detention" for unexcused absence. My social studies teacher said if I would write a paper about it, she would give me extra credit. So I served my sentence in the study hall, wrote the paper, got the credit.

Ten years later Judge Marshall was appointed to the Supreme Court and ten years after that, our school principal was promoted to Assistant Superintendent and put in charge of integrating the Dallas public schools.

Listen to what we remember. The next time you seek advice, seek us. We are not silent and we're not done yet.

But, we are ignored, assumed to be old and feeble and demented. People are astonished when we aren't what they assume. Of course I appreciate genuine admiration when I deserve it. But don't people realize that their astonishment at our accomplishments, based on wrong assumptions, is insulting? Why is so little expected of us? Why shouldn't Katherine Beiers finish the 2014 Boston Marathon at age 81? Why shouldn't Ruth Bader Ginsburg sit on the US Supreme Court at 82? People seem to think it's a compliment to say "My, you don't look that old", but that's genes, not my doing. They insult my accomplishment with "Why would you want another degree, at your age?". Well, a job! And they are simply rude with "You're older than my grandmother!".

Well, I'm not near as old as I am. See? My screensaver says "I'm not 76, I'm sweet 16 with 60 years experience." So please don't dumb-down our digital devices. I've had ten computers over thirty five years. This is my brain, it goes everywhere with me, in my backpack, usually. It's a great tool.



Here is another type of tool, my birthday present to myself last year. Guess you could say I really do have an axe to grind. I built a victory garden in my own back yard last winter. Have you ever tried to dig in our high desert caliche? It's not for wimps, takes a tool like this.

It's really annoying to be considered inferior after we reach some mysterious threshold of age, which nobody agrees on. EEO Commission says 40, AARP says 50, Census Bureau says 65. I dunno. Kids say it's anybody older than Mom. What do you say? ... I think it's when the individual says it is, maybe when health and mobility are declining, which for some it never does. But it's definitely not some arbitrary regulation that says "today you're young and tomorrow you're old".

What does "elderly" mean? And euphemisms like senior citizen, mature adult, advanced in age. How about getting on, long in the tooth, no spring chicken. Or maybe golden age? In some societies, an elder is someone with seniority or authority, who is respected. I kind of like the term "Super Senior" for those of us born before 1941, who beat the rush.

My mother was not "elderly" at 69, she was an active vigorous woman. I am not "elderly" at 77, I am an active vigorous woman. You and I working together can help those astonished people overcome their biases and assumptions. Let's stop the stereotypes and myths about people in this spectacular generation. Participate with us in the adventure of long years, because **we're not done yet.**

So let's get these chips off my shoulder, shall we?

(extracting each one from the bundle on my shoulder)

This one has us feeble, demented, helpless and a burden on everybody. *[toss it]* Well, the grandmas taking care of children aren't a burden on anybody.

Here's a good one: old people can't learn. *[toss it]* Ask my professors how my GPA is 3.8 if I can't learn.

This one says older women aren't interested in sex. *[toss it]* Really. Just let Robert Redford ring my doorbell!

Here – you take them *[throw the bundle of chips into the audience]*. I've got to get back to my dissertation. **I'm not done yet!** *[Exit abruptly]*

Appendix B₁ -- E-Mail Recruitment

Subject Line: Opportunity to Participate in Research

Dear Student,

I am conducting a research study about UNM students born before 1946. You are receiving this email because you are in this age group or may know someone who is.

The purpose of this research study is to learn how UNM's oldest students experience the campus environment. This age group is usually lumped in with the Boomer generation, or sometimes with everyone over age 25, and very little is known about what the Pre-Boomer Students expect, appreciate, or need on campus.

If you agree to participate, this study will involve one of the following three formats:

- Semi-structured individual interview in a conference room on campus
- Focus group of up to ten people in a conference room on campus
- Online chat for those who are located too far away.

There are no known risks, unless anonymity is accidentally breached, but all participants will be "de-identified" and assigned random numbers. Benefits might include better conditions for UNM's oldest students in the future, based on what you have to say in this study.

All participants will receive a \$25 LoboCash card at the end of the session.

You do not have to be in this study, your decision to be in any study is totally voluntary. If you feel you understand the study and would like to participate, please fill out the attached consent form and return it to me by attachment to your reply to this email.

If you have questions prior to participating, please contact:

- Sue Coates at escoates@unm.edu or 505-266-2115

Thank you for your time,



*Elinor Sue Coates, (student ID#101538512)
PhD Candidate, OLIT
Organization, Information, and Learning Sciences
College of University Libraries and Learning Sciences*

Principal Investigator: *Dr. Patricia Boverie, PhD.*

Study Title: Pre-Boomers On Campus

IRB # 1116690-1

Appendix B₂ -- IRB-Approved Consent Form

Pre-Boomer Students On Campus (#1116690-1) Informed Consent for Interviews or Focus Groups August 25, 2017

Sue Coates under the guidance of Dr. Patricia Boverie from the Organization, Information, and Learning Sciences Program at UNM, is conducting a research study. The purpose of the research is to learn the experience of UNM's oldest students in the primarily youth-oriented campus culture, so that the university can make any necessary adaptations for the influx of "Boomers" expected to arrive over the next decade. You are being asked to participate in this study if you meet the following three criteria:

- You were born before 1946
- You are enrolled at UNM
- You volunteer for an interview or a focus group

Your participation will involve an individual interview or in a focus group, in which you and the researcher will discuss prepared topics about how students in this age group experience the campus environment. The interview or focus group should take about one hour to complete, and includes questions such as how you would describe your experience as a pre-boomer student at UNM; how you think the university supports your pursuit of learning; how your own life experience contributes to the campus culture; your opinion about having a student organization or community of practice especially for pre-boomer students; and why you decided to return to school at this point. Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate. You can refuse to answer any of the questions at any time. There are no names or identifying information associated with your responses. All participants will be identified only by a random number assigned to each person. There are no known risks in this study, but some individuals may experience discomfort or loss of privacy when answering questions. Data will be maintained in a locked file within the OILS office at Zimmerman Library, and will be destroyed a year after the study is complete.

The findings from this project will provide information on how the university's oldest students experience the campus environment. If published, results will be presented in summary form only. Quotes may be used but not with names.

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to call Dr. Boverie at 505 277-2408 or Sue Coates at 505-266-2115. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, or about what you should do in case of any harm to you, or if you want to obtain information or offer input you may call the UNM Office of the IRB (OIRB) at (505) 277-2644 or irb.unm.edu.

By filling out the information below and returning this consent form, you will be agreeing to participate in the above described research study.

Name of Adult Participant Signature of Adult Participant Date

Name of Research Team Member Signature of Research Team Member Date

Appendix C -- Record of Individual and Group Interviews #1116690-1

Interview number(s)*	
Date & Time	Recording? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Video <input type="checkbox"/> Both <input type="checkbox"/> None Transcribed by:
Location	
Interviewed by	Sue Coates, PhD Candidate, researcher, informant, participant

* Random numbers assigned upon receipt of consent for de-identifying each participant.

Questions and Topics	Participant response	Interviewer observations
Greeting, permission to record, continued consent, right to withdraw		
What words describe your experience on campus, how you feel you are perceived?		
Why and how did you decide to enroll as a university student at this point in life?		
What types of social activities offered on campus appeal to you, or what is missing?		
How do class materials appeal to you, or do they miss the mark for you?		
How do you think the university supports your pursuit of learning, what services have you found useful, what do you think is missing that you need?		
What descriptive terms would you use to characterize the campus culture?		
What have you observed or experienced that would be considered age discrimination?		
How do you define "old" or "elderly", in terms of a specific age, or words?		
How well does the university's policy of diversity and inclusion apply to Pre-Boomers?		
If you perceive aspects of campus culture that are uncomfortable what do you do?		
How does your own life experience contribute to the campus culture?		
What memories from your youth do you share with younger students today?		
What else would you like to say about Pre-Boomer Students on campus?		
How about an <u>on-going</u> "community of practice" or student advocacy group?		
What name would you like to have adopted for the pre-boomer students?		
As an individual interview participant, would you be interested in also participating in a follow-up focus group, to pursue your campus experience with others in this age group?		

Documents Received (title)	From Whom (Participant #)	For What Purpose

Appendix D₂ -- Enrollment Management Division Report

SPRING SEMESTER 2017

Birth Year	Full Time	Half Time	< Half Time	Time Total Headcount	Associates	Undergrad	Graduate	Non-degree Undergrad	Non-degree Grad	Degree Enrolled Total	Non-Degree Enrolled Total	Total Enrolled Headcount	Credit Course HC	Non-Credit Course HC	Both HC	Total Headcount
1928		1		1					1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
1929			1	1				1		0	1	1	1	0	0	1
1930			2	2					2	0	2	2	1	1	0	2
1932			3	3				1	2	0	3	3	1	1	1	3
1933		3		3		1	1		1	2	1	3	3	0	0	3
1934			4	4				2	2	0	4	4	4	0	0	4
1935		1	3	4				1	3	0	4	4	0	2	2	4
1936		1	2	3			1	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	0	3
1937			2	2					2	0	2	2	0	1	1	2
1938		1	4	5				2	3	0	5	5	2	3	0	5
1939	1	1	2	4		1	1		2	2	2	4	2	2	0	4
1940		1	12	13		1		3	9	1	12	13	7	5	1	13
1941		5	4	9	1	1		3	4	2	7	9	4	5	0	9
1942		1	20	21				4	17	0	21	21	11	10	0	21
1943		5	17	22		2	2	7	11	4	18	22	13	8	1	22
1944	1	2	26	29	1	1	3	3	21	5	24	29	18	9	2	29
1945	1	5	16	22	1	2	3	5	11	6	16	22	10	11	1	22
Total	3	27	118	148	3	9	11	33	92	23	125	148	79	60	9	148

SUMMER SEMESTER 2017

1932		1		1				1		0	1	1	0	1	0	1
1934			1	1				1		0	1	1	0	1	0	1
1935			1	1				1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
1936			1	1				1		0	1	1	0	1	0	1
1938			1	1				1		0	1	1	1	0	0	1
1939	1	1	1	3		1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	0	3
1940		1	2	3				2	1	0	3	3	0	2	1	3
1941		2	1	3		1			2	1	2	3	3	0	0	3
1942		1	1	2				2		0	2	2	1	1	0	2
1943		1	1	2				2		0	2	2	0	2	0	2
1944	1	4	5	10		1	1	3	6	1	9	10	8	2	0	10
1945	1	2	1	4	1				3	1	3	4	3	1	0	4
Total	3	13	16	32	1	1	2	14	14	4	28	32	17	14	1	32

FALL SEMESTER 2017

1926			1	1					1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
1928		1		1					1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
1929			1	1					1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
1930			1	1					1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
1932		1	3	4				1	3	0	4	4	1	3	0	4
1933			1	1			1			1	0	1	1	0	0	1
1934			3	3				2	1	0	3	3	1	1	1	3
1935		1	3	4				1	3	0	4	4	0	4	0	4
1936		2		2			1		1	1	1	2	1	1	0	2
1937			2	2				1	1	0	2	2	1	1	0	2
1938		1	7	8				4	4	0	8	8	2	6	0	8
1939	1	1	4	6		1	1		4	2	4	6	2	3	1	6
1940		1	10	11	1	2		3	5	3	8	11	7	4	0	11
1941		4	6	10	1	1		3	5	2	8	10	5	4	1	10
1942		2	14	16				6	10	0	16	16	8	8	0	16
1943	1	4	16	21		1	1	7	12	2	19	21	15	5	1	21
1944	2	7	17	26	1	1	3	3	18	5	21	26	19	6	1	26
1945	1	2	13	16		1	3	3	9	4	12	16	7	8	1	16
Total	5	27	102	134	3	7	10	34	80	20	114	134	71	57	6	134

Note: Some students are counted in more than one semester. Actual total individuals born before 1946 enrolled during the year is 212. Twelve students had no email address on file, 200 were invited to participate, 18 responded, 14 were interviewed.

Appendix D₃ -- Enrollment Statistics Posted on UNM Website

Average Age by Level and Load

		Fall Semesters						
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	1 Year Change	5 Year Change
Concurrent	Part Time	16.70	16.74	16.68	16.66	16.44	-1.28%	-1.56%
	Full Time	16.50	17.17	17.00				
		16.70	16.75	16.70	16.66	16.44	-1.28%	-1.53%
Undergraduate	Part Time	28.88	29.54	29.81	29.61	29.49	-0.40%	2.11%
	Full Time	21.98	21.88	21.70	21.57	21.44	-0.62%	-2.49%
		23.47	23.49	23.35	23.17	23.14	-0.12%	-1.40%
Non-Degree Undergraduate	Part Time	36.77	36.18	32.75	34.66	34.42	-0.69%	-6.39%
	Full Time	21.56	21.41	21.74	21.12	21.01	-0.50%	-2.52%
		27.43	25.95	25.37	25.92	25.37	-2.14%	-7.52%
Anderson Graduate	Part Time	33.00	32.81	33.73	34.12	35.06	2.75%	6.26%
	Full Time	28.87	29.00	28.88	27.77	26.65	-4.04%	-7.70%
		30.73	31.01	31.34	31.35	31.37	0.06%	2.08%
Graduate Programs	Part Time	35.69	35.72	35.91	35.66	35.61	-0.13%	-0.24%
	Full Time	31.00	30.65	30.52	30.76	30.75	-0.01%	-0.80%
		33.47	33.25	33.23	33.29	33.30	0.01%	-0.53%
Law School	Part Time	31.75	31.00	37.38	31.25	36.53	16.89%	15.05%
	Full Time	29.25	29.37	29.79	29.56	28.87	-2.31%	-1.28%
		29.28	29.39	29.97	29.58	29.23	-1.17%	-0.17%
Medical School	Part Time							
	Full Time	26.88	27.04	26.71	26.61	26.65	0.13%	-0.86%
		26.88	27.04	26.71	26.61	26.65	0.13%	-0.86%
Non-Degree Graduate	Part Time	40.83	39.96	41.98	42.10	41.32	-1.85%	1.18%
	Full Time	29.49	29.21	33.21	28.72	28.53	-0.69%	-3.28%
		39.47	38.73	41.00	40.65	40.17	-1.17%	1.77%
Doctor of Pharmacy (PHARM D)	Part Time	31.40	35.33	35.00	28.50	34.25	20.18%	9.08%
	Full Time	26.65	26.66	26.29	26.13	26.03	-0.37%	-2.32%
		26.72	26.73	26.45	26.16	26.14	-0.07%	-2.17%
Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)	Part Time	44.75	48.31	49.87	49.50	50.09	1.19%	11.93%
	Full Time				30.00			
		44.75	48.31	49.87	48.72	50.09	2.81%	11.93%
Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)	Part Time			42.33				
	Full Time	28.17	28.06	27.96	28.11	28.34	0.83%	0.61%
		28.17	28.06	28.42	28.11	28.34	0.83%	0.61%
Grand Total	Part Time	31.88	32.25	32.49	32.37	32.15	-0.67%	0.85%
	Full Time	23.39	23.27	23.13	22.99	22.87	-0.49%	-2.19%
		25.88	25.84	25.75	25.63	25.62	-0.05%	-0.99%

Headcount by Level

		Fall Semesters					1 Year Change	5 Year Change
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017		
Concurrent		288	237	302	319	369	15.67%	28.13%
Undergraduate		20,844	20,251	19,886	19,648	18,913	-3.74%	-9.26%
Non-Degree Undergraduate		316	371	334	248	234	-5.65%	-25.95%
Anderson Graduate		642	567	553	634	651	2.68%	1.40%
Graduate Programs		4,357	4,253	4,184	4,154	4,017	-3.30%	-7.80%
Law School		345	349	347	335	367	9.55%	6.38%
Medical School		399	438	422	420	421	0.24%	5.51%
Non-Degree Graduate		1,019	977	893	869	895	2.99%	-12.17%
Doctor of Pharmacy (PHARM D)		338	341	325	324	303	-6.48%	-10.36%
Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)		8	16	15	25	23	-8.00%	187.5%
Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT)		88	89	92	84	85	1.19%	-3.41%
Grand Total		28,644	27,889	27,353	27,060	26,278	-2.89%	-8.26%

Appendix E -- IRB Ruling

IRBNet Board Action - Sue Coates

IRBNet Board Action

Heather Savage <no-reply@irbnet.org>

Wed 9/6/2017 2:02 PM

To: Sue Coates <escoates@unm.edu>; Patricia Boverie <pboverie@unm.edu>;

Please note that University of New Mexico (UNM) IRB Main Campus has taken the following action on IRBNet:

Project Title: [1116690-1] Pre-Boomer Students On Campus
Principal Investigator: Patricia Boverie, PhD

Submission Type: New Project
Date Submitted: August 18, 2017

Action: EXEMPT
Effective Date: September 6, 2017
Review Type: Exempt Review

Should you have any questions you may contact Heather Savage at hsavage@unm.edu.

Thank you,
The IRBNet Support Team

www.irbnet.org