



PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COMMISSION ON
**Educational Excellence FOR
Hispanics**

2012 Report on Activities

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* The commissioned essays are provided for informational purposes only. The information, opinions, or recommendations expressed in the commissioned essays are the work solely of the authors, and are not adopted or endorsed by the Government, the U.S. Department of Education, or the President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

Executive Summary

President Obama has made clear that the most important contest this country faces today is with competitors around the world for the jobs and industries of our time. At more than 54 million strong, including nearly 4 million in Puerto Rico, Hispanics¹ constitute the country's largest and fastest-growing minority group. In the coming decades, Latinos will continue to drive the growth of the labor force. Our country was built on, and continues to thrive on, its diversity, and there is no doubt that the future of the United States is inextricably linked to the future of the Hispanic community. Therefore, Latino success in education and in the labor market is of both immediate and long-term importance to America's economy.

The President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics was renewed by President Obama through the signing of Executive Order 13555. The Commission advises the President and the Secretary on matters pertaining to the educational attainment of the Hispanic community. In 2012, the Commission established three subcommittees: 1) Early Learning; 2) K-12 Education; and 3) Postsecondary Education. This report summarizes the 2012 activities and proposed next steps of the three Commission subcommittees.

Early Learning

The status of Hispanic education in the U.S. continues to be characterized by persistent gaps in achievement and attainment, and extensive evidence shows that achievement patterns are set in the years before the commencement of school. Investing in improving and expanding access to and participation in high-quality early childhood education programs, coupled with building an infrastructure to

support families, friends, and neighbors—all parties involved in caring for and developing young children—will yield tremendous social and economic returns for young Latino children and our country.

The subcommittee developed a plan focused on a national call to action on Hispanic early care and education, to highlight the urgent need to accelerate and fund the growth of early learning programs. This includes an educational campaign to raise awareness and increase investments and support for innovations that provide high-quality early learning for Hispanic children by improving and expanding home-based care activities, family, friend and neighbor care, and overall family engagement in early learning.

K-12 Education

Today, nearly one in four K-12 students enrolled in America's public schools is Latino. While the nation continues its steady path toward economic recovery, there are still a significant percentage of Latino families living in or just above poverty. This environment can create additional academic and socioeconomic challenges or barriers to educational achievement for Latino students.

The subcommittee outlined the importance of the teaching force in helping Latino students overcome some of the many barriers they face to successfully complete high school and move forward to higher education. It also recognized the critical shortage of bilingual and Latino teachers who can effectively serve Latino and English Language Learner students. The subcommittee therefore held an event that highlighted extraordinary teachers who are making a difference in the lives of Latino students and serve as role models.

¹ The terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably in this report, while recognizing their distinctive demographic and cultural meanings.

Postsecondary Education

In today's global economy, a high-quality education is no longer a pathway to opportunity—it is a prerequisite to success. Economic progress and education achievement are linked; therefore, ensuring that every student in our nation graduates from high school prepared for college and a career and, ultimately, graduates from a postsecondary institution are national imperatives.

The subcommittee held a symposium to assess what works and does not work, based on both research and practice, in promoting Latino postsecondary completion. At the symposium, participants discussed: 1) financing postsecondary education, 2) expanding academic competence, and 3) empowering Latino communities for postsecondary success, to develop a set of recommendations that have the highest probability of increasing Latino postsecondary completion.

Conclusion

The three subcommittees' activities and efforts, covering the range of education from early childhood development to postsecondary education, will help move America closer to closing the achievement gap for Hispanic children, so they can pursue their dreams and opportunities. This in turn will help realize the President's 2020 goal to once again lead the world in the proportion of college graduates, and by extension, grow our middle class, and strengthen our nation.



Early Learning Subcommittee Report

President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

CHAIR:

Sylvia Acevedo

VICE-CHAIR:

Modesto Abety

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Cesar Conde

Nancy Navarro

Adrian Pedroza

Manuel Sanchez

Shakira

Background

Investing in early childhood education has a return of up to \$7 for every dollar invested, and decades of research demonstrates that this type of investment in our children provides the foundation for building a strong workforce for future generations. And yet, according to the National Institute for Early Education Research's 2011 State Preschool Yearbook, roughly 30% of the nation's 3- and 4-year-olds are served by publicly funded early childhood education, and Hispanic children have the lowest rates of enrollment among the major ethnic groups. Continuing to invest in high-quality programs is an important priority for the nation.

The status of Latino education in the U.S. continues to be characterized by persistent gaps in achievement and attainment, and extensive evidence shows that achievement patterns are set in the years before the commencement of school. The National Task Force for the Early Education of Hispanics found in 2007 that on measures of reading readiness, math concepts, and general cognitive skills, Hispanic youngsters are already behind their white peers when they start kindergarten. According to a National Assessment of Education Progress 2011 study, more than four of every five Hispanic children (81%) were not reading proficiently by fourth grade.

Many young Hispanic children live within neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and disinvestment. These environments create tremendous challenges for their parents and relatives to be able to provide experiences that help children develop and learn. Current Obama administration policies and investments continue to increase the supply of high-quality early learning and development programs on a systemic scale. There is an equally important need for complementary investments in efforts that support individual families in serving as their child's first teacher and provide insights on doing so most effectively.

Meeting this challenge will require innovative investments and initiatives focused on building a social and educational infrastructure that supports families in their communities. It is a challenge that, as a nation, we cannot afford to ignore, and we must embark on with a great sense of urgency.

In the end, investing in improving and expanding access to and participation in high-quality early childhood education programs, coupled with building an infrastructure to support families, friends, and neighbors—all parties involved in caring for and

developing young children—will yield tremendous social and economic returns for young Latino children and our country.

Hispanic Early Care and Education— A Call to Action

The Early Learning subcommittee of the President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, chaired by Sylvia Acevedo, developed a national call to action on Hispanic early care and education, to highlight the urgent need to accelerate and fund the growth of early learning programs. The subcommittee outlined an educational campaign to raise awareness and increase investments in high-quality early learning programs serving Hispanic children, a key component of which will be a summit on Hispanic early care and education.

The subcommittee and White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics staff worked closely with White House Domestic Policy Council to develop a conceptual frame for the call to action – especially identifying less formal care settings where the private and philanthropic sectors can complement the Obama Administration’s federal investments in early childhood education. The call to action encourages investments and support for innovations that provide high-quality early learning for Hispanic children by improving and expanding home-based care activities, family, friend and neighbor care, and overall family engagement in early learning.

On July 18, 2012, the Early Learning Subcommittee held a roundtable at the U.S. Department of Education to discuss the call to action. Key stakeholders from philanthropy, the corporate sector, research, media, and practitioners engaged

in a discussion with senior administration officials on the importance of additional investment in early learning and explored opportunities to join the call to action. The ideas for collaboration and the overall plan were well received. A number of stakeholders expressed interest in collaborating with the commission and joining the call to action.

One example of a partner’s subsequent activity is the work of Univision. As a media partner in the effort, Univision aired an hour-long special on early learning on its television network in September, named *Primeros pasos hacia el éxito*. It was incorporated as part of their “Es El Momento” education campaign. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and Director of the Domestic Policy Council Cecilia Muñoz were interviewed to discuss early learning among Hispanic children, along with a video message from Grammy Award winning artist and Commission member Shakira. The video is available at <http://vidayfamilia.univision.com/es-el-momento/videos/especiales-eselmomento/>

Next Steps

In 2013, the subcommittee will continue to work with other partners to announce new investments and commitments that align with and advance the call to action, garnering media attention and visibility for the overall effort. The planned summit will gather partners, practitioners, and other stakeholders to review all of the activities undertaken through the call to action, highlight best practices and new learning, and draw attention to the issue with a broader audience, to further the awareness and education objectives.



Hispanic Early Care and Education: The Key to America's Global Economic Competitive Future

(concept paper that frames the call to action)

Introduction

Hispanic children are a large and rapidly growing population. In 2011, Hispanics accounted for one of every four children ages 0-17 (23.4 percent) in the U.S.² The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2050, Hispanics will account for 39 percent of all children.³ Thus, Hispanic children entering adulthood during the coming decades will be a rapidly rising proportion of all persons who are joining the labor force, starting their own families, purchasing homes, and contributing in all other aspects of society. Their success, or lack of success, will have enormous consequences for the social and economic vitality of the nation.

Challenges in Educational Achievement

The status of Latino education in the U.S. continues to be characterized by persistent gaps in achievement and attainment, and extensive evidence shows that achievement patterns are set in the years before school. The National Task Force for the Early Education of Hispanics (2007) found that on measures of reading readiness, math concepts, and general cognitive skills, Hispanic youngsters are already behind their White peers when they start kindergarten. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (2011), by fourth grade, more than four of every five Hispanic children (81%) were not reading

proficiently.⁴ New research links this achievement gap to high school graduation. For example, among Hispanic children who are not reading proficiently by third grade, 25% do not graduate from high school by age 19, and this jumps to 33% for Hispanic children who also have experienced at least one year of poverty.⁵

The Case for a Family Support Strategy

Among the chief concerns for addressing the school readiness of Latino children is the need to support families as their child's first teacher. While many children tend to be in the care of parents or relatives in the years before school, this is particularly true for Latinos. Among all Hispanic children under the age of five, 60% are cared for by parents or relatives, compared to 45% of white children.⁶ In fact, even when Latino parents enter the workforce, they tend to rely more on relative care than formal, center-based care options. While Hispanic children live in families with many important strengths, the characteristics of these parents and relative caregivers point to an urgent need to ensure they receive support regarding how to promote the health, social and academic development of the children in their care. Over one-third of young Latino children have parents who have not graduated from high school, and six in ten live in low-income families with incomes below 200% of

2 Calculated by Donald J. Hernandez (Hunter College and the Graduate Center, CUNY) and Jeffrey S. Napierala (University at Albany, SUNY) from the March 2011 Current Population Survey using the *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 3.0*. [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010. Miriam King, Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Sarah Flood, Katie Genadek, Matthew B. Schroeder, Brandon Trampe, and Rebecca Vick).

3 U.S. Census Bureau (2008). U.S. Population Projections. National Population Projections Released 2008 (Based on Census 2000). Retrieved May 22, 2012 from <http://www.census.gov/population/projections/>

4 National Center for Education Statistics (2011). *The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2011* (NCES 2012-457). Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC.

5 Donald J. Hernandez (2012). *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

6 U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), 2008 Panel, Wave 5

the federal poverty threshold.⁷ Research shows that children whose parents are low-income and have completed fewer years of school tend, on average, to arrive at kindergarten less ready, complete fewer years of school themselves, and to obtain lower paying jobs when they reach adulthood.⁸

Innovative Approaches to Supporting Family Caregivers

A variety of approaches for helping parents and families support their children’s healthy development and learning have emerged over the several years; however, there is a need to evaluate these approaches and determine which are most effective to scale with Latino families. For example, there are efforts in communities to implement activities that provide child development training directly to parents and relatives, or expand home visiting services that promote positive parent and child interactions. Other efforts have used place-based approaches that identify relative caregivers and engage them as groups of caregivers, enabling them to interact with each other, and receive training either as a bridge to more formal professional development in early childhood or as a means to build their capacity to promote the school readiness of the children in their care. Finally, the use of different media approaches to reach parents and relative caregivers directly, such as use of public broadcasting or expanding connectivity for families to participate in online social and learning networks show promise for reaching and supporting large numbers of caregivers. These community-driven efforts have emerged

out of the recognition that in order to promote school readiness for all young Latino children, it is essential to pay attention to the many families who do not have their children in formal settings, particularly during the most formative development period in a child’s life – the infant and toddler years. Yet, without targeted investments to evaluate and build an infrastructure to scale the most promising approaches, these interventions will not achieve the reach that is required for improving outcomes for young Latino children.

Conclusion

Many young Latino children live within neighborhoods of concentrated poverty and disinvestment. These environments create tremendous challenges for their parents and relatives to provide experiences that help children develop and learn. As public policy and investments aim to increase the supply of high-quality early learning and development programs, there is a need for complementary strategies that invest in expanding the knowledge base on how to effectively reach, and build the capacity of, families to serve as their child’s first teacher. Meeting this challenge will require new innovations and investments in building an infrastructure for family support in communities. It is a challenge that, as a nation, we cannot afford to ignore, and we must embark on with a great sense of urgency. Taken together, an infrastructure for family support at the local level, and systems that support access to high-quality early learning experiences—along the education continuum—will yield tremendous social and economic returns for young Latino children and our country.

We invite you to join us in exploring how best to support innovative strategies that strengthen family caregivers and informal providers, advancing the state of Hispanic early care and education.

For more information, contact:

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7 Calculated by Donald J. Hernandez (Hunter College and the Graduate Center, CUNY) and Jeffrey S. Napierala (University at Albany, SUNY) from the March 2012 Current Population Survey using the *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 3.0*. [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010. Miriam King, Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Sarah Flood, Katie Genadek, Matthew B. Schroeder, Brandon Trampe, and Rebecca Vick). Early studies include Peter M. Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan (1967). *The American Occupational Structure*. New York, Wiley; David L. Featherman and Robert M. Hauser (1978). *Opportunity and Change*. New York: Academic Press; and William H. Sewell, Robert M. Hauser, and Wendy C. Wolf (1980). Sex, Schooling, and Occupational Status. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(3), 551-83.

8 Early studies include Peter M. Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan (1967). *The American Occupational Structure*. New York, Wiley; David L. Featherman and Robert M. Hauser (1978). *Opportunity and Change*. New York: Academic Press; and William H. Sewell, Robert M. Hauser, and Wendy C. Wolf (1980). Sex, Schooling, and Occupational Status. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(3), 551-83.



Hispanic Early Care and Education Roundtable Attendees list

Wednesday, July 18, 2012

Confirmed Attendees

Modesto Abety Gutierrez
Commissioner
President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

Sylvia Acevedo
Commissioner
President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

Karen Avery
Senior Director, Institutional Giving
PBS Foundation

Jeanette Betancourt
Senior Vice President of Outreach and Educational Practices
Sesame Workshop

David Biemesderfer
President and CEO
Florida Philanthropic Network

Charles Bruner
Director of Research and Evaluation
BUILD Initiative

Ivelisse Estrada
Senior Vice President, Corporate & Community Relations
Univision Communications, Inc.

Veronica Figoli
Director, Outreach & Engagement
Piton Foundation

Miguel Gomez
Policy Director
St. Joseph's Community Health Initiative

Eliza Greenberg
Partner
New Profit, Inc.

Patrick Gusman
Executive Director
ConvergeUS

Don Hernandez
Professor, Department of Sociology
Hunter College and The Graduate Center, CUNY

Lisa Klein
Executive Director
Birth to Five Policy Alliance

Meera Mani
Director CFC
Packard Foundation

Stephanie McGencey
Executive Director
Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families

Patti Miller
Vice President, Public Policy
Sesame Workshop

Nancy Navarro
Commissioner
President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

Richard Noriega
President and CEO
AVANCE

Nina Sazer O'Donnell
Vice President, Education
United Way Worldwide

Mary O'Neill
Director of Programs
Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers

Adrian Pedroza
Commissioner
President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

Jose Luis Rodriguez
President and CEO
Hispanic Information and Telecommunications Network (HITN)

Lesli Rotenberg
Senior Vice President for Children's Media
PBS

JoAnn Rullan
Education Campaign Manager
Univision Communications, Inc.

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Senior Policy Advisor, Early Learning Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Marco A. Davis
Deputy Director
White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

Richard Gonzales
Senior Advisor for Early Childhood Development and Education Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Steven Hicks
Special Assistant on Early Learning
U.S. Department of Education

Ann Segal
Director, Disadvantaged Children and Families
Wellspring Advisors

Marsha Semmel
Director, Office of Strategic Partnerships
Institute of Museum and Library Services

Stacey Stewart
Executive Vice President, Community Impact
United Way Worldwide

Sarah Walzer
CEO
The Parent-Child Home Program

William Jawando
Deputy Director of Strategic Partnerships
U.S. Department of Education

Jacqueline Jones
Deputy Assistant Secretary on Policy and Early Learning
U.S. Department of Education

José Rico
Executive Director
White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

Roberto J. Rodriguez
Special Assistant to the President for Education
White House

Gabriel Sandoval
Senior Advisor
White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic

Hispanic Early Care and Education Roundtable

July 18, 2012

On July 18, 2012, approximately 25 key stakeholders gathered with senior officials from the U.S. Department of Education (ED), the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the White House to discuss the need for increased attention to, and investment in Hispanic early care and education.

The meeting began with an extended presentation from Prof. Don Hernandez, providing an overview of both the state of early care and education for Hispanic children, and the value of strategic investments in high quality services and programs that serve children at an early age.

Jacqueline Jones, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Early Learning at ED, and Richard Gonzales, Senior Advisor for Early Childhood Development and Education at HHS then reviewed at a high level the Obama Administration's commitment to, and investments in early learning.

Three practitioners—the Parent-Child Home Program, HITN, and AVANCE each provided a brief overview of their work, and how it is addressing this issue.

Several of us shared the commission's thinking about best ways to make an impact in this area, opportunities we identified for the private and philanthropic sector to complement the Federal investments, and ideas about how to bring more attention to this issue through an ongoing call to action, bolstered by awareness-raising through media. Univision demonstrated their pro-social education campaign, "Es El Momento" as an initiative aligned with this effort.

Finally, the stakeholders in attendance were asked for thoughts and reactions. Key discussion points included:

- There is a need for innovation in this area—new ideas and approaches to address the challenges and close gaps
- Programs and services must incorporate and address different forms of parenting, as well as features specific to the Latino population.
- We must bridge the technology gap between Hispanic and non-Hispanic families
- Look for ways to link family care to formal early childhood education systems
- More place-based and capacity-building approaches for local communities are needed
- There are many resources already out there, that are not being taken full advantage of—disparate efforts, not distributed at scale, etc.
- This effort can galvanize, leverage, and consolidate different efforts and activities

The meeting concluded with the Initiative sharing plans to launch an ongoing call to action around Hispanic Early Care and Education, and to hold a larger gathering of stakeholders, a "summit" to highlight this issue and the work being done around it.



K-12 Education Subcommittee Report

President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

CO-CHAIRS:

Dan Cardinali
Patricia Gándara

K-12 COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Alfredo Artilles
Lily Eskelsen
Marta Tienda
Darline Robles
Kent Scribner
Monica Martinez
Veronica Melvin

Background

Today, nearly one in four K-12 students enrolled in America's public schools is Latino. While the nation continues its steady path toward economic recovery, there are still a significant percentage of Latino families living in or just above poverty. This environment can create additional academic and socioeconomic challenges or barriers to educational achievement for Latino students.

K-12 students who face socioeconomic barriers (e.g., food insecurity, poor or unstable housing, untreated mental health issues, parental unemployment or low wage employment) may bring to school a set of challenges that school administrators and teachers may not be able to fully address and/or manage. Children of families living in poverty have a disproportionate number of these barriers that they bring to school compared to students who do not live in poverty. Many communities across the United States have clusters of schools with a high percentage of students with one or more socioeconomic barriers. The emerging research indicates that students who attend school with one or more of these barriers are at substantially higher risk of poor academic achievement, grade retention, and dropping out of school without a high school diploma. Given the growing demand for a workforce in the United States that possesses a postsecondary education, students without a high school diploma are substantially more likely to be unemployed or underemployed adults with a resulting impact on their standard of living and the economic health of the communities in which they live.

Another important issue in K-12 education is teaching. America's schools need many more highly qualified Latino teachers. While Latinos make up almost 1 in 4 students, according to the most recent data available from the National Center for Education Statistics, only 7% of all public school teachers are Hispanic. Latino teachers not only have particular assets that can engage Latino students, but as part of the overall Hispanic population, they are also a significant backbone of the middle class. Our nation also needs teachers of every background who are committed to excellence for Latino students. We need to find ways to stimulate the interest of more young people in teaching, engage the media and higher education institutions in innovative ways, and develop policies to support this goal.

The K-12 subcommittee of the President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, co-chaired by Patricia Gándara and Daniel Cardinali, adopted two areas in which to focus its efforts: (1) the social context of K-12 Latino education and (2) teachers and the teaching force for Latinos. In 2012, the subcommittee’s activities addressed the second area.

Importance of the Teaching Force: Champions of Change

The subcommittee outlined the importance of the teaching force in helping Latino students overcome some of the many barriers they face to successfully complete high school and move forward to higher education. It also recognized the critical shortage of bilingual and Latino teachers who can effectively serve Latino and English Language Learner students. Activities were therefore planned to (1) highlight extraordinary Latino and other teachers who are making a difference in the lives of Latino students as potential role models; (2) inspire young Latinos to want to become teachers; and (3) discuss, examine, and recommend a set of policy proposals that could facilitate the entry into the teaching field of more Latino youth.

The first effort—the recognition of extraordinary teachers—was organized through the White House Champions of Change program. Ten outstanding educators were selected and recognized at the White House on August 30, 2012. During the event, the recognized educators provided their insights about issues related to successful teaching of Latino students. They discussed how they came to be teachers, what they considered critical for good teaching, and what

they might recommend to the President to increase the numbers and effectiveness of bilingual and other effective teachers of Latino students, among other comments. The Hispanic educator Champions of Change can be reviewed at www.whitehouse.gov/champions/education-champions. A copy of the recognition program agenda is attached.

Next Steps

In 2013, the subcommittee will continue, revise, and broaden the reach of the teacher recognition activities. The subcommittee will also advance the second and third components of the effort—specifically, inspiring young people, especially those from the Latino community, to become teachers and develop policy recommendations for facilitating entry into the teaching profession for Hispanic youth.

In 2013, the subcommittee will also seek to commission a report that includes a comprehensive analysis of the impact of social barriers on K-12 Latino students in the future and provides an in-depth and rigorous analysis of the academic literature regarding both socioeconomic barriers and the evidence-based strategies to mitigate them. The report will develop a new body of analysis regarding the unique barriers for K-12 Latino students and explore evidence-based and/or promising strategies to mitigate these unique barriers. Taken collectively, this work will serve to advance the commission’s mandate of expanding educational opportunities and improving educational outcomes for Latinos of all ages in the K-12 arena.



Champions of Change Media Release

(includes bios of each champion)

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of Communications

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 31, 2012

White House and President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics Honor Educators as “Champions of Change”

WASHINGTON, DC—TODAY, Friday, August 31, the White House and the President’s Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics will honor educators who have devoted their time and efforts to inspiring their students to excel and promoting the teaching profession by setting a strong example in the classroom. Ten educators who have focused on improving student outcomes and closing the academic achievement gap for their students—most of whom are Hispanic and English Language Learners—are traveling from around the country to Washington to be recognized at a special White House event.

“America’s future is inseparable from the Hispanic community’s future—and by strengthening the academic success of Latino students, we strengthen our nation’s long-term economic prosperity,” said U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan. “These leaders have shown an absolute dedication to helping their students succeed and are examples of the profound impact that educators can have not only in their classrooms, but in their communities.”

Hispanics will continue to drive the growth of America’s labor force in the coming decades, accounting for 60 percent of the Nation’s population growth between 2005 and 2050, and already approximately 1 of every 4 students in K-12 public education is Hispanic. If America is going to have the strongest, most competitive work force and lead the 21st century economy, and if we’re going to meet the President’s goal of having the highest percentage of high school graduates in the world by 2020, then we have to improve the educational outcomes of Hispanics. At the event, the educators will have an opportunity to share best practices, models, and teaching strategies for effectively engaging and educating students, in particular, Hispanic students.

Hispanics are both the largest and fastest-growing minority group in public education, but have the lowest education attainment levels of any group in the country. To meet this challenge, the Administration is working in partnership with communities across the country. The President’s Advisory Commission is

critical to that effort, and is working to help strengthen the PK-12 pipeline to ensure all Latino students graduate from high school prepared for college and their careers—as well as have the resources they need to access and complete some form of postsecondary education. A recent White House report on the Administration’s agenda and the Hispanic community includes a detailed section on education, and can be found by clicking [HERE](#).

The White House Champions of Change program was created as a part of President Obama’s Winning the Future initiative to honor ordinary Americans doing great work in their communities. Each week, a different sector is highlighted and groups of Champions, ranging from educators to entrepreneurs to community leaders, are recognized for the work they are doing to serve and strengthen their communities.

To watch this event live, visit www.whitehouse.gov/live at 1:30 p.m. ET TODAY, Friday, August 31.

Vanessa Lugo

Denver, CO

Vanessa Lugo is a Teach for America alumna who currently teaches Early Childhood Education at Cole Arts and Science Academy in Denver Public Schools. She was recently named team leader of the ECE, K, and First grade team and will begin facilitating professional development for teachers around culturally responsive practices. She has spent the last two summers working as a staff member for Teach for America at their summer institute in Phoenix, supporting new teachers as well as working to develop the role of the Diversity and Inclusiveness facilitator.

Selina Marie Alonzo

Phoenix, AZ

Selina Alonzo represents an outstanding commitment to children and families in her community. As an English teacher at Maryvale High School, Ms. Alonzo demonstrates a love of learning and a passion for her profession. She was named her district’s 2009 Teacher of the Year, and was also honored in 2010 with the Esperanza Award given by Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc. As a community member, Selina represents urban families by serving on the Board of Directors for The Neighborhood Center, through Neighborhood Ministries. As an expression of her faith, she is committed to working for justice by living, teaching, serving, and fellowshiping in the same Phoenix community in which she was raised.

Octavio Alvarez

Los Angeles, CA

Octavio Alvarez has been teaching at Brawley Union High School for eight years. His duties include teaching traditional and bilingual mathematics classes. He attended the Mexican public education system and graduated from the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California with a major in Civil Engineering. Since his hire at Brawley Union High School his focus has been to help and assist the bilingual community of Brawley and to prepare his students to succeed after high school. As a 2012 California Association for Bilingual Education recognized teacher in mathematics, he has single handedly turned around the BUHS English

Learner Mathematics Program and has significantly increased both California Standards Tests and California High School Exit Examination scores year after year for his students.

Jesus Arrizon

San Luis, AZ

Jesus Arrizon hails from a farm worker family of fourteen that emigrated from Mexico in 1976. Arrizon's father worked in the lettuce fields for more than 30 years. One of his father's main goals in life was to provide his family with the opportunity to attend college and fulfill the American dream. Arrizon received his associate's degree in medical technology from Arizona Western College. He went on to complete an engineering degree at the University of Arizona. After working for 13 years in the mining industry, Arrizon decided to change careers by going into the education field. Arrizon completed a master's degree in education from the University of Phoenix. Since that time, for the last 11 years, he has worked for the Gadsden Elementary School District 32 and Arizona Western College.

Raul Garcia

Boston, MA

Raul received his B.A. at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor where he studied Sociology and Latino/a Studies. Afterwards he studied at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education where he obtained his Ed.M. and Massachusetts license to teach high school social sciences. Through the support and mentorship of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund Grant, which he received at U. of M., he remains committed to teaching in the urban public schools of Boston. Raul has taught Writing and Humanities at the Boston Arts Academy since the fall of 2001.

Ben Hernandez

Houston, TX

Ben Hernandez has served the students of Houston for more than 14 years. His instructional experience includes elementary PE, Kindergarten, and 5th grade. During his time as a 5th grade teacher he increased student performance on the state math assessment (TAKS) from 77% passing to 94% passing his first year. His work in 5th grade math contributed to his school, Lantrip Elementary, receiving a National Blue Ribbon award for dramatic growth in math achievement. He was elected by his colleagues as an elementary representative on the District Advisory Committee. His student performance allowed him to participate as a Gates Recruitment Fellow. For the last two years he has worked with district leadership to develop a new teacher appraisal that includes student performance. And this Spring he was selected as part of the inaugural Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Teacher Advisory Committee. During the 2011-2012 school year Ben moved out of the classroom and into Professional Support and Development, where he works to support and develop teacher instruction.

Guadalupe Meza

Phoenix, AZ

Guadalupe Meza is a Spanish Educator at South Mountain High School in Phoenix, Arizona. Ms. Meza has dedicated her instructional career to motivate her students (Native and non-native speakers) to fight for their dreams and not let anybody, or obstacle, interfere with their goal of acquiring a higher education. In her seven years of teaching, she has been able to help impact the lives of many students, and help them find scholarships and motivate non-native Spanish speakers to keep learning Spanish. Ms. Meza's teaching philosophy impacts her students more, because of her unique non-traditional, yet knowledge-filled, approach to learning.

Armando Orduña

Houston, TX

Armando Orduña has dedicated the last fifteen years to the education of the students of Houston, Texas. A native Houstonian, he spent the first seven years of his career extending outreach programs through the education department of The Children's Museum of Houston. In the last eight years he has strived to close the achievement gap in inner city, Title I classrooms through Spanish language and science instruction. Currently he trains high school students for careers in Education through the city's only teacher-preparation magnet program.

Sylvia Padilla

Long Beach, CA

Sylvia Padilla has been a bilingual teacher for the past 20 years. She currently teaches fourth grade in the two-way bilingual immersion program at Patrick Henry K-8 School in the Long Beach Unified School District. She has been awarded Los Angeles County Teacher of the Year and California Association of Bilingual Education Teacher of the Year for collaborating at the school, district, and state level to improve instruction, implementation, and assessment of state standards in English and Spanish. Sra. Padilla earned her bachelor and Master of Arts degrees from California State University, Long Beach.

Silvia Rodriguez Macdonald

Damascus, MD

As a first generation Cuban-Spaniard-American, a teacher, and a leader, Macdonald has relied on her personal experiences to provide opportunities for the success and advocacy of the Hispanic children and English Language Learners of today. Her daily goal is to make a difference in the lives of the children she teaches and the community by affecting a positive change. Through her work, she strives to influence the teachers and leadership in her school system and community to be able to provide the best education and resources available for students, our future leaders.

###

Champions of Change Program Agenda



August 31st, 2012

**The White House and The President's Advisory Commission on
Educational Excellence for Hispanics Welcome
Educator Champions of Change**

Honorees

Vanessa Lugo
Ben Hernandez
Selina Marie Alonzo
Guadalupe Meza
Octavio Alvarez
Armando Orduña
Jesus Arrizon
Sylvia Padilla
Raul Garcia
Silvia Rodriguez MacDonald

Agenda

Opening Remarks

Roberto Rodriguez, Special Assistant to the President for Education Policy

Panel I – moderated by Commissioner Dan Cardinali

Panel II – moderated by Commissioner Patricia Gándara

Closing Remarks

Jon Carson, Director of the Office of Public Engagement

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IV. Postsecondary Education Subcommittee Report

President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

CO-CHAIRS:

Luis Fraga
Lisette Nieves

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Francisco Cigarroa
Millie Garcia
Manuel Gomez
Sara Lundquist
Monica Martinez
Darline Robles
Ricardo Romo
Marta Tienda

ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONERS CONSULTED:

Alfredo Artilles
Patricia Gándara

Background

In today's global economy, a high-quality education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity—it is a prerequisite to success. Over the next decade, nearly 8 in 10 new job openings in the U.S. will require some workforce training or postsecondary education. And of the 30 fastest-growing occupations in America, half require at least a four-year college degree. Economic progress and education achievement are linked; therefore, ensuring that every student in our nation graduates from high school prepared for college and a career and, ultimately, graduates from a postsecondary institution, are national imperatives.

President Obama has set a goal that our nation lead the world once again in proportion of college graduates by 2020. From 2005 to 2050, Latinos will account for 60% of the nation's population growth, and though Latino college enrollment rates have increased to historic numbers, their college completion rates have remained stagnant with only 13% of Latinos possessing a bachelor's degree. If we are to reach the President's goal together, we must develop and implement a comprehensive, strategic effort to increase Latino postsecondary completion.

The Postsecondary Education Subcommittee of the President's Advisory Committee on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, co-chaired by Luis Fraga and Lisette Nieves, developed a strategic plan of activities focused on Latino postsecondary completion to help realize the President's 2020 goal to once again lead the word in the proportion of college graduates.

Increasing Postsecondary Completion

The subcommittee held a symposium on August 16-17, 2012, at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, California, to bring together 40 scholars, policy experts, practitioners, and other stakeholders to assess what works and does not work, based on both research and practice, in promoting Latino postsecondary completion. The overall goal of the symposium was to develop a set of policy directives that have the highest probability of increasing Latino postsecondary completion over the next eight years. The directives are targeted at federal, state, local, and institutional levels.

Nationally recognized scholars were commissioned to write meta-knowledge essays focusing on three specific policy domains that were discussed during the symposium: 1) financing postsecondary education, 2) expanding academic competence, and

3) empowering Latino communities for postsecondary success. These factors are of critical importance and influence on Latino postsecondary success, which could dramatically improve the nation's chances of achieving President Obama's goals for postsecondary completion. The essays were then assessed by practitioners and policy experts to determine the extent to which research-based findings align with professional practices and experiences. All participants then considered and debated which policies were likely to have the greatest impact on increasing Latino postsecondary completion.

The subcommittee produced specific recommendations in each of the three policy domains. All policy recommendations are deemed urgent, but some are positioned to build on existing policies and practices and so can be fast-tracked, while others require more labor-intensive consultation or will advance as part of national work to reauthorize major federal policies including, but not limited to, the Higher Education Act. A number of recommendations build upon policies and programs already supported by the federal government. The recommendations, with a brief rationale for each, are attached. Also attached are the original essays.

Next Steps

The Subcommittee's recommendations will be submitted to the President and Secretary of Education, and have been circulated among various offices at the U.S. Department of Education for their review and consideration. In 2013, the Subcommittee plans to continue dissemination of the recommendations, holding briefings for policy makers and stakeholders to urge adoption and incorporation of the recommendations at federal, state, local, and institutional levels.

All participants agreed that additional symposia, where researchers, practitioners, and policy experts are convened to assess and develop specific policy recommendations to further promote Latino postsecondary completion, should occur. They noted how rare it is for these groups of stakeholders to have the chance to build on each other's expertise to produce specific policy directives.



Postsecondary Education Subcommittee Recommendations

Enriching America through the 21st Century: Increasing Latino Postsecondary Completion

President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics

The Postsecondary Education Subcommittee of President Obama's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics held a symposium August 16-17, 2012, at which an invited group of forty scholars, practitioners, policy analysts, and other stakeholders assessed what we know that works, and does not work, to increase Latino postsecondary completion. The goal of the symposium was to develop a set of specific policy recommendations for President Obama and Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education, to guide their efforts to meet the President's goal that by 2020 our nation would again lead the world in the proportion of college graduates among the adult population.

Nationally recognized scholars were commissioned to write meta-knowledge essays that focused on three specific policy domains: 1) financing postsecondary education, 2) expanding academic competence, and 3) empowering Latino families. We are well aware that with more time and resources we could have examined other factors affecting postsecondary completion, including K-12 preparation, school tracking, growing ethnic, racial, and class segregation in public schools, the misalignment of research, teaching, and service priorities in higher education, and the continuing challenges of pursuing policies of thoughtful affirmative action. We think, however, that the three domains that were the focus of our symposium are critical contributors to Latino postsecondary success and are domains where policy and practice have historical grounding, are scalable, and are moveable. Substantial progress can be made in each of these areas.

The essays submitted were: 1) "Priced Out: A Closer Look at College Affordability for Latinos," Laura Rendón,

University of Texas at San Antonio, Alicia Dowd, University of Southern California, and Amaury Nora, University of Texas at San Antonio, 2) "Developmental Education and the Latina/o Community College Pipeline: The Case for California," Daniel Solórzano, University of California, Los Angeles, and 3) "Empowering Latino Families to Raise College Completion Rates," Frances E. Contreras, University of California, San Diego. Each of these essays is in the appendix to this report. Separate panels comprised of three practitioners and policy experts critiqued the essays to specify to what extent research findings are aligned with their own professional experiences. All symposium participants were given the essays prior to the meeting. In three separate sessions of one hour and forty minutes each, participants considered and debated which policies were likely to have the greatest impact on increasing Latino postsecondary completion.

What follows are specific recommendations in each of the three policy domains. All policy recommendations are deemed urgent, but some are positioned to build on existing policies and practices and so can be fast-tracked, while others require more labor-intensive consultation or will advance as part of national work to reauthorize major federal policies including, but not limited to, the Higher Education Act. We also recognize that a number of recommendations build upon policies and programs already supported by the federal government. A brief rationale is provided for each policy recommendation. A more comprehensive discussion of the full range of issues and evidence grounding these recommendations is contained in the attached essays.

Financing Postsecondary Education

1. Improve Federal Financial Aid for students and families by creating national access to the FAFSA Directory Information Project as well as a federal Latino FAFSA Review Advisory Committee.

Rationale: Research has documented that although welcomed progress has been made in simplifying the FAFSA, those efforts are insufficient in closing the gap between eligible Latino recipients and active program participants. A promising pilot project underway allows high schools to submit a database of eligible students who are linked by the government with family tax records to create an active FAFSA application. Accelerating the availability of this new tool to all who might benefit and continuing to develop additional Latino-friendly FAFSA strategies through a Latino Advisory Commission would help thousands of additional Latino students in every state afford college.

2. Increase Work Study opportunities for students with a focus on linking these jobs to career pathways, especially high demand career fields and career fields, such as STEM, in which Latinos are significantly underrepresented.

Rationale: Once enrolled, Latino students face continuous challenges to persistence that are fueled by the need to work a substantial number of hours. Expanding federal Work Study programs could provide that vital link between the world of work and the world of higher education while increasing students' institutional engagement and sense of belonging to the higher education institution where they are enrolled. The focus on high demand career fields could help to fast track students into those jobs by building their work experience in those occupational areas and helping them to create a network of professionals that could lead to permanent post-degree employment.

3. Restore Pell Grant Eligibility from 12 to 18 semesters.

Rationale: The combination of high levels of unmet need and low levels of access to assets that can be leveraged to meet the costs of higher education makes the reduction in semesters from 18 to 12 in Pell Grant Eligibility a powerful threat to college completion for Latinos. With the

overwhelming majority requiring academic remediation in English, math, or both after enrolling in college and most Latinos attending less than full time, the model of four academic years including summer or 6 academic years without summer leaves Latinos significantly short of the only form of federal aid that does not require dedicated time while in school (work study) or payback after graduation (loans). Latino student time to completion is between eight and nine years, which leaves them without access to Pell for almost a third of their time in college. In addition to risking significantly higher debt for Latinos, the recently enacted policy reducing the semesters of eligibility also has the impact of discouraging Latino student movement up the pipeline from associate degree programs of study at the community college level to the dramatically more advantageous position of earning baccalaureate degrees at four-year institutions.

4. Expand loan forgiveness options for students.

Rationale: According to a 2011 Pew Research Center report on wealth gaps,⁹ Latinos suffered a 66% reduction in net worth (assets minus debt) from 2005 to 2009 that has left Latinos with the greatest decline in wealth of any ethnic group (specifically, Latinos declined from \$18,359 to \$6,325). These staggering losses nearly evaporated the reservoir of funds that might have been drawn from to support higher education enrollment and/or help to minimize debt for Latino students. Expanding the menu of options for rapidly discharging debt obligations will encourage students to take out the loans that will reduce the hours of unrelated work they must take on to survive and enable more to enroll full time while increasing the hours available for academic study and subject matter mastery. While we applaud current efforts to index post-graduation repayments to no more than 10% of monthly income, we note that this effort does nothing to reduce the overall debt of students and delays by years the infusion of funds that are required for repayment into other sectors of the economy where they could substantially contribute to regional economic vitality.

⁹ This statistic and report are cited in the commissioned essay *Priced Out: A Closer Look at Postsecondary Affordability for Latinos*, included in this report.

5. Double the number of years in which income tax credits for higher education can be claimed from three to six years and provide a \$1,000 bonus on top of the \$2,500 basic credit for low-income families.

Rationale: The drastic reduction in Latino net worth detailed above has created a critical need for families to recoup resources invested in higher education as quickly as possible to both reinvest in continued study en route to completion as well as to stabilize family finances. The \$1,000 bonus recommended for low-income families is an important acknowledgement of the additional hardships they face in financing postsecondary education relative to middle-income families that have both higher average incomes and substantially more assets to leverage in meeting college costs.

6. Fully fund community colleges in partnership with the states, beginning with Hispanic Serving Institutions and then expanding nationwide.

Rationale: Geographic proximity, low cost, open access admissions policies, coupled with flexible class schedules make community colleges the higher education institutions of both choice and necessity for many Latinos in the United States. Approximately 50% of all Latino postsecondary enrollment is in community colleges, while approximately 30% of all Latino postsecondary enrollment is in public four-year colleges. A reduction of public resources invested in this sector over the last five years has both curtailed critical academic support services and cut class offerings, thus severely hampering pathways to degree completion and university transfer for Latinos. Creating innovative completion programs (for example, a “Transfer Up” community college complement to GEAR UP and cohort-based learning community initiatives) as well as other proven strategies would help to fast track students to completion while significantly reducing the inefficiencies that lead to higher debt and attrition prior to completion.

Expanding Academic Competence

1. Review current math and English placement examinations.

Rationale: Math and English placement tests are a high-stakes practice in community college education and have been shown to be weak predictors of success in transfer-level courses and, at best, a narrow indicator of students’ readiness for college. Therefore, we recommend convening a national panel of experts to consider: 1) whether or not we need the assessments; 2) whether to augment the current tests with other types of assessments or consider other assessments by themselves; and 3) how to best support students regarding the information about, and preparation for, the assessments through online or in class prep courses prior to taking placement exams.

2. Establish funding incentives to expand partnerships between two-year and four-year institutions.

Rationale: We recommend creating funding incentives for community colleges and four-year institutions that work in partnership to develop pools of eligible cohorts of students through learning communities and bridge programs. These institutions should recruit and retain a diverse group of students using holistic admissions and assessment criteria developed through Evidence-Based Innovation Consortia (EBICs) that will offer assistance in establishing formal agreements between two- and four-year institutions in their states. This will ease the student transfer between institutions and thus increase Latino college completion beyond community colleges.

3. Establish National and Regional Centers for Developmental Education.

Rationale: These centers would be working centers that convene faculty for professional development on assessment, curriculum, and pedagogy. The centers would also bring faculty together from the K-12, adult basic education and 4-year college sectors to discuss their similar interests in developmental education, including improving the rates at which high school seniors and adult learners enter college without the need for remediation and meeting the linguistic needs of immigrant students. The

centers would be an intellectual and pedagogical space for community college educators to tackle big questions on how students learn, the content of classes, and the goals of culturally diverse learners.

4. Create Evidence-Based Innovation Consortia (EBICs).

Rationale: A National Center for Education Statistics report on community college students found that transfer rates from two-year to four-year institutions are inadequate, particularly among Latino students, with only 6% eventually completing a bachelor's degree. Additional research indicates that pathways to STEM bachelor's degrees are not as accessible for students who start in community college. The creation of EBICs would involve faculty, deans, and department heads in geographic and market-based groupings of two-year and four-year colleges and universities to review, invent, experiment with, and evaluate innovative curricula, pedagogies, and assessments of student talents and learning, including expanding the pipeline to college for Latino youth and adults that have never entered postsecondary education.

5. Expand access to research assistantships, particularly at community colleges and Hispanic Serving Institutions.

Rationale: National science and health foundations, such as the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, provide targeted funds for underrepresented minority students for fellowships and scholarships at the undergraduate and graduate level. These often come along with academic supports and access to professional networks and mentoring, such as that provided by the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) and Minority Access to Research Centers Undergraduate Student Training in Academic Research (MARC U-STAR) programs. These approaches deserve support and extension at community colleges and HSIs, which have typically received a smaller share of resources. The Title V HSI-STEM funds may be utilized to create such opportunities for undergraduates at two-year and four-year HSIs. This is valuable because such targeted funds reduce the need to borrow, may improve a student's preparedness for entry to

graduate and professional study in STEM fields, and may increase their chances of finding work in those fields.

6. Create demand-driven work and education opportunities for Latino students.

Rationale: Many Latino young adults will continue to work while in college, and yet, a lack of meaningful partnerships with public and private sector employers do not allow students to gain meaningful work experience while learning. Promoting opportunities for competitive-based programming that links both academic and employment goals will have a huge impact on Latinos and will also reflect that the majority of the Latino student population works while attending school part-time. Taking a step beyond cooperative education and making the work experience central to academics can support the understanding that many Latino students are engaged in the workforce to support their families but not in a career-driven way. Exploring private-sector work/academic partnerships in the first year of community college is a great way to incentivize completion.

Empowering Latino Families

Three principles guide our thinking in making the recommendations that follow. First, Latino families must be understood as assets and resources in the pursuit of postsecondary education. Families play critical roles in terms of moral support, optimism, expectations, and a strong work ethic. As a result, they are essential partners in the pursuit of postsecondary education. Second, empowering Latino families moves beyond traditional concepts of engaging parents. As one of our symposium participants stated, "For Latinos, children don't go to college, families go to college." Family members beyond the immediate family, including grandparents, extended family, and community leaders, are often critical supporters of students pursuing postsecondary education. Moreover, consistent with national data, Latino students in postsecondary education increasingly are nontraditional and include parents, those returning for further job training and professional development or entering college for the first time, and parents with younger children. Third, the critical role that Latino families can play in supporting postsecondary education requires that

a multi-sector approach be pursued in any intervention. Policies that include students, families, colleges, universities, elementary and secondary schools, and communities simultaneously are most likely to contribute to the further development of a culture of postsecondary success for Latinos.

1. Provide an annual tax deduction to all families who have a member(s) successfully complete a full academic year of at least half-time study in postsecondary education when that family member lives at home.

Rationale: According to a report by the Pew Hispanic Research Center, it is estimated that 62% of Latinos attending two-year postsecondary institutions and 48% of those in four-year institutions live at home.¹⁰ Providing housing is one of the primary ways that Latino families support their members who are pursuing studies beyond secondary school. By providing the family with a tax deduction, the family is given even more resources to contribute to the student's education, reduce the student's corresponding debt load, and reward the family for the investment that they are making in their family member's education. The student must complete at least a half-time course of study and receive a minimum grade of B- . This deduction would be in addition to the American Opportunity Tax Credit.

2. Develop a postsecondary information inventory resource in multiple languages, and send both printed material and the URL for an online website to all families who complete a FAFSA.

Rationale: One of the most consistent research findings supported by testimony from educational practitioners is that Latino families have very high aspirations and expectations for their members to complete postsecondary education. However, these aspirations and expectations are often not realized because of a persistent information gap regarding postsecondary opportunities available at different types of institutions, strategies of financing, and

the earnings potential for those having postsecondary education. To overcome this gap, families that complete a FAFSA will be asked for an email address and will be sent a URL for a Department of Education website that addresses all dimensions of enrolling and successfully completing postsecondary education. This information will be provided in English to all families as well as be available in any additional language that the family specifies. The information will also be regionally specific in providing information in the family's immediate area of residence as well as their home state. Information can also be requested for postsecondary opportunities in other regions and states. Lastly, information will be provided on culturally specific college counseling agencies and centers in the family's area of residence.

3. Develop a competitive initiative among colleges and universities for the establishment and/or expansion of programs to engage Latino families as full partners in postsecondary education.

Rationale: Colleges and universities must be given incentives to develop anew or build upon current programs and practices that bring Latino families as effective partners with their members who are pursuing postsecondary education. Among the best practices that have been identified in current programs are: peer advising approaches where parents share experiences with other parents (as compared to approaches where experts "tell" parents what they need to know); providing families with transparent information and testimony regarding the opportunities *and* challenges of transitioning to postsecondary education; and promoting the self-esteem and empowerment of family members to see themselves as active contributors to, and not a drain on, a member's postsecondary educational success. Programs that develop engaged partnerships with Pre-K through 12 schools and related organizations so that postsecondary education is understood as the culmination of family efforts that began in the earliest stages of a child's education will be especially competitive for support.

¹⁰ This statistic and report are cited in the commissioned essay *Empowering Latino Families to Raise College Completion Rates*, included in this report.

4. Establish a competitive initiative for colleges and universities to re-engage Latinos who started postsecondary education but did not complete their studies.

Rationale: Postsecondary completion rates among Latinos are very low. For example, studies indicate that although a majority of Latinos begin their studies at two-year institutions, the completion rates for certificates, associate degrees, and transfer credentials are only at 15%. The reasons for this non-completion vary. Some students are likely to have challenges associated with financing, academic preparation, being required to take lengthy developmental education sequences, and family or work responsibilities. The challenges are also likely to vary by immigration status, country of origin, family members' educational backgrounds, region, and type of institution. Students who had the self-confidence and commitment to pursue their postsecondary education, but were not able to complete it, must be provided opportunities to regain that sense of self-worth. Many of these individuals now have children and live with the consequences of limited and unpredictable job opportunities. These former students must not be lost permanently. If incentives can now be provided through innovative programming to recapture the aspirations they held previously, a substantial number of highly committed students will be provided the opportunity to complete their studies and reap the gains of their additional education.

5. Establish formal structures of diagnostic evaluation of family engagement programs.

Rationale: Family engagement programs in Latino communities have existed for a much longer period of time and are much more studied at Pre-K through 12 levels than at postsecondary levels. Previous recommendations call for the establishment of innovative programs to encourage

greater family engagement. The lessons learned regarding what worked and what did not work in these new programs must be systematically catalogued and shared widely. Too often, new programs are established and what is learned from them stays within one specific college or university. Given the growth in the numbers of Latino students in postsecondary education and similar growing geographical dispersion of these students across more and more types of institutions, the sharing of lessons will be essential to the identification of best principles and practices that can be replicated in different contexts.

6. Develop new communication venues for informing Latino families of the opportunities to enroll in and strategies to successfully complete postsecondary education.

Rationale: Among the most common ways that Latino families access information is through mobile phones and, for Spanish-dominant families, Spanish-language television and radio. These venues must be utilized more for providing information on opportunities and strategies for completing postsecondary education. For example, families could sign up for monthly messages from the postsecondary institutions in their areas of residence to receive notification about information meetings, application deadlines, and financial aid deadlines. Building on programs such as Univision's *Es El Momento* and new ways of utilizing Spanish language television to help families become aware of the opportunities in their region must be supported. It is well known that Spanish-dominant families heavily rely upon Spanish-language radio for news and all types of information. Educational institutions should be provided with incentives to develop creative programs that utilize administrators, faculty members, staff, and students to discuss their experiences in postsecondary education through Spanish language radio.



Enriching America through the 21st Century: Increasing Latino Postsecondary Completion

Friday, August 17, 2012

Symposium Agenda

- 8:00 a.m. **Continental Breakfast**
- 8:35 a.m. **Welcoming Remarks:** Karen Symms Gallagher, Dean of USC’s Rossier School of Education
- 8:40 a.m. **Setting the Stage for Day Two of the Symposium:** Commissioner Nieves
- 9:00 a.m. **Second Domain - Expanding Academic Competence:** (Facilitated by Lisette Nieves and Monica Martinez, Commissioners and Domain Co-Chairs)—Commissioner Martinez introduces and describes the context and significance of the domain
- 9:05 a.m. Presentation of Highlights by Author: Daniel Solorzano
- 9:20 a.m. Presentation of Highlights by Respondents: Phillip Garza, José Luis Morín, and Andrea Venezia
- 9:35 a.m. **Open Dialogue:** Commissioner Nieves facilitates dialogue among all symposium participants based on presentations of authors and respondents
- 10:35 a.m. **Identification Key Insights and Initial Recommendations:** Commissioners Nieves and Martinez facilitate discussion to identify key insights and initial recommendations
- 11:15 a.m. **Break**
- 11:30 a.m. **Luncheon**
- 12:30 p.m. **Third Domain - Empowering Latino Families:** (Facilitated by Luis Fraga and Darline Robles, Commissioners and Domain Co-Chairs)—Commissioner Robles introduces and describes the context and importance of the domain
- 12:35 p.m. Presentation of Highlights by Author: Frances Contreras
- 12:50 p.m. Presentation of Highlights by Respondents: Rosa Harrizon, Lenore Rodicio, Deborah Santiago, Lilia Tanakeyowma
- 1:05 p.m. **Open Dialogue:** Commissioner Fraga facilitates dialogue among all symposium participants based on presentations of authors and respondents
- 2:05 p.m. **Identification Key Insights and Initial Recommendations:** Commissioners Robles and Fraga facilitate discussion to identify key insights and initial recommendations
- 2:45 p.m. **Break**
- 3:00 p.m. **Closing Session:** Higher Education Committee Co-Chairs and Commissioners Nieves and Fraga provide closing remarks, synthesize symposium outcomes, and highlight next steps
- 3:30 p.m. **Adjournment of Symposium**

Three Commissioned Essays

essay 1

Priced Out: A Closer Look at Postsecondary Affordability for Latinos

A Knowledge Essay Prepared by
Laura I Rendón, Alicia C. Dowd, and Amaury Nora

for

***Enriching America through the 21st Century:
Increasing Latino Postsecondary Completion***

Convened by

**THE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE OF
THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COMMISSION
ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR HISPANICS**

August 16-17, 2012

Davidson Center

University of Southern California

This commissioned essay is provided for informational purposes only. The information, opinions, or recommendations expressed in the commissioned essays are the work solely of the authors, and are not adopted or endorsed by the Government, the U.S. Department of Education, or the President's Advisory Council on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank the members of the Postsecondary Education Subcommittee of the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics for commissioning this knowledge paper and the symposium in which it was presented, particularly the organizers of the session on financial aid, Drs. Sara Lundquist and Ricardo Romo, and the symposium co-chairs, Dr. Luis Fraga and Lisette Nieves. The authors appreciate helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper from Dr. Luis Fraga.

The authors also thank Dr. Vijay Kanagala, Jade Nguyen, and Cecilia Santiago-González for valuable research assistance.

Suggested Citation:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A key barrier to college access and completion for Latinos is financial. Latino families experience the college affordability landscape in dramatically different ways than White and Asian families, whose needs may well be met by their own ability to pay for college and by existing federal, state, and institutional aid. Latinos, however, are being priced out of college because this cohort is disadvantaged by high rates of poverty, limited financial, academic and social capital, high levels of unmet financial need, high risk of accruing unmanageable debt, and financial illiteracy.

Consequently, the objectives of this knowledge essay are to: 1) illuminate the importance of college affordability for Latino students and families, 2) highlight the extent of borrowing and debt for Latinos, 3) identify challenges to accessing financial aid, and 4) provide federal policy recommendations that can facilitate Latino student financing of higher education.

Key Findings

- College affordability is especially critical for Latinos due to a legacy of poor high school and college attainment and high rates of poverty which can put college out of reach.
- An abundance of research evidence substantiates that financial aid has both tangible (receipt of aid to offset college costs) and intangible (reduction of stress and development of positive academic and social attitudes) benefits. Financial aid is also associated with college persistence, academic performance, degree attainment and transfer.
- No matter what sector they enroll in, low-income Latinos, as represented by those receiving Pell Grants, typically face the highest levels of unmet need of all racial/ethnic groups.
- College costs, including tuition, room and board, can be two to five times greater than the median net worth of Latino households.
- As Latino enrollments rise in the for-profit sector, students will be at risk of accruing unmanageable debt burden because for-profit graduates have the highest loan default rates.
- Public community college students have the lowest loan debt.
- Low-income Latinos experience financial literacy challenges making it difficult to complete the FAFSA and to understand financial aid forms and processes.
- Financial and legal barriers can put postsecondary education out of reach for an estimated 65,000 undocumented students – those born abroad who are not U.S. citizens or legal residents – who graduate from U.S. high schools each year.
- Undocumented Latino students are largely ineligible for state or federal financial aid. Only three states—California, New Mexico and Texas—allow undocumented students to receive state financial aid.
- Although many undocumented families file tax returns using individual taxpayer identification numbers (ITINS), the majority face complex, highly technical tax payment circumstances. They are often reluctant—due to fear or lack of knowledge of their rights—to release confidential information that might jeopardize their lives in the U.S (Olivas, 2009).

Recommendations

Federal policy recommendations are offered to address information and financial barriers, to minimize risks and to address research gaps. These recommendations include:

Recommendation 1: Continue Efforts to Simplify the FAFSA and Create a Latino FAFSA Review Advisory Commission.

Recommendation 2: Develop Culturally Responsive Financial Literacy Centers Connected to College Affordability.

Recommendation 3: Restore the Duration of Eligibility for Pell Grants to 18 semesters (or equivalent).

Recommendation 4: Increase Federal Work Study Funding.

Recommendation 5: Expand Loan Forgiveness Programs for Latino Students.

Recommendation 6: Create Demonstration Projects to Provide for Community-Based College Savings Accounts (CBCSA).

Recommendation 7: Fund an Integrated Program of Federal Research Examining the Relationship of Financial Aid and Student Outcomes.

Priced Out: A Closer Look at Postsecondary Affordability for Latinos

One of the most important educational policy issues of our time is college affordability for the nation's native-born and immigrant Latino population. Although arguably one of the best investments, low- and middle-income Latinos¹ are finding it increasingly difficult to afford postsecondary education. At a time when state funding for higher education is lagging relative to demand, when tuition is rising, and when the purchasing power of need-based aid is declining, overall Latino wealth has diminished and non-affluent Latinos are being priced out of college.

Latino families experience the college affordability landscape in dramatically different ways than White and Asian families, whose needs may well be met by their own ability to pay and by existing federal, state, and institutional aid. Consequently, the objectives of this knowledge essay are to: 1) illuminate the importance of college affordability for Latino students and families, 2) highlight the extent of borrowing and debt for Latinos, 3) identify challenges to accessing financial aid, and 4) provide federal policy recommendations that can facilitate Latino student financing of higher education.

Why College Affordability Is Critical for Latino Students

Being able to afford college is especially critical for Latinos due to a legacy of poor high school and college attainment—see Table 1, Appendix B. Further, high rates of poverty are reducing their ability to afford, as well as to complete college. When considering Latino higher education attainment, it is important to note where Latinos attend college. For Latinos, the main entry point into college remains community colleges. Nationally, in Fall 2010 nearly half of all Latino students were enrolled in public, 2-year colleges (49.3 percent), and in public 4-year the enrollment was at 29.8 percent—see Figure 1, Appendix A. Despite the benefit of relatively lower tuition charges, the question of return on investment is of particular concern for students in community colleges, which have low rates of degree completion and transfer (Bensimon & Dowd, 2009; Dowd, 2007). Many Latino students who aspire to transfer and earn bachelor's or graduate degrees never realize that goal (Bensimon & Dowd, 2009). About 45.8 percent of all degrees earned by Latino students in 2010-11 were earned at public, four-year colleges, and the comparable share at public two-year colleges was 22.4 percent.—see Figure 2.

College affordability is related to financial status. The Pew Research Center (Taylor, Kochhar, Fry, Velasco & Motel, 2011) reported that the nation's Latino population experienced the largest single decline in net worth (assets minus debts) of any ethnic/racial group during the recession. The median wealth of Whites is now 20 times that of Black households and 18 times that of Hispanic households. In 2005, including home equity value, Latino households had a median net worth of \$18,359, which represented a small percentage of the median net worth of White (\$134,992) and Asian (\$168,103) households. But by 2009, this already-low total of \$18,359 had sharply declined to \$6,325, a drop of 66 percent—the biggest drop among all groups in percentage terms. Further, Pew estimated that in 2010 the 6.1 million Hispanic children among the poor were the largest group, compared with 5 million non-Hispanic White and 4.4 million Black children. In 2010,

¹ We use the terms Latino and Hispanic interchangeably in this paper, while recognizing the distinctive demographic and cultural meanings. References to statistics retain the term used in collecting the data, which is most often Hispanic based on the collection of federal data in the major categories adopted for race and ethnicity.

the official poverty line for a family of four, including two related children, was \$22,113. When income for this family of four falls below this line, then all family members are termed to be in poverty (Lopez & Velasco, 2011). The relationship between class and educational attainment points to stark inequalities between the rich and the poor, a point that has long been substantiated in research studies (Adelman, 2004; Reardon, 2011). Privileged students, many who attend elite, selective colleges and universities with large endowments, not only possess more wealth (as well as social and academic capital), but are also more likely to graduate from college on time. Because many Latino college students are low-income and first-generation and have attended poorly resourced school systems, they do not have the financial, social and academic capital to understand or to navigate the world of college (Rendon Linares & Munoz, 2012; Rendon, 1994; Venegas, 2007; Way & Holdern, 2009).

Unmet Financial Need, Borrowing and Unmanageable Debt Burden

Between 1999–2000 and 2009–10, estimated prices for undergraduate tuition, room, and board at public institutions rose 37 percent, and prices at private institutions 25 percent, after adjustment for inflation (NCES, 2011). For the 2009–10 academic year, average annual prices for full-time undergraduate tuition, room, and board at public four-year institutions was \$15,014 and at public two-year, \$7,703 when adjusted for inflation. The comparable tuition at private four-year colleges was \$32,790 and at two-year, \$24,483. Consequently, tuition can be two to five times greater than the median net worth of Latino households discussed above.

Pell Grants, While Helpful, Are Insufficient Sources of Aid

Access to college for many Latinos is made a reality through federally-sponsored financial aid, including Pell Grants, subsidized loans, and work-study aid. This is true across the different types of postsecondary institutions that Latino students attended. The largest source of financial aid for low-income students comes from the federal government's need-based Pell Grants.² Most Pell recipients come from families where the household income falls below \$20,000 a year. However, Pell Grants have not kept up with either inflation or tuition increases. As shown in Figure 3, the purchasing power of the Pell grant has declined over time. Students have to find a way to cover greater amounts of the cost of college that is not covered by financial aid, what is called the "unmet need."

The role the Pell Grant plays today in promoting college affordability for Latino students is best understood by examining patterns of college financing by institutional type. Data from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) revealed that in the 2003/04 academic year³, 80 percent of Latino undergraduates applied for financial aid, and 63 percent were awarded some form of financial assistance. While Latinos were more likely to receive federal aid than the other racial/ethnic groups, they received the lowest average aid award of any group. For example, in 2003-05 an average of \$5,415 was awarded to Latino students compared to \$6,230 to Whites. The average Pell Grant is a better representation of how much money is actually awarded to students. In 2010-11, when the maximum Pell Grant was \$5,550, 9.1 million students received an average of \$3,828 (College Board, 2011).

2 Federal financial aid is determined through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the formula known as Federal Methodology (FM). Pell Grants are awarded to individual students based on the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The government conducts a "need analysis" based on financial information, such as income, assets, and other family information, which students (and parents if a dependent student) provide when applying for aid. Eligibility for subsidized Stafford Loans is based on both the EFC and the cost of attendance at the student's institution.

3 NPSAS 2003/04 is the most recent data collection of this federal survey.

Figure 4 represents a breakdown of different sources of financial aid awarded to Latino students by institutional type. Student loans⁴ accounted for the majority of financial assistance at private, non-profit institutions and also, overwhelmingly, at for-profit institutions. The second highest source of aid came in the form of Pell Grants. At public four-year institutions, the highest source of financial assistance came in the form of state aid, followed by student loans, Pell Grants, and institutional aid. Those Latino students attending a community college paid for their education mainly through institutional and state aid, followed by Pell grants, and student loans. Notably, the proportion of Latino students taking student loans at community colleges is much lower, at 15 percent, than in the other sectors. Further, community college students are less likely to receive state or institutional grants, work study aid, and subsidized federal loans.

Unmet Need

The lack of college affordability facing Latinos is best illustrated by examining levels of unmet financial need. This is illustrated in Figure 5, which displays the percentages of the total costs of attending college that were *not* met through a combination of financial aid awarded (grants, loans, etc.) among Pell Grant recipients, disaggregated by race/ethnicity and institutional type. The figures represent that portion of the total costs of attending college that was not met by the student's total financial aid packet. Higher values mean a higher burden on student ability to pay for college. For example, Latinos in public four-year institutions have higher unmet need, 76 percent of their college costs. Conversely, unmet need for Latinos in public two-year colleges represented 72 percent of their costs.

Figure 5 makes clear that no matter what sector low-income Latinos enroll in, as represented by those receiving Pell grants, they typically face very high levels of unmet need. The highest levels of unmet need for Latino students were found among those that attended private, four-year for-profit institutions and those enrolled in private, four-year non-profit institutions. However, even for those Hispanic students enrolled in public two- and four-year colleges nearly three-fourths of the costs were not covered by financial aid received. Notably, other racial/ethnic groups who are Pell recipients also have high levels of unmet need especially at private non-profit and for-profit sectors, but because Latinos have on average less wealth this unmet need is more burdensome for them.

Borrowing and Unmanageable Debt Burden

Considerable attention has been given to the notion that Latinos are risk or loan averse. However, patterns of borrowing tell a much more nuanced story. Sixty-seven percent of Hispanic students graduating in 2008 with bachelor's degrees had federal student loan debt. This rate of borrowing was, in fact, higher than the 62 percent average rate among all students, and the typical amount of debt was also relatively high. Hispanic debt in the 2008 bachelor's degree cohort averaged \$22,886, compared to \$18,200 among their counterparts of all racial/ethnic groups (Cataldi, Green, Henke, Lew, Woo, Shepherd & Siegel, 2011).

Those statistics illustrate that for Latinos who complete a bachelor's degree, borrowing is slightly more common than among other groups and the average debt is higher. However, among *all* undergraduate students (not restricting the view only to those students who earned bachelor's degrees) borrowing by Hispanics has traditionally been somewhat lower than by others. For example, in 2003-04, 30 percent of Hispanic undergraduates borrowed, compared to 35 percent of total undergraduates (Santiago & Cunningham 2005). It is possible that the proportion of borrowers goes up among graduates because those who chose not to borrow—the "risk averse"—suffered from their failure to borrow in their academic pursuits. For example, longer work hours may have reduced study time or made it more difficult to enroll in required courses. It is

⁴ This statistic represents loans of all types that students applied for and received, but the majority of student loans are awarded by the federal government. States, for example, fund need-based and merit aid, but few provide subsidized loans (AASCU Report, 2012).

also possible that other risk-averse Latinos never entered college due to an unwillingness to consider taking loans or to even contemplate how to pay college costs that were nearly equivalent to or a high share of their total income.

The lower rate of borrowing among Latino undergraduates is due, in part, to their heavy use of community colleges as gateways to postsecondary degrees, particularly in states with extensive community college systems such as California, Florida, and Texas. Among associate's degree graduates of any race or ethnicity, the majority (62 percent) who graduated from a public two-year college graduated with no debt (College Board, 2011). The fact that the majority of associate's degree holders were able to use a no debt strategy for associate's degree completion is attributable to the relatively low costs of community colleges and to students' receipt of Pell grants, institutional aid, and state grants.

The portrait of borrowing is quite different for students of all racial/ethnic groups who earn associate's degrees from for-profit colleges. Average student loan aid in 2009-10 was highest in the for-profit sector (\$9,641). For-profit institution graduates (compared to those from other sectors) were the most likely to have accrued the highest levels of debt, and most students (86 percent) had taken on debt (College Board, 2011; Fuller, 2012). Therefore, it is not surprising that for-profit college graduates have the highest loan default rates. Many low-income students take out private loans without exhausting choices and surplus federal financial aid (Loonin, 2012). The number of Hispanic students who initiate their studies at a for-profit college, although relatively small in relation to the total number of Latino undergraduates, has been increasing dramatically since the 1990s (Soto, 2012). A consequence of this shift from the public to the private sector is that more Latinos will be at risk of accruing unmanageable debt burdens.

Challenges to Accessing Financial Aid for Latinos

The first step to being awarded federal financial aid is the timely completion of the FAFSA. This step is also critical to obtaining other forms of financial aid because most states, colleges and universities use the FAFSA to determine eligibility for grants, loans, scholarships, and work study opportunities they administer.⁵ The FAFSA must be filed by January 1, but the process for filing should begin much earlier. Federal aid is limited and much of it is offered on a first-come, first-served basis (FAFSA Website, n.d.).

Financial Literacy Challenges

Completing the FAFSA and working through financial aid applications can be daunting for Latino students and families. Many Latino families have much less experience than affluent families with formal financial institutions and their processes, including establishing checking and savings accounts, securing car loans, applying for credit cards, or setting up retirement accounts. This lack of experience is in part due to distrust or harmful experiences with mainstream financial institutions. Latinos disproportionately held subprime mortgages and had higher rates of default during the economic downturn. Further, low-valued customers, such as those with low depository balances, are sometimes excluded from conventional financial institutions. As a result many Latinos are "unbanked," meaning that they tend not to use mainstream, insured financial institutions, and even view conventional banking with suspicion or fear of harm (National Council of La Raza, 2004; Venegas, 2007). While a wide range of financial literacy programs presently exist, these initiatives are often difficult to implement in schools because teachers have many demands and limited time. Little, if any training is given to staff teaching financial literacy. Financial education and debt management programs are unevenly administered and rarely rigorously evaluated. There is also a dearth of research on the effectiveness of these programs and their impact on subsequent

5 Besides the FAFSA, some states and colleges require that students file other applications for aid—<http://studentaid.ed.gov/types>

money-management and college-going behavior. In addition, these programs may not always be connected to college affordability and graduation (Way & Holdern, 2009).

Challenges Faced by Undocumented Latino Students

Financial and legal barriers can put postsecondary education out of reach for an estimated 65,000 undocumented students—children born abroad who are not U.S. citizens or legal residents—who graduate from U.S. high schools each year (College Board, n.d.). Thirteen states have provided important leadership to reduce financial aid⁶ barriers (Flores, 2010). The states⁷—California, Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin—allow undocumented students to register at in-state tuition rates,⁸ which are considerably lower than public tuition charges for out-of-state students. Three of these states—California, New Mexico and Texas—also allow undocumented students to receive state financial aid. Unfortunately, students without legal immigrant status are ineligible for federal aid. The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, which would have made undocumented students who met certain criteria eligible for federal financial aid and that would have created a pathway to U.S. citizenship, was defeated in Congress in 2010. Although many undocumented families file tax returns using individual taxpayer identification numbers (ITINS), the majority face complex, highly technical tax payment circumstances. They are often reluctant—due to fear or lack of knowledge of their rights—to release confidential information that might jeopardize their lives in the U.S., thus losing out on financial opportunities (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2011; Olivas, 2009).

Recommendations

President Obama’s plan for college affordability includes many features that are being welcomed by Latinos and Latino advocates. Helpful federal initiatives include: increasing Pell grants to \$5,635 for the 2013-14 award year, conversion to direct loans, public service loan forgiveness, income-based repayments, and tax credits. In Congress there has also been a push to support the DREAM ACT to provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. While the act was not passed, legislation that supports eligibility for federal and state financial aid for undocumented students should be at the forefront of the federal education policy agenda. Proposed legislation such as the “True Cost of College” Act, which will give students and families a clear idea of how much it costs to attend and enroll in the college of their choice deserves funding and support. Similarly, President Obama’s proposed *College Affordability and Success Scorecard* would make indicators of college affordability and value such as college costs, time to graduation, loan repayment, average cumulative borrowing, and earnings potential more easily accessible to students and their families.

While constituting less than 10 percent of colleges and universities in the non-profit sector, Hispanic Serving Institutions provide the most access to Latinos with 54 percent enrolled in 2009-10 (HACU, 2012). Federal policy should target this sector which numbered 293 institutions in 2009-10. Much of the growth in college enrollment among young Hispanics has been at community colleges, which deserve increased support to boost degree completion and transfer rates to four-year institutions. In 2011, 47 percent of all HSIs (137) were community colleges.

6 In addition, four states—Arizona, Colorado, Georgia and Indiana—have passed legislation that specifically prohibits undocumented students from receiving in-state tuition rates.

7 The 13th state, Wisconsin, did allow such eligibility but revoked that legislation in 2011.

8 Typical requirements for eligibility include attending an in-state high school for a specified period (for example, one to three years) and graduating or receiving a GED.

Recommendations Aimed at Eliminating Information Barriers

We now know that low-income Latinos grapple with information barriers such as: not understanding how to complete the FAFSA and the importance of submitting it on time; not comprehending financial institutions and their processes; inability to distinguish which financial aid packages make better sense for them (i.e., differences between private and federal subsidized loans); and not understanding the wide range of postsecondary institutions and major fields of study. Undocumented Latino students face additional complexities in releasing personal information. We also know that students require the support of validating “institutional agents” (i.e. financial aid advisers, faculty and counselors) who serve as brokers of their success (Bensimon 2007; Bensimon & Dowd, 2012; Bensimon & Dowd, 2009; Pak, Bensimon, Malcom, Marquez, & Park, 2006; Dowd, Sawatzky, Rall & Bensimon, in press; Rendon Linares & Munoz, 2012). What will not work is treating Latino students as if they had the wealth, financial, and educational experiences associated with privileged, affluent students whose parents have graduated from high school and likely completed college (National Council of La Raza, 2004; Venegas, 2007; Way & Holdern, 2009).

Recommendation 1: Continue Efforts to Simplify the FAFSA with a Special Focus on User Friendliness for Latinos and Other Low-Income Student Groups and Create a Latino FAFSA Review Advisory Commission.

A federal Latino FAFSA Review Advisory Commission and counterparts at the state level with representatives from low-income communities should be created. The commission should annually review and recommend periodic changes to the FAFSA for user friendliness and coordination with the disbursement of available state aid. Information should be targeted at the Latino community through local community-based organizations, school district offices that enroll large numbers of Latino students, and media events involving outlets that reach Latino youth.

Recommendation 2: Develop Culturally Responsive Financial Literacy Centers Connected to College Affordability.

Culturally-responsive Financial Literacy Centers attuned to the needs and experiences of Latinos and low-income students and families should be established in all schools and colleges serving Latino communities. The centers should be staffed by bilingual, certified Financial Literacy Professionals (FLPs) who can become the key institutional agents charged with providing students information about financing their college education. The centers should develop a culturally-sensitive curriculum, connecting financial literacy with life goals, college enrollment, college completion, and career planning. The FLP's staffing the centers should be trained and certified as knowledgeable about the laws, policies and regulations that govern access to financial aid for native and undocumented Latino students. The centers should partner with guaranty agencies, community-based organizations, banks, and credit unions.

Recommendations Aimed at Addressing Financial Need

Research evidence substantiates the importance of financial aid within the student persistence process (e.g., Cabrera, Nora, & Castaneda, 1993; Chen & DesJardins, 2007; Crisp & Nora, 2010; Curs & Singell, 2002; DesJardins, Ahlburg, & McCall, 2002; Gross, 2011; Nora, 1990; Nora, Barlow, & Crisp, 2006; Olivas, 1985; Singell, 2004). These findings address the tangible component of receiving financial aid (receipt of aid to offset college costs), as well as the intangible benefits associated with receiving financial aid, such as the reduction in stress and the development of positive academic and social attitudes. Financial aid has proved to assist students in not only preventing dropout behavior but also in exerting a positive impact on student outcomes such as persistence (Hu & St. John, 2001), academic performance (Cabrera, Castaneda, Nora & Hengstler, 1992; Woo & Choy, 2011), transfer from two- to four-year institutions (Crisp & Nora, 2010; Woo & Choy, 2011) and degree attainment (Dynarski, 2003, 2005). Finally, we know that federal work study benefits students by enabling them to work on campus, where they can remain engaged in the campus community rather than experiencing an environmental *pull* towards the world of work (Crisp & Nora, 2010). The most beneficial contribution made by the Federal Work Study (FWS) program is

providing students the opportunities to earn money to pay for college expenses while remaining engaged, academically and socially, on their campuses.

Recognizing the importance of financial aid, what will not work is assuming Latino students have the monetary resources to make up unmet need and that the Pell Grant is sufficient to keep Latino students enrolled in college because the amount of the Pell Grant award has not kept pace with the increases in tuition and fees across the country. Effective in the 2012-13 award year, Pell Grant aid was reduced from 18 full-time semesters (or equivalent) to fund only 12 semesters (or equivalent) of college study. This removes the ability for students to receive two Pell Grant awards during any one particular school year, and compromises receipt of a summer Pell Grant if students already received a full award during the previous spring, winter or fall semesters.

Recommendation 3: Restore the Duration of Eligibility for Pell Grants to 18 Semesters (or equivalent).

Pell Grant policy should not be made on a vision of traditional students who graduate in four years, including summer school. Part-time, older, and remedial students, as well as community college students and those who transfer, do not fit that image. The majority of Hispanics do not enroll full-time making it impossible to adhere to the four-year period (Santiago & Cunningham, 2005).

Recommendation 4: Increase Federal Work Study Funding.

President Obama’s proposal to double the number of work study opportunities within the next five years is a step in the right direction. Also, the federal government can build on recent legislative achievements that will invest a billion dollars in the present decade in HSI’s that develop partnerships between community colleges and four-year public university partners to boost transfer to degrees in STEM fields of study where Latinos are sorely missing (Malcom & Dowd, 2012) There should be a set aside in work study funding that is focused on developing opportunities for Latinos to gain work in STEM fields, including health-related fields of study where Latinos are least represented (Dowd & Malcom, 2012; Malcom 2008; Malcom & Dowd, 2012). There should be STEM work study research assistantships and internships, selecting those with demonstrated capacity to create a bridge between community colleges and state universities or liberal arts colleges.

Recommendations Aimed at Minimizing Risk

While Latinos are not completely loan averse, it is inadvisable to graduate with a huge loan debt. We know that attending for-profit institutions carries a huge risk for Latino students. Students in this sector typically have high levels of unmet need and are likely to take out private loans, which usually results not only in high loan debt, but also in loan default. Even attending more affordable community colleges carries risk because of low retention and transfer rates in this sector. While public service loan forgiveness is already provided for in federal policy, such efforts should be expanded in ways that specifically target Latino students, parents, and communities.

Recently, there has been a federal focus toward Children’s Savings Accounts (CSA’s) designed to help families contribute early savings toward college. However, our review of research substantiating the effect of CSA’s on student outcomes indicates studies have mixed results and some suffer from serious methodological flaws. We do not believe it is fair to ask low-income Latino families to save when they are already poor, when they do not have health insurance and when they fear that whatever they save could be used against them when considering their eligibility for food stamps, home health services and even Pell grant awards. Further, the minimal savings that might be accrued are simply not enough to make a significant difference in funding a college education. What is needed is greater community support, from both the public and private sectors to reduce individual student risk.

Recommendation 5: Expand Loan Forgiveness Programs for Latino Students.

A loan forgiveness program should be created for low- and middle-income Latino students who earn an undergraduate degree and enroll immediately in graduate or professional schools thereby incentivizing graduate school opportunities for Latinos. There should also be a loan forgiveness program for students who complete an associate's or bachelor's degree in a STEM-related field, including health professions where Latinos are underrepresented.

Recommendation 6: Create Demonstration Projects to Provide for Community-Based College Savings Accounts (CBCSA) for Latinos Enrolling at HSI's.

Incentives should be provided for public-private partnerships that will fund community-based college savings accounts (CBCSAs) for Latino students enrolling at HSIs. The federal government can seed the development of CBCSAs, for example, by tying initial funding to supplementary programs associated with grantees in the Title V HSI-STEM program or by directing funds towards the federal Promise Neighborhoods.

The CBCSA demonstration projects should be guided by an advisory group comprised of representatives of the business community, such as the Chamber of Commerce, as well as HSI presidents or other high-level education leaders, a member of the state financial aid commission, representatives of local elected officials, and school district leaders. Business Council members would be called on to request investments in the CBCSAs. The projects should focus on 1) providing no to low interest loans to Latino students in the CBCSA community to fund their living costs, 2) allowing students who graduate from college using CBCSA funding to qualify for deferred interest payments on federal loans associated with those programs while they are employed at companies that contributed to the CBCSA fund, and 3) creating an income-based payment provision for Latino graduates who develop their own businesses to promote business start-ups and economic development in Latino communities.

Recommendations to Address Research Gaps

To inform and drive future practice and policy, the empirical knowledge base connecting financial aid and student outcomes must be kept up to date.

Recommendation 7: Fund an Integrated Program of Federal Research Examining the Relationship Between Financial Aid and Student Outcomes.

- Support research that examines the extent that asset-building tools such as Individual Development Accounts, Children's Savings Accounts and College Savings Accounts impact college access and persistence.
- Expand research on the connection among student debt, financial aid, and financial literacy with college success for Latinos and other low-income populations. The Department of Education should establish a funding priority for this type of research to be conducted in schools, colleges and universities.
- Fund research to ascertain the impact of the private student loan market on low-income students in the for-profit sector.

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Appendix A

Figure 1: Percentage of Undergraduate Latinos Enrolled in Each Sector, Fall 2010

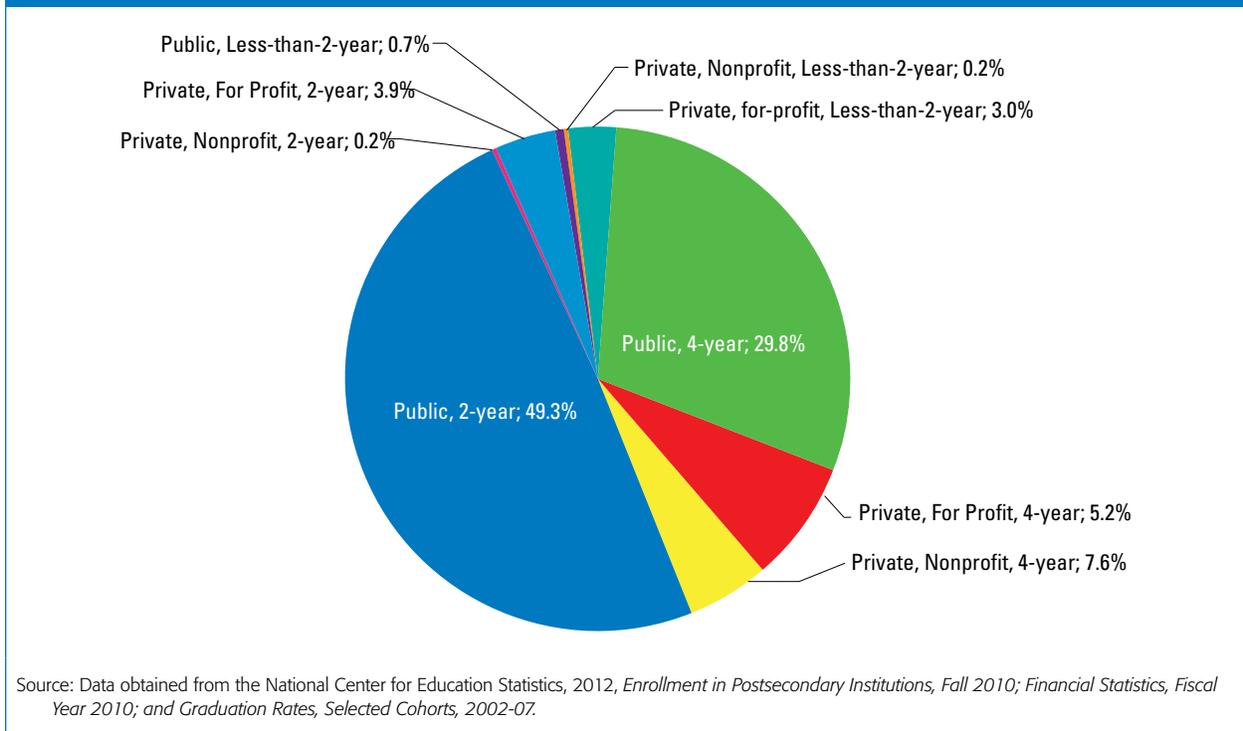
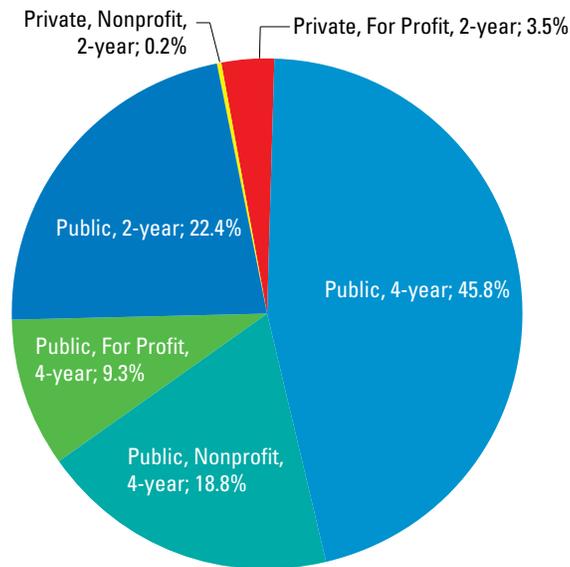


Figure 2: Percentage of undergraduate degrees earned by all Latino students in each sector in 2010-11



Source: Data obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics, 2012, *Postsecondary Institutions and Price of Attendance in 2011-12*.

Figure 3. Average Amount of Pell Grant for all Undergraduates by Institutional type compared to Total Cost of Attendance

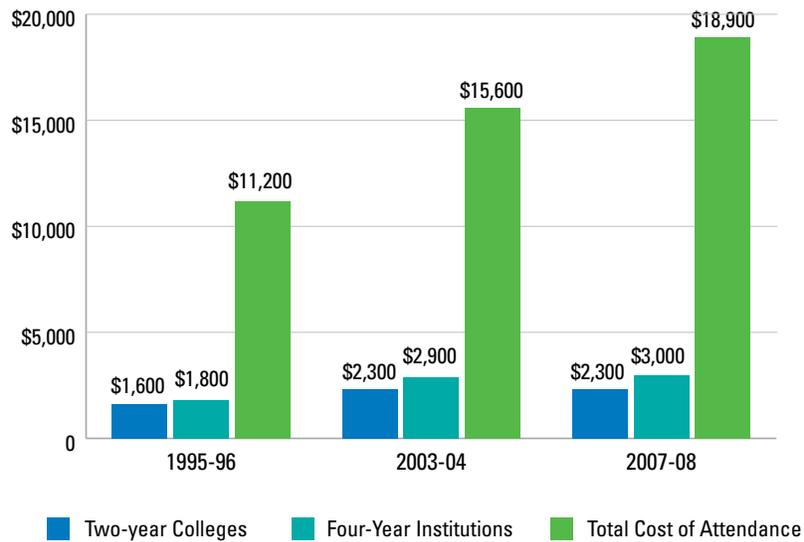
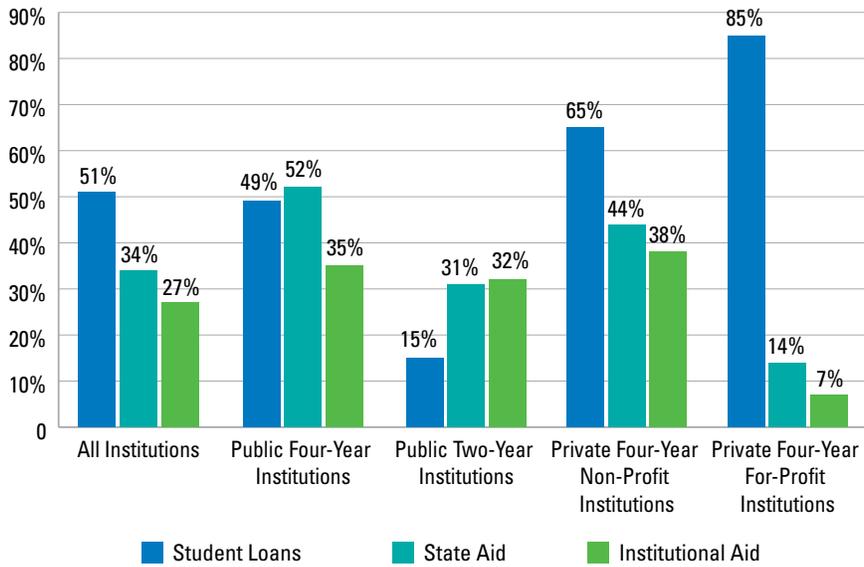
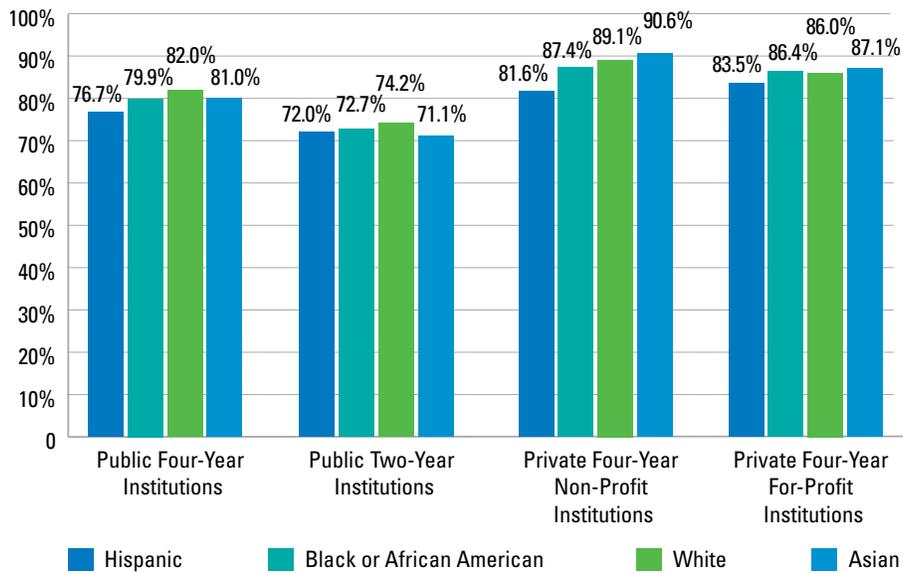


Figure 4. Percentage of Latino Undergraduates Receiving Financial Aid, by Institutional Type and Source of Aid, 2007-2008



Source: NPSAS 2007-2008, Author's Calculations Using QuickStats.

Figure 5. Average Unmet Need among Pell Grant Recipients, by Institutional Type, by Race/Ethnicity, 2007-2008



Source: NPSAS 2007-2008, Author's Calculations Using QuickStats.

Appendix B

Table 1. Educational Attainment by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010

In percent. For persons 25 years old and over. Based on data from the Current Population Survey as of March. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Level of Education	Total	White	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Total Hispanics	Mexican	Puerto Rican	Cuban
High School Graduate or More	87.1	87.6	84.2	88.9	62.9	57.4	74.8	81.4
College Graduate or More	29.9	30.3	19.8	52.4	13.9	10.6	17.5	26.2

U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). Table 229. *Educational Attainment by race and Hispanic origin: 1970 to 2010*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2012/tables/12s0229.pdf>

essay 2

Developmental Education and the Latina/o Community College Pipeline: The Case of California

A Knowledge Essay Prepared For:

THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COMMISSION ON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR HISPANICS

***Enriching America Through the 21st Century:
Increasing Latino Postsecondary Completion***

August 2012

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This commissioned essay is provided for informational purposes only. The information, opinions, or recommendations expressed in the commissioned essays are the work solely of the authors, and are not adopted or endorsed by the Government, the U.S. Department of Education, or the President's Advisory Council on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.

Executive Summary

This executive summary is a review of the six findings and two recommendations based on those findings.

Finding #1

Latina/o students at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels are the fastest growing group in the United States. Yet, no matter how one measures educational outcomes, Latina/os experience the lowest educational attainment of any major racial or ethnic group in the U.S.

Finding #2

Community colleges are the primary postsecondary entry point for Latina/o students. Unfortunately, it is also the segment of the higher education pipeline where we lose the most Latina/o students. Latina/o students leave the community colleges because of: 1) personal and familial financial responsibilities, 2) poor academic preparation in the K-12 educational sector, 3) lack of college information prior to and while in the community college, 4) inadequate academic and career counseling, 5) lack of availability of classes (basic skills and others), 6) lack of adequate financial aid, and 7) low institutional expectations for student success.

Finding #3

In addition to these obstacles, Latina/o students bring many strengths to their community college experience. For instance, community college students are enthusiastic to be in college and have overcome many barriers to get there. They aspire to move through the educational pipeline and on to successful careers. They know that a college education will help them and their family.

Finding #4

As Latina/o students start their journey through the community colleges they take English, mathematics, and if needed, English Language (EL) placement or assessment examinations. Based on the results, students are placed in or referred to the appropriate level English, mathematics, or EL developmental education course or course sequence. In California, between 70-95% of first-time community college students require “remediation” or developmental courses in English, mathematics, and/or English Language Learning (ELLs). Compared to all other students in the CCC, Latina/os were overrepresented in developmental English, math, and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. There is strong research evidence that we should reduce the length of our developmental sequences and, in doing so, eliminate the many exit points where students are “pushed out” or “stop out” of the community colleges.

Finding #5

Six years after enrolling California’s community colleges around 80% of Latina/o students had not completed a certificate or degree and/or had not transferred to a 4-year college or university. In California, we lose eight out of every ten Latina/o community college students.

Finding #6

One of the promising practices identified in the literature are the *accelerated* courses in English and math. Using the *Puente Community College* model as a guide, mathematic developmental education can benefit from a cross-conversation with our K-12 colleagues in culturally relevant and responsive mathematics curriculum and pedagogy, ethnomathematics, and social justice math.

Recommendations #1: The Future of Math and English Assessment Tests

Math and English assessment tests are a high stakes practice in community college education, and have been shown to be weak predictors of success in transfer level courses and at best a narrow indicator of students' readiness for college. Therefore, convene a national panel of experts to consider: 1) whether or not we need the assessments; 2) whether or how to augment the current tests with other types of assessments or consider other assessments by themselves; and 3) how to best support students regarding the information about and preparation for the assessments.

Recommendations #2: National and Regional Centers for Developmental Education.

Establish national and regional centers for developmental education. These centers would be working centers that convene faculty for professional development on assessment, curriculum, and pedagogy. The centers would also bring faculty together from the K-12 and 4-year college sectors to discuss their similar interests in developmental education. The centers would be an intellectual and pedagogical space for community college educators to tackle big questions on how students learn and the content we teach them.

Introduction

The Latina/o students at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels are the fastest growing group in the United States. Yet, no matter how one measures educational outcomes, Latina/os experience the lowest educational attainment of any major racial or ethnic group in the U.S. (Solorzano, Villalpando, and Oseguera, 2005). This paper examines one critical segment of the Latina/o education pipeline where Latina/o students are most often found and unfortunately lost—community colleges. Specifically we focus on a critical barrier and leakage point at the beginning of the community college pipeline—the assessment and placement of Latina/o students in the development education course sequence.¹ We start by examining some national data on enrollment and educational attainment on Latina/os in K-16+ education with a focus on community colleges. Since California has the largest Latina/o elementary, secondary, and postsecondary student population in the nation, we use the state as a case study to examine their educational demographics and the Latina/o postsecondary pipeline with a special emphasis on community colleges. Then, we investigate the Latina/o experience in developmental education. Next, we identify some promising practices for Latina/o students as they make their way through the developmental education sequence of courses and toward transfer to a four-year institution. We end the paper by recommending policies that might address this critical breach in the Latina/o educational pipeline.

Latina/o Education in the U.S.

Latina/os are the largest and fastest growing minority group in the K-12 and community colleges sectors of education in the U.S. Table 1 gives a 2008-09 snapshot of the K-12, 2-year and 4-year college enrollments by race/ethnicity and reveals that Latina/os were 22% of the K-12, 17% of 2-year, and 10% of 4-year enrollments in the U.S. As we examine Latina/o enrollment through these three segments of the pipeline their numbers decline.²

Table 1: K-12 and College Enrollments by Type by Race/Ethnicity: 2008-09 (In Thousands)

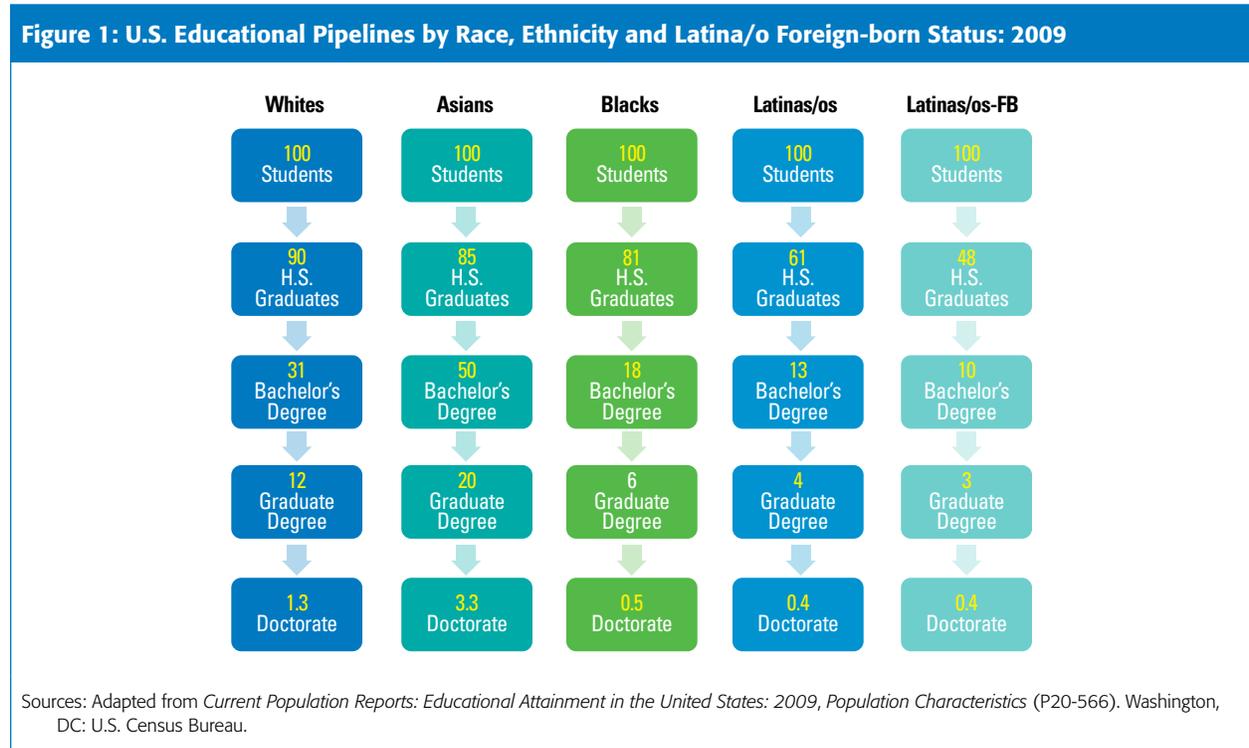
	K-12		2-Year Colleges		4-Year Colleges	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Latina/o	10,456.5	21.5	1,309.0	17.4	1,237.7	9.6
Black	8,255.0	17.0	1,152.8	15.3	1,767.0	13.7
Native Am	5,86.0	1.2	90.3	1.2	117.7	0.9
Asian PI	2,423.2	5.0	495.7	6.6	842.0	6.5
White	26,725.4	54.9	4,373.4	58.1	8,357.4	64.8
Other	244.3	0.5	100.2	1.3	584.6	4.5
Total	48,690.4	101.1	7,521.4	99.9	12,906.3	100.0

Source: K-12 data adapted from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary/Secondary Education," 2008–09, Version 1a; College data adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2012, Table 279.

¹ The terms "basic skills" and "remedial" education has been used synonymously with developmental education.

² One could argue that all things being equal, these numbers should be similar at each point in the educational pipeline. However, for Whites and Asian PIs, the numbers increase. See also Richard Fry and Mark Lopez, August 2012.

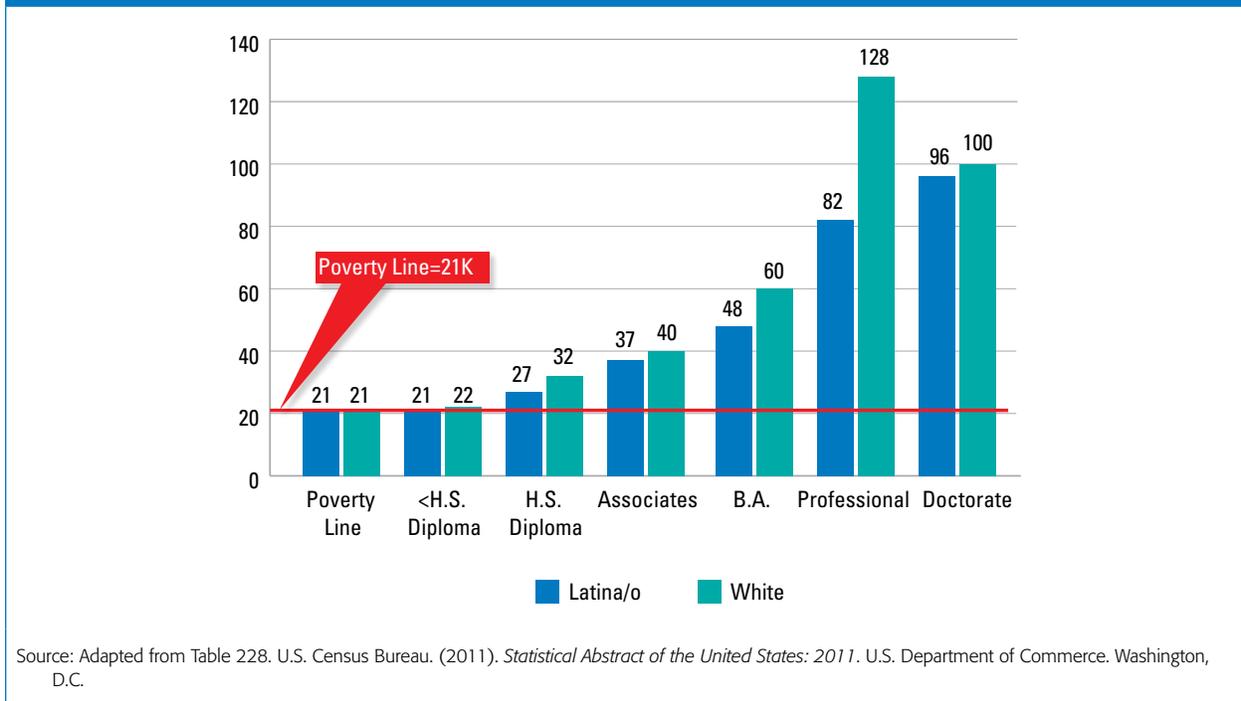
One reason for the decline in enrollment from K-12 to the postsecondary sectors is the comparatively low high school graduation rates. Indeed, Figure 1 shows that Latina/os (61%) generally but Latina/o foreign-born students (48%) in particular have the lowest high school graduation rate compared to all other students in the U.S. The fact that Latina/o students are “pushed out” from middle and high school at these high percentages is evidence of a critical leakage point in the Latina/o educational pipeline. As Latina/os continue on to the postsecondary sector, their educational attainment rates are the lowest in the U.S. (see Figure 1).³



We also know that persisting in postsecondary education has implications for later earnings. For instance, Figure 2 shows the increase in earnings for every degree attained for both Latina/os and Whites. It also illustrates that at each level Whites have higher incomes than Latina/os. Therefore, entering and successfully moving through postsecondary education matters and since community colleges are the primary entry point for Latina/o students, it matters even more.

³ The pipelines in Figure 1 were developed with the help of Veronica Velez and Alejandro Covarrubias. For a comprehensive examination of the Chicana/o educational pipeline see Covarrubias, 2011.

Figure 2: Income by Educational Attainment for Latina/os and Whites: 2008 (In Thousands)



Community Colleges

Table 1 also reveals that community colleges are that first and most important entry point in the Latina/o postsecondary pipeline. Other than Whites, Latina/os have the highest community college enrollments of any group in the U.S. We also know that this segment of higher education is where we lose the largest numbers of Latina/o students (see Moore and Shulock, 2010; Ornelas and Solorzano, 2004; Rivas, Perez, Alvarez, and Solorzano, 2007; Solorzano, Villalpando, and Oseguera, 2005).

We need to understand why we are failing so many Latina/o students at the community colleges. There are three questions that can begin to help us address this challenge. The first is: what is the role of community colleges in our postsecondary systems of higher education? The community colleges have at least four primary missions: 1) career and technical education (CTE); 2) developmental education or basic skills; 3) personal enrichment and lifelong learning; and 4) preparing students to transfer to four-year universities. These four missions speak to the many and unique responsibilities and challenges of community colleges. These missions also differentiate them from 4-year colleges and universities. The second question is: why do we lose so many Latina/o students from the community colleges? Some of the reasons for this complex pathway and high “stop out” or “push out” rates are: 1) personal and familial financial responsibilities, 2) poor academic preparation in the K-12 educational sector, 3) lack of college information prior to and while in the community college, 4) inadequate academic and career counseling, 5) lack of availability of classes (basic skills and others), 6) lack of adequate financial aid,⁴ and 7) low institutional expectations for student success.⁵

⁴ This is especially critical for undocumented students who are not eligible for federal or most state financial aid.

⁵ For each of these seven areas see: Crisp and Nora, 2010; Dowd, 2007; Jain, Herrera, Bernal, and Solorzano, 2011; Martinez and Fernandez, 2004; Martinez Wenzl and Marquez, 2012; Melguizo, Bos, and Prather, 2011; Melguizo, Hagedorn, and Cypers, 2008; Ornelas and Solorzano, 2004; Rivas, Perez, Alvarez, and Solorzano, 2007; Solorzano, Villalpando, and Oseguera, 2005.

The third question is: are there existing policies and structures at the community colleges that contribute to the high “stop out” rate of Latina/o students? As students make their way through the community colleges they go through at least the following six steps: 1) at the initial college application and enrollment, students take English, mathematics, and if needed, English Language (EL) placement exams; 2) based on the results, students are placed in or referred to the appropriate level English, mathematics, or EL developmental education course or course sequence;⁶ 3) students must enroll in the course; 4) students must complete the course;⁷ 5) students must enroll in the requisite transfer level course; and 6) students must complete the transfer level course.

These six plus steps are fraught with challenges for students and failing at one has implications for other steps along the way. Indeed, Hern (2012b) warns us that “we will never significantly increase student completion of college English and Math—and thereby increase completion of longer term credentials—unless we **reduce the length** of our developmental sequences and **eliminate the many exit points** where students fall away” (emphasis mine). As students make their way into the community college system, many have been underprepared at the K-12 sector for the appropriate level of academic work based on initial English reading and writing and mathematic assessments. As a result, students need to participate in some form of developmental education prior to taking transfer level or “gatekeeper” courses (see Grubb et al., 2011a). The research shows that nation-wide between 50 and 60% of all community college students have taken at least one developmental education course (Grubb et al., 2011a). These national percentages are probably higher for Latina/o students, based on the evidence for California presented in the next section. Therefore, California is a good case to study community colleges generally and developmental education in particular because of the sheer number of students enrolled in the system and the fact that they are the primary postsecondary entry point for low socioeconomic students and Students of Color.

California as the Case Study for Latina/o Students and Developmental Education

California has the largest community college system in the U.S. In 2011-12, there were 2.6 million students in the 112 community colleges. This number represents 25% of all community college students in the U.S. (Student Success Task Force, 2012).⁸ These 2.6 million students also make up 72% of all public postsecondary students in California (Student Success Task Force, 2012). This segment of the pipeline is the most important and least studied in higher education research (see Park and Watford, 2012). The fact that community colleges are the primary postsecondary entry point for low socioeconomic students and Students of Color only magnifies their importance in higher education.

California’s Educational Demographics

To better understand community colleges and postsecondary education in California, one must first examine the K-12 public school enrollment numbers. In 2010-11, California enrolled 6.2 million students in 9,895 public schools in the K-12 sector. The matriculation patterns in Figure 3 show that White K-12 student enrollment has dramatically declined from a plurality of 47% in 1990 to 26% in 2012. At the same time Latina/o enrollment has significantly increased from 33% in 1990 to a majority at 52% in 2012.⁹ The slope of the line over this 22-year period suggests that Latina/o enrollment will continue to grow and will have demographic implications for California’s postsecondary systems of higher education.¹⁰

6 At most colleges these are non-credit courses.

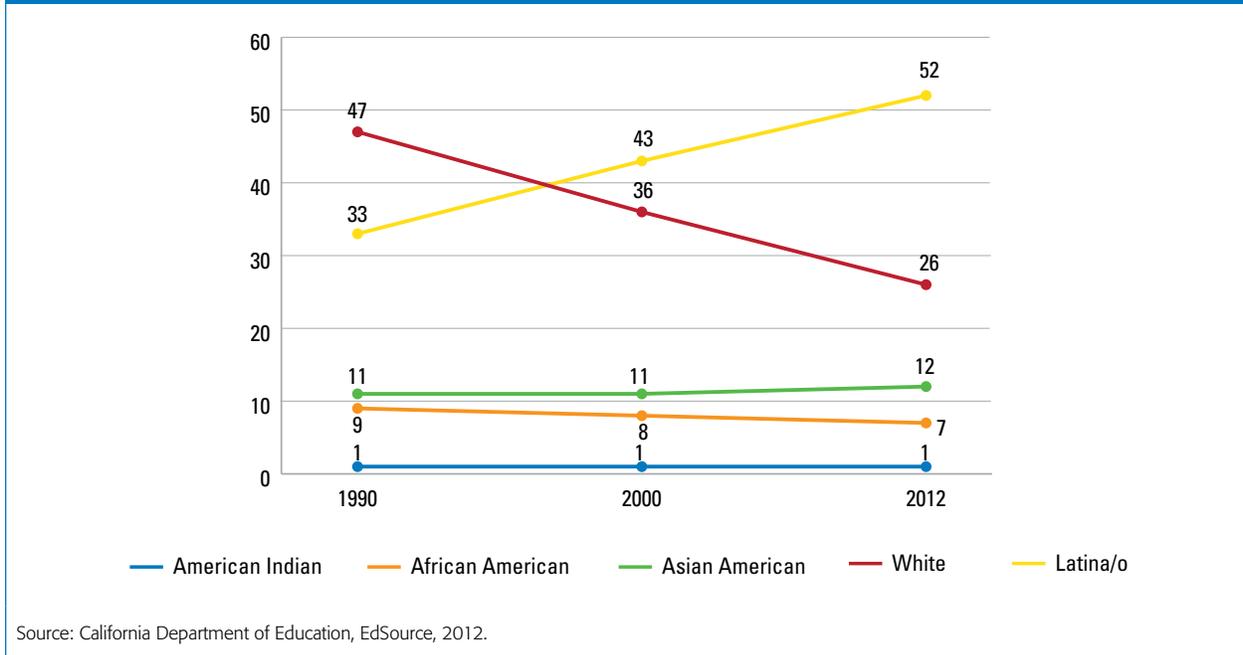
7 Steps three and four are repeated for every course in the developmental sequence below transfer level.

8 See Appendix 1 for the top ten states in community college enrollment in 2010.

9 To show the magnitude of the numbers, if in 2011-12 the 3.2 million Latina/o K-12 California Public School Students were a U.S. state they would be 30th between Connecticut and Iowa.

10 These numbers will continue to increase because of such demographic indicators as increased immigration, comparatively high fertility rates, and low median age of the Latina/o population.

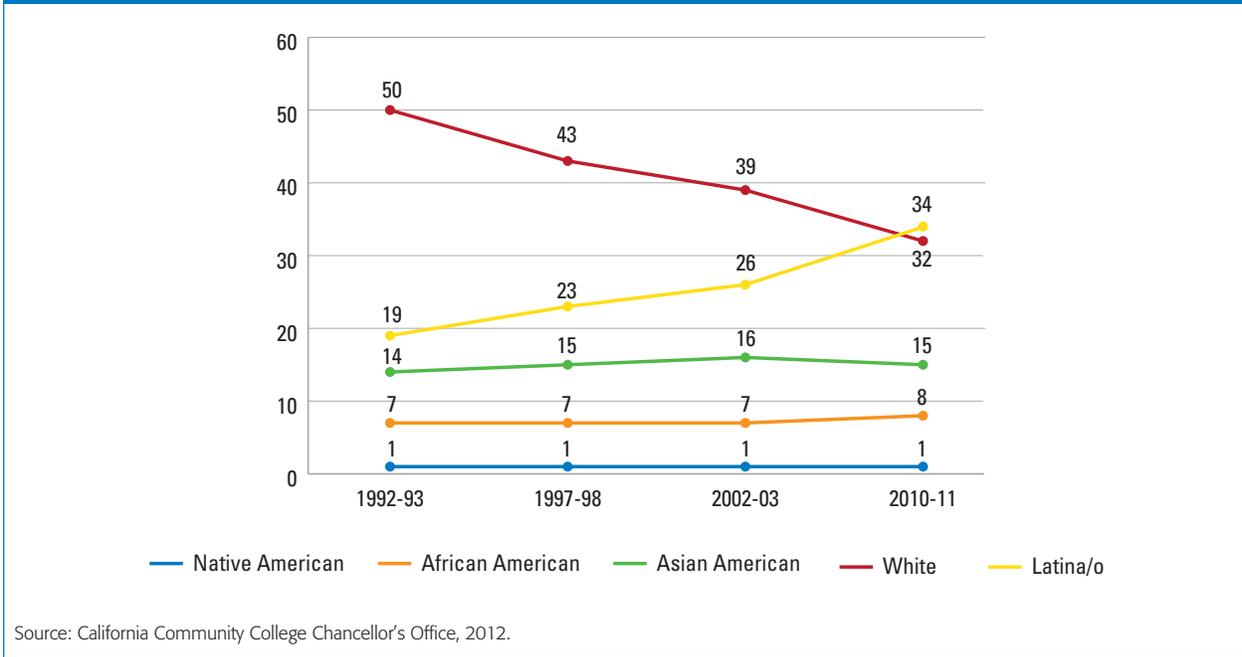
Figure 3: California K-12 Public School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity—1990-2012



The most immediate impact of these K-12 demographic trends are in California’s 112 community colleges. As shown in Figure 4, White community college student enrollment has declined from a majority (50%) in 1992-93 to 32% in 2010–11. At the same time Latina/o enrollment increased from 19% in 1992-93 to a plurality (largest group) of 34% in 2010–11. The slope of the line over this 20-year period suggests that Latina/o community college enrollment will continue to grow.¹¹

¹¹ The incline of these numbers also has implications for California’s other two institutions of higher education—the California State University and the University of California.

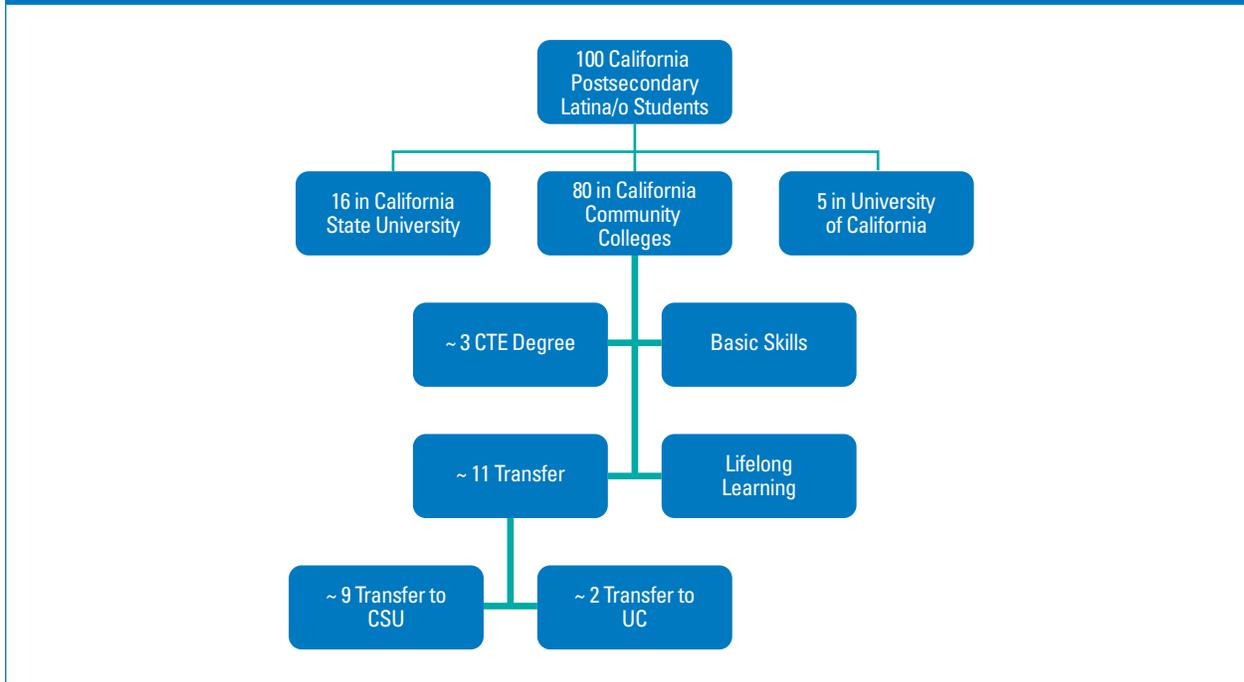
Figure 4: California Community College Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity—1992-2011



The Latina/o Community College Pipeline and Developmental Education in California

How successful are we at getting Latina/o students through the California Postsecondary Pipeline? Using Figure 5 as our guide, for every 100 Latina/o postsecondary students, 80 will start in one of California's community colleges, while 16 will initially enter the California State University (CSU) and five in the University of California (UC). Of those 80 students in the community college around three (~4%) will receive a Career and Technical Education (CTE) degree/certificate and only 11 (~14%) will transfer to a four-year university. Of these 11 transfer students, nine (~80%) will attend a CSU and two (~20%) a UC (see Moore and Shulock, 2010).

Figure 5: The Latina/o California Community College Pipeline 2010



The pathway through community colleges is a complex road for Latina/o students with many starts and stops along the way and around 22% reaching their certificate, degree, or transfer goals within six years (Moore, Shulock, and Offenstein, 2009). However, we know that earning a community college degree, certificate, or transfer increases students’ earnings and job prospects (see Figure 2). We also know that in California, between 70-95% of first-time community college students require “remediation” or developmental courses in English, mathematics, and/or English Language Learning (ELLs) (Bunch, 2008; Bunch, Endris, Panayotova, Romero and Llosa, 2011; Bunch and Panayotova, 2008; Grubb et al., 2011b; Student Success Task Force, 2012; Valdes and Gifford, 2009). The *Basic Skills Initiative* (2012) found that in 2006-2007 Latina/o students were 29% of the California community college (CCC) population and 44% of the enrollment in non-credit developmental education and ESL courses. These numbers also indicate that compared to other racial and ethnic groups in the CCC, Latina/os were overrepresented in developmental education and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses.

Considering the actual and projected numbers of Latina/o students who enter California’s community colleges every year, developmental assessment tests¹² are the most critical high stakes test in postsecondary education (Baily, 2009). Scoring below the transfer level course cut-off score means that students will have to take from one to five semesters of courses before ever taking a transfer level course. Six years after enrolling California’s community colleges around 80% of Latina/o students had not completed a certificate or degree and/or had not transferred to a 4-year college or university (Moore and Shulock, 2010). Again, in California, we lose eight out of every ten Latina/o community college students.

12 California uses the Accuplacer, Compass, and the CSU Mathematics Diagnostic Test Project assessment tests.

Developmental Course Placement Matters for Latina/o Students

The research has shown that the lower the placement in the developmental course sequence, the less successful the student will be.¹³ In fact, in California, only 20% of Latina/os who enrolled in basic math (arithmetic) went on to enroll in a college level math course within six years (Grubb et al., 2011c). Grubb also reports “if students are assessed three or four levels below college level, there is very little chance they will complete a developmental sequence.” (see Grubb et al., 2011a, pp. 10-11). Table 2 examines the distribution of Latina/o students across developmental writing and mathematics levels in California community colleges. If a student starts at the lowest level of the sequence of courses (i.e. “4+ levels below Freshman Composition” or “Arithmetic” in mathematics), it would take two years just to get to the transfer level course. In many cases, a student would then need to pass the “transfer level” or “gatekeeper” English or mathematics courses in order to take other classes in their major or other parts of the transfer curriculum.¹⁴ Depending on where students start, these sequences of developmental courses can set them back in the transfer pipeline as much as two additional years. It also creates multiple transition and potential exit points in the transfer pipeline. For instance, Grubb and his colleagues (2011c) have argued, “the transitions among courses need to be minimized since that’s when students are most likely to leave a [developmental course] sequence” (p. 63). Where you begin the developmental course sequence also impacts whether or not you complete and pass the transfer level English reading and mathematics. For instance, Bailey, Jeong, and Cho (2010) found that nationwide, only 10% of student who placed at three or more levels below transfer level math completed the Transfer level math course. For English reading, only 24% of students who placed three or more levels below transfer level reading passed the transfer level course. According to Table 2, 53% of Latina/o students in California place three courses below transfer level math and 28% are three levels below transfer level English. Therefore, where students are assessed and placed in their developmental math and English sequence of courses is the most significant barrier in the Latina/o postsecondary pipeline.

Table 2: The Distribution of Latina/o Students Across Developmental Writing and Mathematics Levels Leading to Transfer Levels Courses in California Community Colleges: 2002-03 Through 2008-09

Percentage of Latina/o Students 4+ levels below Freshman Composition	Percentage of Latina/o Students who began 3 levels below Freshman Composition	Percentage of Latina/o Students who began 2 levels below Freshman Composition	Percentage of Latina/o Students who began 1 level below Freshman Composition	Transfer Level Writing and Reading
4%	14%	37%	45%	
Percentage of Latina/o Students who began in Arithmetic	Percentage of Latina/o Students who began in Pre-Algebra	Percentage of Latina/o Students who began in Beginning Algebra	Percentage of Latina/o Students who began in Intermediate Algebra/ Geometry	Transfer Level Math
30%	23%	30%	16%	

Source: Adapted from Figures 10a and 10b in Perry, Bahr, Rosin & Woodward (2010).

13 The stigma of low placement also effects students’ success (i.e. stereotype threat) (see Steele, 2010).

14 In California, the transfer curriculum is called IGETC (Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum).

According to Burdman (2012), community college educators are rethinking whether the assessment tests are fair and wondering if their everyday use constitutes a barrier to community college success. In a recent report titled, *Where to Begin? The Evolving Role of Placement Exams for Students Starting College*, Burdman (2012) speaks to a reform initiative that “underscores the high-stakes nature of consigning students to noncredit remedial sequences with unclear effectiveness” (p. vii). Burdman, (2012) lays out a reform narrative where: 1) placement exams are high-stakes tests; 2) the effectiveness of traditional developmental education is unclear; 3) accelerating some students through or out of developmental courses seems promising; 4) placement exams are weak predictors of success in gateway courses; and 5) math and English assessments provide at best a narrow picture of students’ readiness for college (p. vii). Burdman (2012) also reports that “three broad categories of innovations are being explored: downplaying the tests; changing the tests; and supporting students around the tests” (p. vii).

Hern (2012a) cautions that “despite these noble intentions, remedial course sequences have become the place where college dreams go to die” (p. 60). Hern (2012a) supports the claim by arguing that:

“students who are placed three or more levels below college math, fewer than 10 percent ever go on to complete a college-level math course. Put differently, community colleges weed out more than 90 percent of these students before they get through the first gate” (p. 60).

Unfortunately, the data we have shared on Latina/o community college students in this paper are empirical evidence of this unfortunate narrative (see Figure 5).

Teachers, Pedagogy and Expectations for Student Success

One of the promising practices identified in the literature are the **accelerated** courses in English and math. According to Edgecombe (2011) acceleration “involves the reorganization of instruction and curricula in ways that facilitate the completion of academic requirements in an expedited manner” (p. ii). Accelerated schooling has its roots in the elementary and secondary sectors of education. Levin’s (1987) seminal work in accelerated schools had three guiding principles that guided the K-12 work: 1) developing a unity of purpose toward a common set of goals for the school that will be the focal point of every teacher and administrator’s effort; 2) making sure that primary responsibility and accountability for educational decisions and results are delegated to the staff at the school site in conjunction with parents and students; and 3) building on the unique assets and strengths of at-risk students, their families, and their cultures¹⁵ (see Accelerated Schools Project, 1994; Hopfenberg and Levin, 1993; Hopfenberg, Levin, Meister and Rodgers, 1990; Levin, 1987).¹⁶ Accelerated learning in this context is not “remediation” but an enhancement of the curriculum working on assumption that students can and will meet the pedagogical and curricular expectations (see Gutierrez, Morales and Martinez, 2009). To reinforce this point, Laura Hope, the Dean of Instruction at Chaffey College in California and a national leader in developmental education in community colleges asserts that her college uses the moniker “Completion Counts: Exceeding Expectations.” She goes on to state:

“the term ‘exceeding expectations’ is probably the most important part to us because it reflects our moral imperative. We are all committed to exceeding our own expectations. The term implies that we are always striving

15 There is no direct evidence these principles guide the community college accelerated learning models. However, these community college accelerated learning models can benefit greatly by adapting the three Levin principles of accelerated schools.

16 For a similar higher education framework see Jeannie Oakes, *Critical Conditions for Equity and Diversity in College Access: Informing Policy and Monitoring Results* (2003).

to be better for ourselves and for students. The term obviously implies students too, in that we want them to be more than even they expected” (cited in Gabriner and Grubb, 2012, p. 12).

Almost all reform efforts in the K-12 sector are anchored in high expectations for student success. The same must be the foundation for postsecondary reform (see Edmonds 1986; Garcia, 1987/88).

There is strong evidence that the accelerated math and English curriculum has shown positive outcomes for community college students (see Edgecombe, 2011; Hern, 2012b; Jenkins, Speroni, Belfield, Jaggars & Edgecombe, 2010). An important initiative is the *California Acceleration Project* which supports 112 community colleges in redesigning their English and Math programs to increase student completion (see Hern, 2012b for a comprehensive look at accelerated programs in California). Another older and successful reform in English instruction is the *Puente Community College Program*. The *Puente Program* started in 1981 at one community college in California with the goal to address the low rate of academic achievement of Mexican American and Latina/o students. Today the program serves 59 community college campuses and 33 high schools. *Puente* is designed to assist students to complete community college courses and to transfer successfully to four-year institutions. The program provide students with: 1) an accelerated writing course sequence that incorporates Mexican American/Latino and other multicultural authors, experience, and issues, through which students progress from pre-transfer level writing through the transfer-level English composition class, in one year; 2) counseling that provides students with sustained, in-depth, career and academic guidance throughout their enrollment at the community college; and 3) mentoring by members of the professional community who are recruited and trained to share with Puente students career advice regarding their personal experiences of integrating culture and family with academic and professional success (see *Puente Program Website*, 2012).¹⁷

Using the *Puente Community College Model* as a guide, mathematic developmental education can benefit from a cross-conversation with our K-12 colleagues in culturally relevant and responsive mathematics curriculum and pedagogy, ethnomathematics, and social justice math (see Gutstein, 2005; Gutstein and Peterson, 2005; Leonard and Martin, in press; Martin, 2009a, 2009b; Moses and Cobb, 2001). Again, a culturally relevant program for mathematics education in the community colleges would use the *Puente Community College Program* and Levin’s Accelerate Learning Program’s model with the support of the *California Acceleration Project* to build on the unique assets and strengths of Students of Color, their families, and their cultures.

Latina/o Educational Attainment and the Impact on the State of California

Latina/o Educational Attainment is critical for the future economic prosperity of the state of California since they will be 50% of the working age population by 2040 (Moore and Shulock, 2010). As shown in Figure 2, there is an economic payoff for Latina/o students who successfully navigate the educational pipeline. Without high quality educational experiences at the K-12 level, low-income youth often find themselves limited to low-wage jobs and not able to access the benefits of higher education. This has negative consequences not only for the youth themselves, but also for our nation as it continually strives for economic prosperity and the development of an educated populace. For instance, Social Security Administration data show that in 1960 there were about 16 workers for every Social Security beneficiary (Social Security Administration, 2011; Social Security Online History, 2011). In 2009 that number declined to three workers and by 2034 it is projected to be two workers for every beneficiary. Considering the young age and growth in the Latina/o population in the U.S. and California, these numbers suggest that it is in the U.S. and California’s best economic interest to make sure the young Latina/os get a

¹⁷ For a study analyzing the impact of the high school *Puente Program* see Gándara, 2002, and Gándara and Bial, 2001. For studies examining the community college *Puente Program* see Laden, 2000, and Rendon, 2002.

high quality education, which translates to good paying and secure jobs so they can support the Social Security system now and into the future (Datnow and Solorzano, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Our economic future depends on it.

Recommendations:

The recommendations in the paper are based on at least three principles: 1) community colleges are the most critical institution in higher education for Latina/o students, 2) community colleges are staffed with dedicated and gifted professors, counselors, administrators, and staff that work under some of the most difficult conditions in higher education, and 3) community colleges have some of the most dedicated, resilient, and persistent students in higher education. As such, we need to capitalize on the strengths and assets students bring to the college. Community college students are eager to be in college and have overcome many obstacles to get there. They aspire to move through the educational pipeline and on to successful careers. They know that going to college will help them and their family.

This paper has argued that community college developmental assessment tests are the most critical high stakes test in higher education. Therefore, the first set of recommendations focuses on the developmental math and English assessment tests.

Recommendation No. 1: Math and English assessment tests are a high stakes practice in community college education, and have been shown to be weak predictors of success in transfer level courses and at best a narrow indicator of students' readiness for college. Therefore, we should convene a national panel of experts to consider: 1) whether or not we need the assessments; 2) whether or not to augment the current tests with other types of assessments or consider other assessments by themselves; and 3) how to best support students regarding the information about and preparation for the assessments. The convening body should work with state and local educational agencies to implement the findings and recommendations. This convening can be accomplished in conjunction with the second recommendation.

The second recommendation builds on promising developmental math and English models discussed in this paper. Developmental education programs and courses must have high expectations for all students' success and build on their strengths. We must shorten the developmental education pipeline and reduce the number of exit points for students. Whatever curricular program we use, student must have access to intensive academic supports. We must also support professional development for faculty. Based on the promising accelerated and the culturally relevant learning models provided in this paper, I want to make the following recommendation:

Recommendation No. 2: Establish national and regional centers for developmental education. These centers would be working centers that convene faculty for professional development on assessment, curriculum, and pedagogy. The centers would also bring faculty together from the K-12 and 4-year college sectors to discuss their similar interests in developmental education. The centers would be an intellectual and pedagogical space for community college educators to tackle big questions on how students learn and the content we teach them.

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Appendix A

2010 Community College Enrollment and Percent Change by Top Ten States

2010 Rank	State	Enrollment	10 Year Percent Change—2001-2010
1	California	1,583,772	8%
2	Texas	749,099	55%
3	Florida	498,158	33%
4	Illinois	380,500	12%
5	New York	336,153	19%
6	Michigan	260,969	31%
7	North Carolina	254,011	40%
8	Ohio	236,444	32%
9	Arizona	232,253	26%
10	Washington	212,551	18%

Source: *Community College Week*, November, 28, 2011; U.S. Department of Education Data (IPEDS).

essay 3

Empowering Latino Families to Raise College Completion Rates

Knowledge Paper

**THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COMMISSION ON
EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR HISPANICS**

August 16–17, 2012

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UC San Diego

** This commissioned essay is provided for informational purposes only. The information, opinions, or recommendations expressed in the commissioned essays are the work solely of the authors, and are not adopted or endorsed by the Government, the U.S. Department of Education, or the President's Advisory Council on Educational Excellence for Hispanics.*

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Executive Summary

Latino families play a critical role in the lives of their children—a relationship that continues as youth become adults and enter various postsecondary pathways. While the role of families vary per household, a consistent finding in higher education literature is the role that moral support, optimism, expectations, and the example of a hard work ethic,¹ that plays in the lives of Latino youth pursuing a postsecondary education. This knowledge paper provides an overview of key studies that inform our understanding of the role that Latino parents and families play in the lives of Latino youth and adults as they seek higher education options.

Among the key findings:

- Latino parents experience a college information gap—many are unaware of the institutional options, costs, pathways and financing options available to their children.
- The background and face of Latino students has changed. Latino students are increasingly non-traditional, women, delaying entry to higher education, working greater than twenty hours per week, and have higher percentages of single parents than their non-Latino peers in postsecondary institutions.
- Latino parents and families are likely to be helping to support their student by allowing them to live at home while they pursue a postsecondary degree. Approximately 62 percent of Latinos at two-year institutions and 48 percent attending four-year institutions lived at home while pursuing a higher education.²
- Technology may be a viable tool for bridging the language barrier that exists among Latino parents and postsecondary institutions. While some colleges and universities have attempted to reach the Latino student market through bilingual websites, mobile applications may be a more effective approach, as Latino parents and students access the internet through their phone.³

The paper concludes with a discussion of areas that require further inquiry and research as well as a set of policy recommendations to move the pendulum forward on postsecondary completion rates among Latino students.

Introduction

Latino parents and families are critical components for student success across the P-20 educational continuum. Parents are a students' first teacher, and in many cases, sources of aspirations, motivation, and support for their children to strive for personal and generational progress.⁴ Many Latino children in schools today are the children of immigrant parents, who hold an optimistic outlook and belief that the education system is the pathway for social and economic mobility.⁵ Latino parents, like the majority of parents across the United States, have very high aspirations for their children—many want their students to earn a BA degree or higher and become full members in the fabric of this nation and economy.⁶ While Latino parents want their children to complete college, they lack the knowledge on *how to* guide their student through the college transition and completion process.⁷

This paper provides an overview of the relevant literature on the role of Latino families in college graduation, identifies existing gaps, and proposes a research agenda that will enable families, communities and policy leaders alike to better engage Latino parents in the college completion process.

The Parent Education & College Knowledge Gap

Many Latino parents lack a firm understanding of the U.S. education system, work long hours and do not feel connected to schools generally.⁸ For Spanish-speaking monolingual parents, this disconnect to the U.S. school system is even greater. As a result, there is a college knowledge gap among many Latino parents and families. Parents often do not know how to advise their students on course taking that leads to college readiness,⁹ nor are they fully aware of college costs and planning early for college for their children.¹⁰ Further, the lower parent education and socioeconomic levels among Latinos compared to their peers further exacerbates the limited understanding of the college preparation and transition process.

Another barrier to full participation, particularly in states with growing Latino populations, is the language barrier. In a mixed-method study on the opportunities to learn for Latinos in Washington State¹¹ many parents (n=270) expressed a disconnect with schools and lack of information in Spanish: "They know that our children are ELLs and we speak Spanish, but none of the materials sent to our homes are in Spanish. How can we become involved in our child's school if we cannot understand what is happening?"¹² This study illuminates the ongoing struggle that Latino parents face as schools continue to ignore the linguistic needs of the families of the students they serve despite the existence of state and federal standards for parent communication. In addition, schools in states with growing Latino populations continue to exhibit limited efforts to offer engagement opportunities for Latino parents.¹³

A study by Tornatzky, Cutler & Lee (2002) that surveyed Latino parents from Los Angeles, Chicago and New York (n=1054) also found that "language barriers constituted an extremely important negative factor in acquiring college knowledge."¹⁴ In addition, the telephone survey included what the authors call a "mini test" of actual college information. Over 65 percent of parents missed at least half of the questions asked about college.¹⁵ The results of this study illustrate a college knowledge gap among Latino parents in multiple regional contexts and the disadvantage among Latino parents as they attempt to support their child pursue a postsecondary education.

In addition to the limited connection to schools and general understanding of postsecondary pathways, many Latino parents and their children are not fully aware of the variation that exists within the higher education system. For many Latinos, college is college. They are all the same.

What Latino families lack is relevant information on the differences that exist across institutional types. As a result over 60 percent of Latino students attend non-selective institutions.¹⁶ For example, students who attend selective institutions are

more likely than students in non-selective colleges to complete their degree.¹⁷ And students who attend selective colleges and universities have higher earnings¹⁸ and are more likely to attend graduate school at a major research institution.¹⁹

Because the misconception that colleges are alike is widely held among immigrant and first-generation Latino families, preparation, and course-taking patterns often fall short of a college preparatory profile and many Latinos are increasingly selecting the local college or university as their first postsecondary choice.²⁰ Thus, although Latino students have a higher likelihood of completing their degree in highly selective universities and at faster rates,²¹ students are often not strongly encouraged to attend the most selective institution if they do qualify or students are simply not competitively eligible for selective institutional options.²²

Relevant Literature on the Role of the Latino Families in College Completion

Much of the literature that exists on Latino parents and their role in education pertains to the K-12 level. However, given the growing emphasis on connected and integrated educational systems across the P-20 continuum, strong potential exists for parents to play a significant role in advocating for their children at the postsecondary level. In addition, since over half of Latinos begin higher education at the community college level,²³ these institutions are very much part of regional landscapes that help to support their enrollments and viability.

The Importance of Moral Support

Moral support that parents provide to their children related to education has a lasting impact on choices, direction and aspirations. Ceja (2004) conducted a qualitative study among twenty high school Chicana seniors and found that parents play a critical role in creating what he calls a “culture of possibility” that influenced their own resiliency in school and desire to pursue a college education.

The impact of moral support extends beyond the childhood years, and plays a critical role in college completion. Ceballo (2004) interviewed ten first-generation Latino Yale undergraduates from impoverished families, and found that although many of the parents of these students were largely unaware of educational requirements, but “they supported any attempts made by their children in educational settings.”²⁴ Ceballo’s study reinforces the notion that Latino parents are committed to the academic success of their children even if they are unaware of the college process. Contreras (2009) further found that the early and ongoing supportive messages among parents while their children navigated college helped students to reach their degree goals. In a qualitative study of twenty undocumented Latino students in Washington State, the immigrant parents helped their students through college in several ways, including: allowing them to live at home, especially for community college students; helping them to find employment (although low wage) which is often difficult for undocumented students; sending financial support and care packages when possible; or visiting when they sensed their child was experiencing difficulty with the institutional climate and needed to recharge.²⁵

Select studies have examined high achieving individuals and the unique role that parents and families have played in their pathway to success. In one of the first qualitative studies on high achieving Latinos (n=50) who had earned advanced degrees, Gándara (1995) found her subjects attributing their academic success to their parents or role models they met on their educational journeys. Parents were a source of support and inspiration for these students, who attended and graduated from elite public and private institutions and became institutional and community leaders. Students described the sacrifices their parents made and the emphasis many of parents placed on reading in the home and doing well in school to ensure a better livelihood in this country.

The role of Latino families more broadly defined, particularly extended families, remains an understudied phenomenon in education literature. Fry (2004) conducted an analysis of NELS:88 data to assess college pathways and completion outcomes of a nationally representative sample of students (n=25,000) and found that the best prepared Latino students initially enrolled in less selective institutions. He further found that Latino students who attended highly selective institutions were more likely to complete college at comparable rates to their White peers. One of the more unique findings of this study was the familial responsibilities and ties that Latino college students possessed in the sample. Fry described how Latino students either cared for family members or were parents themselves:

Young Hispanic undergraduates also possess different family responsibilities than their white peers. They are nearly twice as likely as whites to have children or elderly dependents, and are more likely than white undergraduates to be single parents. The additional family responsibilities adversely affect college completion.²⁶

While this study had a sizable sample of Latino college students through the NELS:88 data set, the analysis does not provide direct evidence on the distinct role that parents play in college success. The study also does not fully convey the impact of parenthood on college persistence, success, degree and career choices. Latino students were more likely to be women, greater than three times more likely to be single parents than Whites at four-year institutions, and twice as likely at two-year institutions.²⁷ Additional questions that might illuminate these findings include: Does being a parent provide Latino undergraduates with a distinct level of motivation? What unique supports do Latina single mothers need to succeed in higher education and transition into viable careers? Finally, the finding that Latino students are twice as likely than their White peers to have elderly dependents calls for further inquiry, as this represents a changing role that Latino youth are experiencing as their parents or grandparents age and are in need of care.

The Role of Intervention Programs

Intervention programs have been the entry point for Latino parents to engage in higher education.²⁸ Select K-12 programs such as PUENTE, Upward Bound (Trio Programs) and community partnerships (e.g., Long Beach Seamless Pathway Project) extend into higher education and have parent components.²⁹ While this may be a viable venue to increase parent participation and partnerships with colleges, the reality remains that most Latinos in schools do not have access to participate in intervention programs.³⁰ The challenge with intervention programs is therefore to make relevant programmatic features (such as academic supports, ongoing parent involvement education engagement activities) part of the institutional infrastructure. In addition, select parent intervention programs such as PIQUE (the Parent Institute for Quality Education) work to empower parents to be advocates for both their children and themselves. PIQUE encourages parents to acquire English language skills and seek degree options so they have greater work opportunities.

College Financing

Nationally, parents play a significant role in college financing, although the ability of parents to pay tuition has diminished.³¹ However, because Latino parents are less educated and possess lower paying jobs, they are less likely to have additional financial resources to finance higher education for their children. Further, Latino parents do not engage in college financial savings plans at comparable rates to non-Latino parents, due to the limited amount of disposable income, larger family sizes and greater levels of economic instability. Further, the recent economic decline in Latino household wealth (over 66 percent from 2005-2009) due to the national housing crisis has left the Latino community with a significant decline in household wealth.³² Despite these limitations, Latino parents help their children at the postsecondary level by allowing their student to continue to live at home while they attend college³³ particularly for those students who are single parents.³⁴

Directions for Future Research: Where We Lack Data & Evidence

There are several gaps in the literature on the potential role for Latino parents and families in postsecondary success that would assist college completion efforts at the individual, institutional, community, and policy levels. For example, a national Latino survey of parents with children in college has yet to be conducted. In addition, while select national parent surveys include Latino parents, most of these surveys focus on parents of K-12 students, or infants.³⁵ The following section highlights areas of inquiry that would move the discourse forward on the role that Latino parents might play to increase college completion rates of their adult students.

Parents as Advocates at the Postsecondary Level

For many Latino parents, the college transition process is elusive, and they are often not engaged in the college process but are supportive of the concept of attending college. Zarate (2007) for example, who conducted focus groups among parents in California, New York and Miami among parents of K-12 students found that Latino parents often consider involvement in education to be a supportive role, rather than an active or advocacy role. Latino parents for the most part, are not advocates for their children at the college level, engaging with the institution. Many do not understand how higher education works. However, there are several institutional and policy issues where parents may play an active role in supporting their student in college through civic engagement efforts, such as: advocating for a simplified admissions and financial aid processes, questioning unit caps on enrollment (e.g., the case of CA), the proliferation of online courses, non-credit bearing courses, and rising tuition costs. Limited data exists on the role of parent civic engagement on higher education issues.

Quality empirical data on parent involvement at the college level also remains limited. Parents of students from more affluent backgrounds are connected to colleges and universities often as alumni or donors, and therefore invited to be part of boards, programmatic efforts or committees, and engaged in select events that colleges offer as part of homecoming events or ongoing traditions.³⁶ Latino parents and the community surrounding many local colleges and universities do not have a good sense of the opportunities for parents to get involved in colleges, such as advisory boards, volunteer opportunities or through existing community partnerships. A good example of efforts that engage parents in college include select intervention programs such as ASU's Hispanic Mother-Daughter Program, Georgia Tech's Latino Parent Day, and Latino parent orientations for students and families new to universities. However, it is unclear how effective these programs are among Latino parents, and if select parent models and efforts might be effective across institutional types and systems.

The Impact Financial Incentives for Parents Supporting their College Students

Limited research exists on role that tax credits play in the lives of families and students and their overall value in raising college completion rates.³⁷ We are not clear on the impact of the various tax credit programs and their impact on college completion or the extent to which Latino parents claim the various tax credits that exist for higher education, such as the American Opportunity Tax Credit (formerly the HOPE Learning Credit) which allows up to a \$2500 deduction for higher education expenses or the Lifetime Learning Credit.³⁸ We do know however, that the average time to degree is nine years for Latino students,³⁹ so extending the American Opportunity Tax Credit to address the actual degree completion time frame would better assist Latino students and families.

Living at Home

Many Latino students attend local community colleges and universities, largely HSIs,⁴⁰ and are commuter students. We do not have current national data analysis on the degree to which Latino students continue to live with their parents and contribute to the household as they pursue their college degree. Fry (2004) found that 62.9 percent of Latino students attending two-year institutions and 48.8 enrolled at four-year institutions continued to live with their parents, the highest

across ethnic groups.⁴¹ In 2008, according to the National Postsecondary Student Aid Data, the overall rate for Latinos living at home was 37.1 percent.⁴² Therefore, it is important to know if this number has increased among Latino students given the economic climate and rising tuition costs. Because Latino students have been found to prefer a “pay as you go” approach to education,⁴³ over half begin higher education at the community college level,⁴⁴ are largely part-time students (47.9 percent) and they tend to work more than twenty hours per week, factors which ultimately affect time to degree completion.

Select empirical studies have examined residential status in relation to student views of campus climate and sense of belonging on campus⁴⁵ but not the economic benefits, responsibilities, or impact of living at home on college completion. Hurtado & Ponjuan (2005), using a nationally representative longitudinal sample of undergraduate Latino students (n=370) found living at home influenced Latino student perceptions of campus climate and familial support played a key role in college completion.

Latino students living on campus or with parents tended to have a higher sense of belonging than students who lived off campus. It may be that peer and familial support are key factors to remaining in college.⁴⁶

Additional research on the impact that living at home has on Latino college engagement, success and ultimately college completion may facilitate policy responses and incentives for parents (e.g., tax breaks) that are struggling to support their child through housing and economic assistance.

The Role of Latino Parents in the Lives of Non-traditional Students

Latino students are increasingly non-traditional students⁴⁷ and are entering college beyond the traditional college age.⁴⁸ For this population, the community colleges play a unique role and entry point into higher education and job skill development. It is important to note that Latino parents continue to play a role in the lives of their children through various forms of support including: housing, child care, financial support and moral support. We have yet to fully understand the role that Latino parents play in the lives of students that did not transition to college immediately after high school and decide later to return to school to seek a postsecondary degree or training.

The Impact of Institutional Variation on College Completion

We have very little data on Latino students’ and parents’ understanding of institutional variation. Latino students and parents are not fully aware of the likelihood of college completion by starting in a community college, or the high debt ratios of earning a degree from for-profit institutions (e.g., University of Phoenix). Latino students and veterans for example, have seen a significant increase in enrollment in for-profit colleges and universities, where debt levels are high and job prospects uncertain.⁴⁹

The potential for technology to bridge the information and language gap

Promising international examples from Spanish speaking countries such as Venezuela, Brazil, and domestic examples from Puerto Rico suggest that technology may be a bridge to mitigate the college information gap.⁵⁰ However, rather than the use of websites or home computers, Latinos access the internet primarily through their mobile phone devices.⁵¹ In fact, Livingston (2010) found that seventy-six percent of Latinos accessed the internet via mobile devices, while only 45 percent accessed the internet using home broadband access. The use of mobile applications by Latino parents remains largely understudied. The potential for increasing access to college information to bilingual and first-generation parents through the use of mobile technology exists—yet we have limited information from parents on the best modes of technology and mobile applications they would find useful in helping their students in college planning, persistence and completion.

Policy Recommendations

The policy arena is one potential avenue for raising Latino parental awareness, engagement, and ability to support adult children as they pursue and complete a postsecondary education. The following policy recommendations are potential policy options for increasing the ability of Latino parents to further support their children to complete a degree or form of postsecondary training.

1) Educate Latino Parents on Postsecondary Options

Bilingual public awareness efforts have been very effective in other policy areas (e.g. Su Voto es Su Voz campaign, Bilingual Census Campaign, etc.) among Latinos. Public awareness campaigns for Latino parents on the pressing need for a higher education and the postsecondary options that exist through the use of various low-cost (and bilingual) multimedia outlets would raise Latino parent awareness of postsecondary pathways that are available for their children.

2) Extend the American Opportunity Tax Credit limit from four years to nine years, the average time to degree for Latino college students.⁵²

Extending the \$2500 per year that is allowed for families for postsecondary costs to nine years would take into account the real average time to degree that exists for Latino students.

3) Provide Tax Benefits for Families Supporting their Student and Dependent(s)

Currently tax benefits exist for families supporting college students through college at qualifying institutions. Expanding allowable costs to include the cost of caring for the dependents of single parent students for families would assist Latino families that have their student and grandchild living at home.

4) High Schools and Colleges Need to Better Engage Latino Families

The concept of parent involvement has primarily existed at the K-12 level. However, as this paper explains, many Latino students (over 60 percent) attend open-door institutions close to home. These institutions are part of the regional landscape and community where Latino parents and families reside. Thus, the potential for greater parent engagement at the higher education level exists to ensure that HSIs and community institutions are accountable to the students that constitute a large proportion of their enrollments.

5) P-20 Efforts Must Address the Needs of Latino Students & Families

Many scholars have argued that college preparation begins in pre-school.⁵³ However, Latino parents are rarely seen as partners in the educational process of their children from the starting gate. This is evident in the limited efforts to engage bilingual or immigrant Latino parents. P-20 efforts by states must increasingly address Latino students and parents in the college preparation process, with great attention to early academic performance that serves as the foundation for course placement in later grades.

6) Assess Successful Latino Parent Efforts & Programs at the Postsecondary Level

Parent efforts in postsecondary institutions that have proven to be highly successful and useful to Latino families should be assessed for their effectiveness and viability for replication in multiple regional and institutional contexts.

7) Support the Development Free Bilingual Mobile Applications on College Planning & Resources (e.g. Financial Aid resources) for Latino students and families.

Very few resources exist for students and parents in the form of mobile applications. Developing bilingual mobile applications that assist families in their postsecondary planning efforts (e.g., course requirements for specific pathways) and vital resources such as financial aid information would expand the availability of information tremendously and place it at the fingertips of thousands of Latino households.

Conclusion

Many Latino parents and families may already be making a significant impact on the lives of Latino college students. The high aspirations that Latino parents hold for their children to earn college degrees suggests that they are likely to play a role in the higher education process, particularly as a source of moral support and encouragement. Moreover, translating Latino parent aspirations into advocacy and engagement with institutions of higher education would hold institutions accountable to the students they serve. Since over 66 percent of Latino students attend “open access”⁵⁴ schools locally, geographic access exists for Latino parents to interact with the colleges and universities through both community and institutional efforts.

Additional empirical evidence on how parents access information, the level of support parents provide to their college student, and whether policy responses to rising college costs (namely tax credits) play a role in college student outcomes would better inform our broader understanding of the impact that Latino parents have on the lives of their adult children. Greater attention to the unique role of parents and families at the postsecondary level may also inform institutional and policy approaches for better engaging Latino parents to be active partners and advocates in college transition, persistence and attainment.

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