



# Association of Mexican American Educators

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A peer-reviewed, open access journal

Volume 14 Issue 3

**2020**

## AMAE Special Issue

Latinx Students at Minority-Serving Institutions

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ISSN: 2377-9187

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24974/amae.14.3.406>

***Latinx/a/os in Higher Education: Exploring Identity, Pathways, and Success.* Angele E. Batista, Shirley M. Collado, and David Perez II (Editors). Washington, DC: NASPA-Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education Inc, 2018, 358 pp. \$44.95.  
Paperback: ISBN: 978-0-931654-74-9**

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*Latinx/a/os in Higher Education: Exploring Identity, Pathways, and Success* explores topics that are central to the experiences of Latinx/a/o students and professionals in higher education. Interwoven throughout the scholarly papers are insightful narratives from Latinx/a/o undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and student affairs professionals. The publication is organized into five sections that explore several critical topics for diversifying leadership within the academy, and improving outcomes for Latinx/a/o college students' success.

Part I of this volume is an introduction to the current landscape of Latinx/a/os in higher education. In the opening chapter, Sylvia Hurtado, Joseph Ramirez, and Katherine Cho shine a light on Latinx/a/o college enrollment data trends and disparities in higher education. Hurtado and associates point out that Latinx/a/os are the largest minority group earning bachelor's degrees at four-year colleges, but remain concentrated in public Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) and specifically in Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). Community colleges alone account for half of Latinx/a/o undergraduates (NCES, 2015). The authors note significant differences in college participation by gender, and among Latinx/a/o subpopulations. This opening chapter offers compelling data points that signal important changes in the landscape of higher education.

In Chapter 2, Magdalena Martinez and Melissa L. Freeman provide a historical overview of federal policy advocacy efforts on behalf of Latinx/a/o students in higher education. They highlight prominent higher education policy advocacy actors such as the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU), a national organization dedicated to the advancement of Hispanic Serving Institutions. According to Martinez and Freeman, literature on Latinx/a/o-focused policy in higher education is limited to descriptive case study and state policy analysis and warrants further investigation. For researchers interested in exploring Latinx/a/o-focused higher education policy, they recommend discursive policy models and advocacy

coalition frameworks, two policy models that center their analysis on the roles of actors and coalitions.

Joel Perez and Gerardo Ochoa address the policy and practice implications for undocumented Latinx/a/o students in Chapter 3. The authors provide historical context on immigration issues, and an overview of legislative policies that impact undocumented students on college campus. They discuss the major barriers that undocumented students must overcome in their pursuit of higher education. According to Perez and Ochoa, lack of comprehensive immigration reform continues to create high levels of uncertainty and stress among undocumented students. This chapter recommends professionals in the field of higher education to find creative ways to support, mentor, and assist undocumented students. Creating a rapid response to support undocumented students in crisis is one example of what institutions can do to be responsive to the needs of this vulnerable student population.

Part II explores the complexity of the Latinx/a/o identity in the United States. In Chapter 4, Sofia B. Pertuz provides a brief historical overview of terms and labels associated with the Latinx/a/o community. Pertuz posits that intersectionality, as a theoretical framework, is best-suited to examine the complexity of the Latinx/a/o identity within the institutional structure of higher education. Specifically, the concept intersectionality is useful because it acknowledges an individual's multiple identities (Wijeyesinghe & Jones, 2014). Pertuz highlights common shared values in Latinx/a/o culture such as *familismo and respeto*, and discusses how these values can provide opportunities for students and higher education professionals. Briana Carmen Serrano discusses the issues facing LGBTQIA Latinx/a/os in higher education, and offers recommendations on how to support this student population. According to Serrano, many Latinx/a/os students “face challenges coming out to their families because of religious and family issues that can lead to conflict” (p. 104). Serrano recognizes the acute challenges that transgender students face in higher education settings. To create an inclusive environment for all students, the author recommends gender inclusive facilities, preferred name policies, and inclusive health care to better serve students who may not have support from their family members.

Best practices and models for developing pathways for Latinx/a/o student success are examined in Part III of this publication. In Chapter 6, David Perez II, Claudia Garcia-Louis, Arambula Ballysign, and Eligio Martinez extend Shaun Harper's (2010) anti-deficit achievement

framework (ADAF) by focusing on the cultural strengths that Latinx/a/o students possess. The authors build on Harper's framework by addressing the important role that familial, community, institutional, and social contexts play in Latinx/a/o students' educational pathways. Chapter 7 of the book is exclusively dedicated to the role that community colleges play in developing pathways for Latinx/a/o students. Edward F. Martinez and Ignacio Hernandez introduce data from the National Center for Education Statistics that reveals that community colleges continue to be the main entry point to higher education for Latinx/a/os students. According to the authors, Latinx students enroll in the community colleges in record numbers in part because they are an affordable option and are located in close proximity to their families. To continue to strengthen this vital pathway to higher education for Latinx/a/os, Martinez and Hernandez recommend hiring and retaining Latinx/a/o faculty, administrators, and staff that can serve as role models. Other recommendations include, disaggregating data on Latinx/a/o students to fully understand their distinct experiences and developing mentorship programs that foster Latinx/a/o students' sense of belonging. Aside from this sole chapter, the publication missed an opportunity to examine the impact that community college transfer pathways have on Latinx/a/os in pursuit of postsecondary education.

The Honors Living-Learning Community (HLLC) at Rutgers University-Newark is the center of focus in Chapter 8. Marta Elena Esquilin meticulously describes HLLC's multifaceted approach that distinguishes it from traditional honors programs. HLLC's unique admissions criteria moves beyond traditional metrics (e.g., GPA, SAT scores) by taking into consideration students' characteristics such as leadership skills, resiliency, academic potential, and passion for social change. By employing a holistic admissions process, administrators are able to identify diverse talented students with endless potential for success. The program's success is attributed to its culturally relevant pedagogy that builds on students' knowledge and lived experiences and "empowers students with a social justice framework to explore social inequities" (p.168). Intergenerational learning communities and cohort-based peer mentoring are critical features of the HLLC model that create a sense of belonging among students of color in the program. Esquilin offers a blueprint to design an equitable honors program based on national best practices that support historically underrepresented students from admission through graduation.

In Part IV of the book, Latinx/a/o student affairs practitioners and faculty reflect on their personal and professional journeys to the field of higher education. In Chapter 9, Tonantzin Oseguera reminds readers that “the workforce within higher education has been slow to mirror the diversity of its student population” (p. 190). To close the gap between students enrolled in postsecondary education and the ethnic diversity of the student affairs profession, Oseguera recommends increasing the number of leadership pipeline programs for undergraduate Latinx/a/os. Specifically, she highlights NASPA’s (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators) Undergraduate Fellows Program, a high-touch mentoring initiative that serves as an entry point to the field of higher education for historically underrepresented students. Oseguera contends that student affairs professionals have significant contact with students, and thus, are well-positioned to serve as mentors and conduits to the profession of student affairs.

Chapter 11 and 13 respectively, focus on Latinx/a/o faculty pathways. William Luis candidly discusses his road to the professoriate. His narrative provides a glimpse into the inequities and racial hostility that many faculty of color experience in the academy. Despite successfully publishing in top-tier journals and serving as an advisor to the Hispanic Division of the Library of Congress, Luis was unjustly denied tenure. Lucy Arrellano provides data that illuminates the gross underrepresentation of tenured-track Latinx/a/o faculty nationwide. Arrellano contends that a number of hurdles stand between graduate school and the professoriate that keep Latinx/a/os from entering the academic ranks. She notes that few Latinx/a/os are groomed to become professors and “even when some do reach the door, they are filtered out during the search process due to lack of fit because they do not share the background of those in decision-making power” (p. 254). This chapter provides insights about key faculty responsibilities, namely, research, teaching, and service. Arrellano provides important advice for prospective and early career faculty Latinx/a/os. She advocates early career faculty to take on critical issues that pertain to their Latinx/a/o community, well before earning tenure. Both faculty-centered chapters document the injustices weathered by Latinx/a/o faculty in higher education.

Chapters 10 and 12 provide perspectives from accomplished senior-level Latinx/a/o leaders in higher education. Anthony Cruz recounts his journey to the Vice Presidency in Chapter 10. With over 20 years of experience in higher education, Cruz details his most valued

pieces of advice for Latinx/a/o student affairs professionals pursuing senior leadership positions. Most notably, he advises student affairs professionals to “confront challenges and fears head on regardless of how uncomfortable it may feel” (p. 210). His journey to senior leadership was unplanned and presented challenges that required him to be flexible and open to new opportunities. Mildred Garcia, the first Latina President of the California State University system, reflects on her journey to the presidency in Chapter 12. Garcia offers lessons learned in her journey to leadership. She speaks to the power of mentoring and surrounding yourself with individuals with diverse skill sets. According to Garcia, when pursuing the presidency, “not only must it be the right institution with the right students that align with your passion and skill set, it must also be the right time” (p. 245).

In the concluding chapter of the book, Angela E. Batista and Shirley M. Collado discuss the important role that mentors, networks, and professional development have on broadening pathways for Latinx/a/os in higher education. They stress the importance of participating in professional development opportunities that inform best practices such as the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education. Batista and Collado’s narratives speak to the importance of leveraging the capacity of Latinx/a/os’ social capital in spaces that were not historically created for them. They challenge Latinx/a/os to be courageous in their pursuit of new leadership participation opportunities that can ultimately “reveal clarity of purpose and a commitment to work toward changing the landscape of higher education” (p. 314).

*Latinx/a/os in Higher Education: Exploring Identity, Pathways, and Success* is a compelling culmination of personal narratives and scholarly papers that are supported by research and data. This publication moves beyond deficit-oriented narratives about the plight of Latinx/a/os in higher education. The contributors make visible the triumphs of Latinx/a/o students, faculty, and administrators as they navigate the pathways to higher education success. It is an essential resource and guide for students interested in exploring student affairs as a feasible profession, as well as for seasoned professionals who want to gain a deeper understanding of how to best serve Latinx/a/o students in a postsecondary context. Missing from this publication is an in-depth analysis of the impact that community college transfer pathways have on Latinx/a/o students.

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