• Literature on sense of belonging largely centers first-year and historically disadvantaged students

• Focus is on factors contributing to establishing sense of belonging, but little is known/published about maintaining sense of belonging for students beyond the first year

• Sense of belonging for seniors critical as junior to senior year is time wherein students have the most to lose from attrition due to time and money invested and inability to recoup earnings foregone up until this point
**Student Engagement**

- Student engagement, defined as student involvement in educationally purposeful activities (Kuh, 2001)
- Student engagement through faculty interactions increased sense of belonging (e.g., Booker, 2007, Freeman et al., 2007; Kim & Sax, 2009; Fechheimer et al., 2011; Haave & Audet, 2013)

**High-Impact Practices**

- Educationally purposeful activities:
  - help increase learning, development and persistence (Kuh, 2008)
  - work to shape perceptions of campus climate including sense of belonging and institutional interactions (Hurtado et al., 1998)
- Student-faculty research programs are HIPs that:
  - develop “job values and life goals” (Jones et al., 2010, p. 87)
  - socialize students into the discipline’s community of practice (Hunter et al., 2007)
**Sense of Belonging**

- Multifaceted construct: psychological and subjective variable (e.g. Hoffman et al., 2002, Hausmann et al., 2009)

- Students perceptions of:
  - their value to the campus community
  - connection with the university (Nunez, 2009)
  - quality of social ties (Nunez, 2009)

**Purpose of current study:** explore whether faculty-related engagement influences seniors’ sense of belonging
National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

In 2014, appended experimental item set: 8,939 seniors at 44 institutions (variety of size, type, etc.)

Experimental set yielded 2 sense of belonging subscales: Peer Belonging and Institutional Acceptance

Engagement Indicators and High-Impact Practices from core survey: Student-Faculty Interaction, Effective Teaching Practices, Research with Faculty

Other demographic and institutional characteristics
OLS MODEL

Student demographics
- First-generation
- Age
- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity

College experiences
- Enrollment status
- Took all courses online
- Major- STEM
- College grades
- Greek affiliation
- Lives on campus

Institutional context
- Control
- Minority-serving
- Selectivity
- Carnegie classification

*Engagement
- Student-Faculty Interaction
- Effective Teaching Practices
- Research with Faculty Participation

DV: Institutional Acceptance
## RESULTS

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<td>Research with Faculty Participation</td>
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Adjusted $R^2 = .378^{***}$
• Sense of belonging for Black students and nontraditionally aged students
• Institutional interactions versus peer relations and interactions
• Impact of residential living and Greek life on sense of belonging
• Role of institutional type
• Benefits of classroom engagement and faculty interactions
Classroom and faculty engagement is essential for senior students

- Faculty course load
- Professional development opportunities
- Incentives and rewards
- Service credit for mentorship
- Course credit for research participation
OVERALL

• Focus on the campus climate

• Focus on historically underrepresented populations

• Influence of high impact practices
POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS

• Institutional representation in NSSE

• Correlational, not causal design

• Self-reported data
Questions & Comments?

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*References and full paper available upon request