

IN

FOCUS:

Interpreting the Latino
Experience in the
U.S. Today

**Presentation Summaries & Policy Recommendations
from the 2004 TRPI Education Conference**

Challenges in Improving Latino College Enrollment: Opportunities for Systemic Change Viewpoints from California

The Present & Coming Crisis: Demography and Education
A View from the Academic Community
A View from the Policy Trenches
The Invisible People
Applications of Real-World Solutions
Financing College: The Unspoken Obstacle

Presented by The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute
School of Policy, Planning, and Development
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, California

With offices at Columbia University
New York, New York



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The Tomás Rivera
POLICY INSTITUTE

Founded in 1985, the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute advances critical, insightful thinking on key issues affecting Latino communities through objective, policy-relevant research, and its implications, for the betterment of the nation.

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The Center for Latino Educational Excellence (CLEE) was established as a major initiative of the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute in the spring of 2002 to help improve educational attainment and achievement in Latino communities across the United States. Through its policy research, CLEE seeks to provide guidance for Latino leadership—across public, non-profit, and private sectors—on how to better the current systems of education that are, on many levels, failing Latino youth and adults.





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Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I invite you to review the TRPI Fall 2004 Conference Summary. Those of you who were able to attend the event witnessed an invigorating day as an impressive array of stakeholders convened to discuss how to improve Latino college enrollment on a systemic level in California. These viewpoints, we feel, may be relevant to Latino communities throughout the nation. The attendees were as impassioned as the speakers, and it became clear through the presentations and ensuing discussions that we all realize the enormity of the task, as well as the factors that really affect Latino college enrollment and achievement. Of course, it is not until we understand both the true nature of the challenge, and the factors that contribute to it, that we can champion solutions.

As you will see in the following summaries, we were presented with findings that were simultaneously hopeful and sobering. As the shape of the Latino population changes, so will its college-going proclivities. An impending explosion of second-generation Latinos is expected to reach high school within the next 20 years; at the same time, we know that 80 percent of native-born students graduate from high school. We must prepare now to harness the potential of these achieving, U.S.- and foreign-born Latinos.

In addition to adjusting our forecasts of college-ready Latinos, we were asked to address whether underrepresented students really are improving their educational attainment, and whether the "education gap" is shrinking. The USC Center for Urban Education has created a scorecard which indicates that true educational achievement for Latinos is not improving; in fact, the gap between white and Hispanic students (and white and black students) is getting larger.

At the same time, our academic researchers provided an array of recommendations for improved college achievement. Could we begin to include college outreach programs in high school curricula? How can we demystify the college financial aid process? Could we change parental and low-income student expectations so that everyone is expected to go to college?

Keynote luncheon speaker Solomon Trujillo called attention to the untapped power and resources of the U.S. Latino population, emphasizing the importance of education in order to fill the board rooms and corporate management teams with Latino representation that is proportional to Latino purchasing power.

An impressive panel of policy-makers presented examples of their efforts, on local, district and national levels, to make a difference in academic achievement. An equally impressive panel of representatives from organizations that offer real-world solutions described how their programs, individually, are impacting college achievement rates among Latinos. By creating partnerships in the community between funders and — most importantly — with Latino parents and students, these organizations have been able to dramatically improve college achievement rates.

Introduction



Our final panel presented recent TRPI findings on the lack of “college knowledge” that exists among the Latino community, especially as it relates to financial aid. Developing information campaigns that educate Latino parents about scholarships, grants and loans, and making sure that information is distributed effectively, could have dramatic effects on the college-going tendencies of the Latino population. Perhaps most dramatically, one panelist challenged us to envision an educational system infrastructure that has broader eligibility guidelines, seamless partnerships with the K-12 schools, and a capacity to handle as many students as can possibly attend.

The conference was a tremendous success, and we look forward to developing an annual series as these issues — and their implemented solutions — take shape and change. Of course, the success of this conference was the result of many contributions by talented and impressive people. I would like to give a special acknowledgment and thanks to Estela Mara Bensimon, Ph.D., Professor and Director of the Center for Urban Education at the USC Rossier School of Education. Her time and considerable assistance with the conference program was invaluable, and contributed immeasurably to the strength and diversity of the conference speakers.

Thank you for your interest in this issue, and taking the time to review this report. I look forward to seeing you at the next TRPI education conference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harry Pachon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "H".

Harry P. Pachon, Ph.D.
President
The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute
Professor of Public Policy
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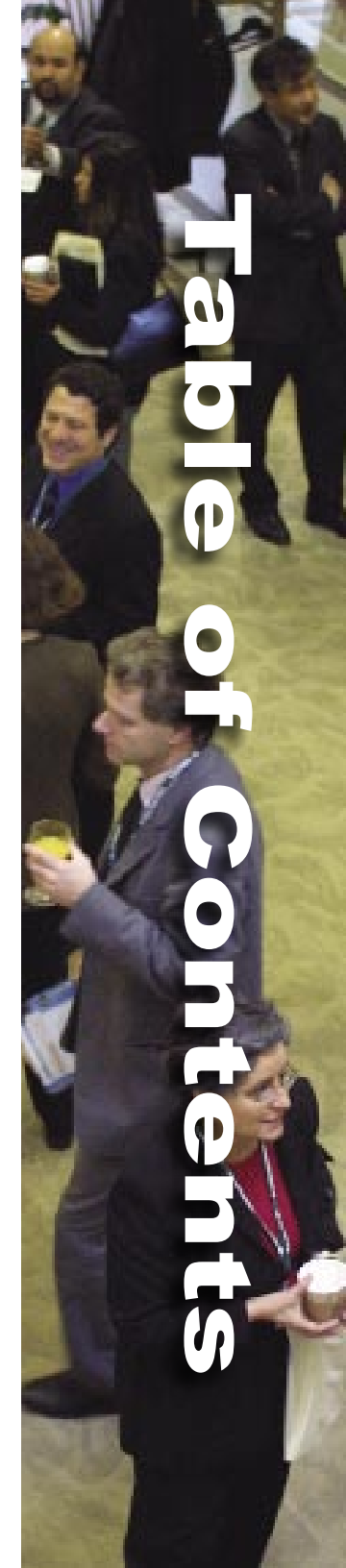
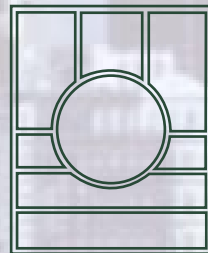


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Rapporteur: Lois Pilant Grossman



Celebrating 20 Years of Progress

TRPI

The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute

The Present and Coming Crisis: Demography and Education



**Dowell
Myers**

School of Policy,
Planning, and
Development,
University of Southern
California



**Estela Mara
Bensimon**

Center for Urban
Education, Rossier
School of Education,
University of
Southern California

This much we know: Latinos, in the last 50 years, have increased in population from 4 million to 41 million in the U.S. Between 1980 and 2000, that number doubled from 6.4 to 12.6 percent of the total U.S. population. We also know that by 2020, the general population of California alone will reach 44 million, up from 29 million in 1990. According to one researcher, it will be the equivalent of adding Florida — the fourth largest state in the country — to California. This kind of growth — about 5 million per decade — is not unusual in the Golden State. What will make the next 30 years remarkable, at least with regard to population growth, is that the change in these figures will be almost exclusively attributable to the evolution of the Latino community.

A Tidal Wave of Children

According to the California Demographic Futures Project, the number of foreign-born California residents tripled from 1970 to 2000, going from 8.6 percent of the state's population in 1970 to 26.2 percent in 2000. Although that number is expected to remain relatively stable, demographers are still predicting a transformation in the Latino community. This transformation will not depend on sustained levels of immigration, but on the succession of the second generation, whose projected population figures among young adults are expected to rise from 18 percent of the total Latino population in 2000 to 39 percent in 2030, even as the first generation declines from 67.2 to 38 percent. The face of the new Latino community will be a youthful one, made up of young adults who will be full U.S. citizens and have much higher levels of educational attainment than their parents' generation, as well as higher incomes and higher consumption levels.

As much as these statistics inspire hope that the common public perception, and the reality, of Hispanics hanging on to the bottom rung of the American educational and economic ladder will change, they also point to the inadequacy of a system that has thus far been unable to accurately project the future needs of this community and to identify the resources that will be required to provide jobs, housing, education, and health care. This is especially true for California, one of the five core states that are home to 11 million of the 41 million Latinos now living in the U.S.



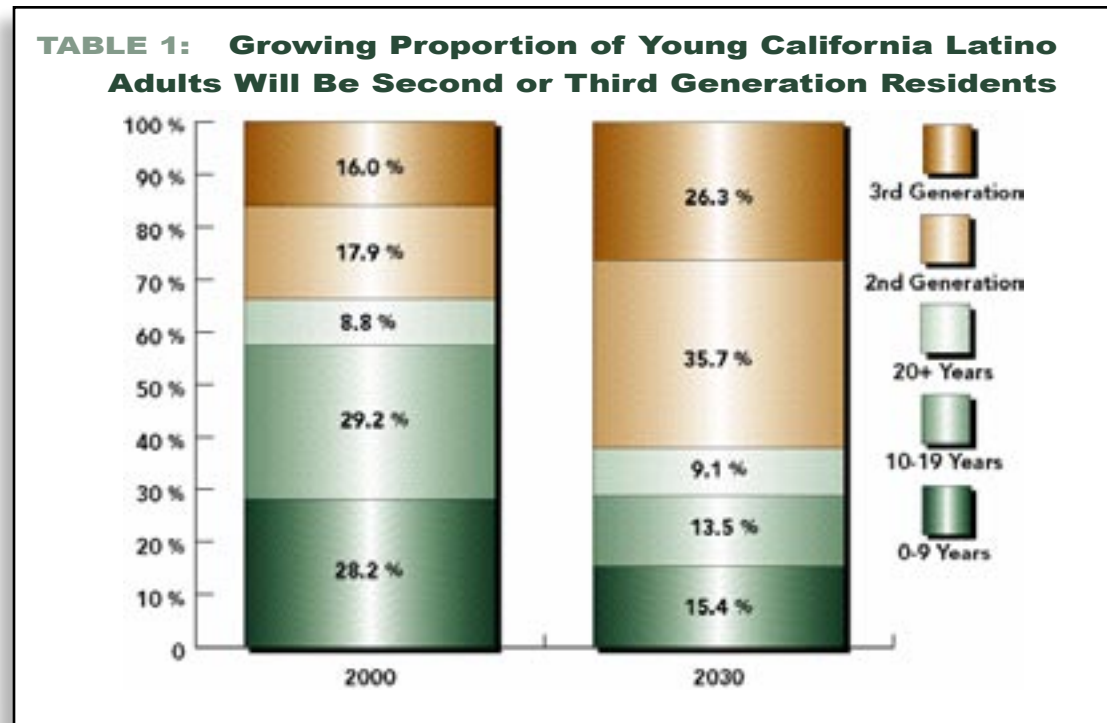
The state has underestimated how many students are going on to higher education. The state can't know because they don't have the forecast data that breaks out Latinos by foreign-versus native-born. We're looking at a twenty percent shortfall in resources by 2030.

Dowell Myers, Ph.D.
USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development



Painting a More Detailed Picture

California, like other states, has traditionally collected data and projected population growth based on three inputs: age, sex, and race. While this method may be appropriate for states that are not home to large numbers of immigrant Latinos, it has resulted in a skewed view of California's future. Dowell Myers, professor and program director of planning at the University of Southern California's School of Policy, Planning, and Development, has focused his research on methods that will provide a more accurate demographic picture, particularly for the Latino community. By collecting data on age, sex, and race, and with the additional inputs of nativity, immigrant duration, and generation, Myers has what he believes is a more detailed, informative view that contains both good news and bad.



For example, it is already known that 51 percent of Latinos do not complete high school. Yet when those numbers are disaggregated into foreign-born and native-born students, the picture changes: 80 percent of native-born students graduate, while less than 40 percent of the foreign-born earn a degree. The good news, Myers said, is that the data show Latinos have a greater inclination and ability for education than was typically thought. Disaggregating the data also prevents the evidence of progress from being buried under a mountain of statistics on immigration flows.

Inherent in this new perspective on Latino graduates, however, is the bad news. "The state has underestimated how many students are going on to higher education. The state can't know because they don't have the forecast data that breaks out Latinos by foreign- versus native-born. We're looking at a twenty percent shortfall in resources by 2030."

Myers reached his conclusion by using additional inputs and a model created specifically for California's unique mix of populations. He projects that by 2030, the state's second-generation Latinos will number 39 percent, and the third-generation Latinos will increase to 26 percent. "The previous immigrants are going to stay and have kids. It's going to result in a tidal wave of children, and our educational system is not equipped to handle that. We're already overcrowded, and it's going to get worse," Myers said.

The face of the **new** Latino community will be a **youthful** one, made up of young adults who will be **full citizens** and have much higher educational attainment than their parents' generation, as well as **higher incomes** and higher consumption levels.

As these American-born and educated children finish their K-12 years and begin to look toward higher education, they may not like what they find — including a serious lack of resources in everything from books to classroom space. “Big changes are happening in this community, and they are not going to reverse. We need to make an investment today, even though the payoff is twenty years down the road. But that payoff will be in better taxpayers, better homeowners, and better workers overall,” Myers said.

Standardizing Performance Indicators

Finding a way to ensure that college students have the appropriate resources is just one task that university administrators, legislators, and policy-makers will have to address. Equally important is the ability to track the progress of college students as a group, and in particular, the performance of students from underrepresented groups. Although 44 states currently publish performance reports on their local colleges and universities, the results are typically based on input measures, not outcomes. In fact, an analysis of 29 state performance reports showed that of 15 different equity measures specific to the status of minority students, faculty, and staff, all but five were input measures. Twenty-one states used enrollment by race and ethnicity as a performance indicator; nine states used graduation and retention by race and ethnicity; five states used degrees awarded by race; one state used student transfers from two- to four-year colleges by race.

Such patchwork methods of determining success do little to help state and federal decision-makers see whether underrepresented groups are attaining educational equity, either nationally or locally. It also makes it difficult to track the educational gap across racial and ethnic groups. According to Estela Mara Bensimon, professor and director of the Center for Urban Education at the University of Southern California’s Rossier School of Education, these two problems are inextricably linked. “There is a perception that enrollment in higher education for Latinos and blacks is growing. But what we tend to overlook is the fact that the gap between white and Hispanic students, and white and black students, is getting larger.”

One of the problems is that the data are not routinely disaggregated by race and ethnicity. It also is not reported in a way that allows for a general review of whether underrepresented students are attaining equity. The result has been that no one has adopted equity as a performance standard. Without equity standards, “we cannot evaluate the performance of our institutions or the state’s higher education system,” Bensimon said. “Without performance measures, neither institutional leaders nor policy-makers can learn about their systems’ actual educational outcomes — they know very little about what is happening inside the schools. It also makes it hard for groups to advocate, monitor, or press for policy changes.”

This lack of information can have negative economic and social consequences, Bensimon said, especially given the growing demand for a better-educated workforce combined with the increasing number of the Latino second and third generations. The inability to accurately evaluate the educational progress of underrepresented groups and to spot hidden disparities could result in an ever-widening gap between the educated elite and the undereducated, low-income immigrant or minority worker.

“Without equity standards, we cannot evaluate the performance of our institutions or the state’s higher education system. Without performance measures, neither institutional leaders nor policy-makers can learn about their systems’ actual educational outcomes — they know very little about what is happening inside the schools. It also makes it hard for groups to advocate, monitor, or press for policy changes.

Estela Mara Bensimon, Ph.D.
USC Rossier School of Education

FIGURE 1: The Academic Equity Scorecard Framework

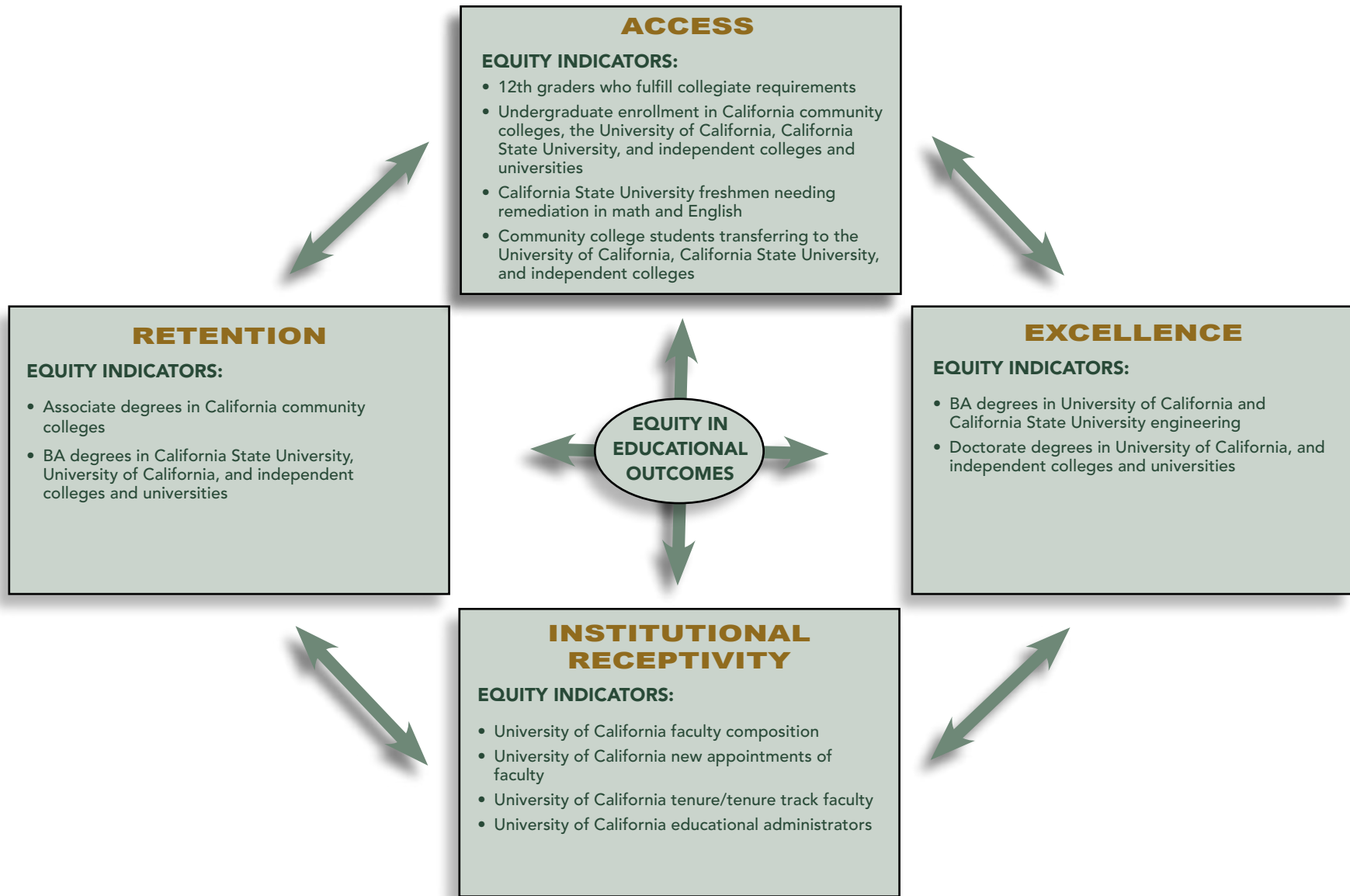


FIGURE 2: The California Academic Equity Scorecard

CCC: California Community College
 UC: University of California
 CSU: California State University

GREEN: At or Above Equity
 RED: Below Equity
 YELLOW: Almost at Equity

Perspectives

EQUITY INDICATORS

EQUITY SCORECARD
 WHITE BLACK ASIAN LATINO

			WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	LATINO
Access	1	12th graders who fulfill A-G requirements vs. K-12 enrollment, 1988-2001	1.3	0.7	2.1	0.5
	2a	Undergraduate enrollment in CCC vs. high school graduates, 1988-2001	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.7
	2b	Undergraduate enrollment in UC vs. high school graduates 1988-2001	0.9	0.5	2.4	0.4
	2c	Undergraduate enrollment in CSU vs. high school graduates, 1988-2001	0.9	0.8	1.2	0.6
	2d	Undergraduate enrollment in independent colleges vs. high school graduates, 1988-2001	1.2	0.8	1.1	0.4
	3a	Needing remediation in math upon entrance vs. number of freshmen in CSU, 2000-2002*	0.8	1.7	0.8	1.4
	3b	Needing remediation in English upon entrance vs. number of freshmen in CSU, 2000-2002*	0.6	1.4	1.4	1.3
	4a	CCC students transferring to UC vs. CCC enrollment, 1988-2002	1.0	0.4	1.9	0.6
	4b	CCC students transferring to CSU vs. CCC enrollment, 1988-2002	1.0	0.7	1.1	0.8
	4c	CCC students transferring to independent colleges vs. CCC enrollment, 1991-2000	1.2	1.1	1.0	0.7
Retention	5a	AA degree in CCC vs. 20-24 age group in CA, 1990-1999	1.3	0.8	0.8	0.5
	5b	BA degrees in UC vs. 20-24 age group in CA, 1990-1999	1.2	0.4	1.9	0.3
	5c	BA degrees in CSU vs. 20-24 age group in CA, 1990-1999	1.3	0.5	1.0	0.3
	5d	BA degrees in independent colleges vs. 20-24 age group in CA, 1990-1999	1.5	0.6	1.0	0.3
Excellence	6a	BA degrees in UC engineering vs. UC undergraduate enrollment, 1988-2001	0.9	0.4	1.2	0.4
	6b	BA degrees in CSU engineering vs. CSU undergraduate enrollment, 1988-2001	0.9	0.4	1.8	0.5
	7a	Doctorate degrees in UC vs. UC undergraduate enrollment, 1988-2001	1.3	0.5	0.3	0.3
	7b	Doctorate degrees in independent colleges vs. independent undergraduate enrollment, 1988-2001	1.0	0.6	0.6	0.3
Institutional Receptivity	8	UC faculty composition vs. student enrollment, 2002	2.1	0.8	0.4	0.4
	9	UC new appointments of faculty positions vs. student enrollment, 2002	2.0	1.0	0.5	0.5
	10	CCC tenure/tenure track faculty vs. CC student enrollment, 2002	1.8	0.9	0.6	0.4
	11	CCC educational administrators vs. CC student enrollment, 2002	1.6	1.4	0.4	0.5

* The direction of the measure is opposite to others, so a value greater than 1 indicates inequity.

Creating Mechanisms for Measurement

Bensimon and a team of researchers addressed the problem by creating the California Academic Equity Scorecard, essentially a report card for higher education. It is based on the Diversity Scorecard Project, which was developed by the Center for Urban Education and 14 institutional partners as a way to identify disparities in the educational outcomes of ethnic/racial groups in the Los Angeles area. Each of the center's institutional partners developed its own indicators for self-assessment and improvement, thus creating a scorecard that measured equity with regard to access, retention, institutional receptivity, and excellence.

The Center then developed the USC Center for Urban Education California Academic Equity Index, a metric that allowed for the assessment of the postsecondary education system, and the determination of whether underrepresented students were achieving equity. Using data from the California Postsecondary Education Commission and other websites, the team created a prototype Academic Equity Scorecard, which measured the same four areas as the Diversity Scorecard — access, retention, institutional receptivity, and excellence.

Understanding Where the System Fails

The indicators the group used to examine California's institutions were somewhat limited, however, due to the availability, or lack of, some data. Still, the group identified 11 indicators (Figure 1). Using the Equity Index, which Bensimon said is a simple way to see if outcomes are getting better, the research team got what may be the most accurate picture of Latinos' educational status and progress. In every area, Latinos rated well below the equity indices (Figure 2); in many cases those ratings have gone unchanged for a decade or more.

Policy-makers continually stress the need to move Latinos up the educational ladder, especially since the knowledge-based economy of the future will depend greatly on Latino educational attainment. Yet when the state's system of higher education is seen through the California Academic Equity Scorecard, it appears to be failing on all fronts. Bensimon admitted that the equity scorecard cannot fix the dilemma; her mission is simply to identify disparities that have been buried for years under mountains of data. "What gets measured is what gets attended to," she said. "Our way of closing the higher education gap is to make the inequities in educational outcomes more visible."

She encouraged the California Postsecondary Education Commission, the University of California, California State University, and the California Community College systems to incorporate equity performance indicators, and include the results in annual reports, websites, and other publicly distributed material. She also encouraged individual campuses to create their own equity measures, and factor them into their strategic planning, program reviews, resource allocation, and the development of new programs.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

Dowell Myers and John Pitkin. 2001. *Demographic Futures for California*. Population Dynamics Group, School of Policy, Planning, and Development. University of Southern California. Los Angeles, California.

Bensimon, E.M., Hao, L., Bustillos, L.T. (forthcoming). Measuring the state of equity in higher education. In P. Gandara, G. Orfield, C. Horn (Eds.) *Leveraging Promise and Expanding Opportunity in Higher Education*. Albany: SUNY Press.
Paper available for downloading at <http://222.usc.edu/dept/education/CUE/>

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A View from the Academic Community

It's "Nobody's Job" - Reaching Out to Underrepresented Students

Juan lives in a one room apartment with his mother and brother. His father left five years ago. Juan's mother works on a janitorial staff, rising at 2 a.m. to catch a series of buses for her 4 a.m.-to-noon shift. She is undocumented and paid in cash; her income so low that a car is out of the financial question. She has no driver's license, no checking account — the family hides money in the house — and no credit card. She has no health care, and according to Juan, she needs an operation.

Juan also works on a janitorial staff in a downtown hotel. Because he too is undocumented, he uses his younger brother Diego's social security card. Juan, the only teen on the janitorial staff, works every night until midnight. Juan also attends high school. His school books are an older, different version than his classmates because he registered late. Yet Juan, who always sits in the front row, still manages to look up the right answers to his teacher's questions.

More than anything, Juan wants to go on to college. He assumes that at the appropriate time, someone from the school will help him fill out college applications, and help him find a way to pay for it. He doesn't realize that the deadlines have already passed, thereby reducing his options to one: community college.

"Kids like Juan don't get a fair shake," said William Tierney, director of the USC Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis at the Rossier School of Education. "Juan is one of those students nobody notices. He's the one that counselors tend to move around a lot. His grades are OK. He's never a problem."

As part of Tierney's research, he interviewed Juan every week for 18 months. "In Juan's case, nobody in his family had ever graduated from grammar school. So it wasn't just that the school didn't help him, it was also that his family didn't have the information they needed to help him."



It wasn't just that the school didn't help him, it was also that his family didn't have the information they needed to help him.

William G. Tierney, Ph.D.
USC Rossier School of Education




Juan's Paycheck

Juan's paycheck every two weeks: \$ 561.89

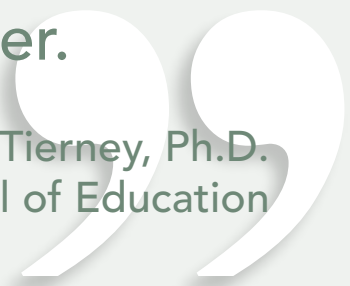
The following is deducted:

Federal withholding	\$ 55.44
FICA:	34.84
Medicare:	8.15
CA withholding	6.58
CA disability:	6.65
Total taxes deducted:	111.64

Juan's take home pay is \$450.25 every two weeks.



The problems we face are not a bunch of disembodied issues. The world is stacked against these low-income kids. If they're in a private, elite school, a college counselor will come to the high school and train the teachers how to write letters of reference. That's not true in low-income schools, where the teachers don't, or can't, write anything more than a perfunctory letter.



William G. Tierney, Ph.D.
USC Rossier School of Education

Juan is, of course, a real person. But he is also emblematic of the problems that exist in the educational world of the Latino community. “The problems we face are not a bunch of disembodied issues. The world is stacked against these low-income kids. If they’re in a private, elite school, a college counselor will come to the high school and train the teachers how to write letters of reference. That’s not true in low-income schools, where the teachers don’t, or can’t, write anything more than a perfunctory letter.”

Getting low-income minority high school students into college, or at least informing them about requirements, deadlines, and financing, apparently is “nobody’s job.” High schools may not have the resources or the inclination; university outreach programs generally are geared more toward increasing applications than recruiting a specific group of students. The responsibility thus becomes incumbent on the students themselves, requiring them to navigate a confusing, complex system with little help from educational institutions or their parents.

How Effective Are College Outreach Programs?

Tierney is currently directing a three-year project funded by the U.S. Department of Education that looks at the effectiveness of college outreach programs. It examines what determines program effectiveness, and whether these programs can potentially affect the educational opportunity structure in this country. The research team identified nine parameters to discern the impact they have on college preparation and enrollment:

- 1** Rigorous academic curriculum
- 2** Academic, college, and career counseling
- 3** Co-curricular activities
- 4** Incorporation of students’ cultures
- 5** Family and community engagement
- 6** Peer support
- 7** Mentoring
- 8** Timing of interventions
- 9** Funding priorities

The study’s preliminary findings support what, in many cases, is already known about immigrant and minority high school students: that they know little about college, its costs, requirements, and deadlines; they do not have a clear understanding of the benefits of a college degree; and they are often unaware that waiting until the 12th grade to begin the college preparation and application process is four years too late.

Getting low-income, minority high school students into college, or at least informing them about requirements, deadlines, and financing, apparently is “nobody’s job.”

The disconnect between students, high schools and higher education, and the not-my-job attitude of some institutions is troubling. Tierney said he believes that gap needs to close, and that it will take everyone involved — including policy-makers at the local, state and federal levels — to manage such a task. His recommendations:

- Develop a collegiate time frame that starts in the eighth grade and intensifies in the 10th.
- Hold schools accountable — both high schools and universities and community colleges — for accessibility.
- Postsecondary institutions should adopt schools in their area, and work closely with them on preparing kids for college.
- Formalize the transition to college. For example, at USC it is almost mandatory for kids and parents to attend a summer orientation.
- Implement unified state and federal policies about college-going, and correct the fragmented way information about college and financial aid is provided. Students currently get information piecemeal; dissemination should be more systematic.

“If we do not increase college-going, we as a nation will be imperiled. We increasingly need a workforce with greater skills and more post-secondary education. As a state, we have one of the largest economies in the world, and yet we import more workers with science and technology degrees, from other states and from abroad, because we do not have enough individuals in California with these degrees.”

Understanding College Access and Financial Aid

Another study currently underway underscores Tierney’s findings. Mari Luna De La Rosa, a postdoctoral research associate at USC’s Rossier School of Education’s Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis, said the goal of the study is to demystify the college financial aid process for low-income, urban students. It will analyze how families receive, understand, and use information about college access and financial aid, and thus enable the development of strategies to more effectively disseminate information. The study includes nine low-income, high-minority Los Angeles high schools. Three of the schools have a high college-going rate, three have a low college-going rate, and three are charter schools with mixed college-going rates, with at least one school serving a large population of undocumented students.

Researchers will interview 30 students per school, all of whom are in the 11th and 12th grades. “What are their perceptions about paying for college? What are their perceptions about financial aid?” said De La Rosa. “We’re finding that it’s kind of one extreme or another. They are either very knowledgeable because they want to go to college and have been on a positive track, or they are just now thinking about it and haven’t done anything toward it yet. They know very little about financial aid and deadlines.”

The study will look at financial aid programs, such as the nationwide Sallie Mae programs and the L.A.-based Free Cash For College event, that provide information about state financial aid programs.

Immigrant and minority high school students

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preparation and application process is four years

too late.

The three-year study, funded by the Lumina Foundation for Education, will also examine how effective programs such as these are. “There is information floating around out there, but we need to capture how it gets announced and communicated, and what kind of effect it has,” De La Rosa said.

Finally, the Lumina study will attempt to better understand the kind of culture students need to encourage and support their college aspirations. The study should reveal such things as how students make their way to a college counselor’s office, when and why they start thinking about college, how they learn which classes meet college enrollment requirements, and how they get information about PSATs and SATs.

Understanding High-Achieving Latinos

Understanding the culture is also uppermost on the mind of Frances Contreras, assistant professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Washington’s College of Education. Contreras’s focus has been on high-achieving Latinos, and an examination of what makes them successful. Her research into equity and access for underrepresented students, the results of which will be published next year, has looked at data from the nationwide cohort of students who took the SAT in 2003. High achievers were considered as such by virtue of the fact that they took the SAT, Contreras said. She profiled the Latino students, and compared their profiles to students who scored in the top 20th percentile. “But then I realized that high achieving Latinos didn’t look like the representative profiles. Those who were high achievers had parents with bachelor’s or graduate degrees, and made more than \$80,000 to \$100,000 per year. That is a profile that really mirrors their white and Asian peers.”

Contreras concluded that creating a culture of high expectations, like the expectation of college attendance, has to start in the primary grades. Yet she is also aware that this is difficult in low-income communities, where both parents work long hours in labor intensive jobs.

Parental expectations are not the only prerequisite for college, though. Students also must have access to advanced placement classes, which requires trained teachers, a student base, the appropriate textbooks, and administrative support — none of which are generally available in low-income areas. Students also need a physical environment that is safe and pleasing, and conducive to learning. Again, these resources aren’t always available in low-income areas or to disenfranchised populations.

“As it gets tougher to get into colleges and universities, especially elite colleges and universities, and as every state develops its own accountability system, our ability to understand how students achieve is a given if we are going to understand how our educational system is working,” Contreras said.

Creating a Culture of High Standards

Equity policies that address equality and access across the general student population are needed, as are standardized tests to see if the system is failing the student, or the student is failing within the system. “I think the state needs to have standards for itself, or an accountability framework for schools and districts,” Contreras said. “It would extend beyond testing, and wouldn’t put the burden for achievement on students but on the system of education. Teachers are required to get the students to perform, as opposed to the system.”

Creating a culture of high expectations, like the expectation of college attendance, has to start in the primary grades.

Parental expectations are not the only prerequisite for college. Students also need access to advanced placement classes, trained teachers, appropriate textbooks, and administrative support — none of which are generally available in low-income areas.

Reversing a culture of low expectations in schools and communities will require a “village mentality,” one that has parents, the community, and the schools working in tandem and taking responsibility for the success of their children. Yet another, albeit less popular solution is a shift toward the idea that school systems must become parental proxies when it comes to setting college-going expectations and supporting students’ college aspirations. “Can we compensate for what is lacking in the homes of disenfranchised, underrepresented students?” said Contreras. “Can we create a substitute for what parents may not be able to provide as a result of systemic barriers, or because they lack the awareness? How do we replicate the infrastructure of educated, high-income parents that produces high-achieving students? How do we complement and supplement the lack of social and cultural capital, and capitalize on the desire that all parents, including low-income Latino parents, have to see their children succeed in school?”

As the state goes through its annual ritual of budget cuts and belt tightening, Contreras predicts a different type of discussion than the one that took place in the 1960s and 70s, when the composition of California was largely white and the state responded by investing heavily in the public school system. “Now that the composition has changed, and with the number of Latino students we’re going to see in the future, the discourse has been and is likely to continue to be very different from what it was 45 years ago.”

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

Tierney: <http://www.usc.edu/dept/chepa/mesa/> and <http://www.usc.edu/dept/chepa/pdf/CollegePrep.pdf>

TRPI study from Sallie Mae: http://www.trpi.org/PDFs/sallie%20mae_4-28.ppt#20

Williams vs. State of California report: http://www.mofo.com/decent_schools/expert_reports/russell_report.pdf

MODERATOR:



Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-34)
United States House of Representatives

A View from the Policy Trenches

PRESENTERS:



Richard Alarcón (D-20)
California State Senate



Marco Antonio Firebaugh (D-50)
California State Assembly



Roy Romer
Los Angeles Unified School District

A Civic Responsibility

"As many of you know, only 52 percent of Latino students graduate from high school. Of that 52 percent, only 16 percent are prepared for college. To change this will require a partnership between those of us who create policy, and those of you who must implement or live with that policy."

Lucille Roybal-Allard
U.S. House of Representatives (D-34)

Roybal-Allard didn't mince words when it came to encouraging partnerships between federal legislators and educators. She asked her audience to let go of the idea that, as individuals, they are politically inconsequential and powerless to create change. She asked them to understand that they are not disconnected from what happens at the federal level, but are directly, and often profoundly, affected by it.

According to Roybal-Allard, the low number of high school graduates has devastating economic and social consequences, both locally and nationally. High school dropouts earn one-third less than high school graduates and less than half of what college graduates earn. Such a disparity in wages points out the importance of a high school diploma and its role in a financially secure future.

From a national perspective, the U.S. economy can only benefit from a better educated workforce. For example, if the Latino college graduation rate doubled by 2010, the economy would be strengthened by increased consumer spending estimated at approximately \$14 billion. Public revenues would increase by \$13 billion through reduced public spending and an increased tax base, according to a study by the Hispanic Scholarship Fund. This additional revenue could be used to improve schools, hospitals, infrastructure, and national security.

Policy Solutions for Those in Need

Roybal-Allard this year supported the “Graduation for All Act” (HR3085). This act targeted school districts with the lowest graduation rates and would have provided grants to improve adolescent literacy. It also would have funded the development of individual graduation plans for students most at risk of not graduating, and strengthened accountability by requiring states and school districts to set benchmarks for improving graduation rates. Although the bill was endorsed by a number of education-related organizations, it did not come up for a vote in the previous Congressional session, and will be reintroduced in the 2005 session. Roybal-Allard is also the lead sponsor of the Student Adjustment Act (HR 1684). The measure would let undocumented students pay in-state tuition rates, allow them to qualify for federal student loans and grants, and give them the opportunity to become legal residents. Although the measure did not come up for a full floor vote in the House or the Senate, where it is known as the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, or DREAM Act (S. 1291), Roybal-Allard plans to reintroduce it in the coming year.

These are just two items of proposed legislation that would have had a dramatic impact at the state and local level, which is why it is important that educators begin looking at the national political landscape, Roybal-Allard said. “Although today’s focus was on the state and local perspective on education, I want to assure you that those of us at the federal level fully understand that local and state governments are directly impacted by decisions made in Washington D.C. That’s why I encourage you to get involved politically. These decisions are made in the political arena, whether we like it or not. If you’re going to empower a community, you’re going to have to do it politically. You’re going to have to pressure your legislators, and let them know what you want.”

Broadening Requirements, Diversity, and Expectations

On a more immediate level, today’s educators are grappling with the large numbers of Latino and minority students who are not prepared for college. “We can’t find qualified students,” said State Senator Richard Alarcón (D-20). According to the Legislative Analyst’s Office, about 30 percent of freshmen at the University of California, and more than 60 percent of freshmen at California State University are unprepared for college-level reading, writing and/or math. One solution the senator advocates is to make A-G course work a requirement in all schools’ curriculum; they are now only required by the University of California system.

Alarcón also believes diversity should be incorporated as a core value in the educational system, and that all schools and parents should operate under the assumption that every child will go to college. “This is important to us as a society,” he said. “Instead of assuming that every student is not going to college, which is a fundamental assumption in secondary education throughout California, we should assume that every child is going to college. Short of that, they should have a plan for vocational school or be looking at the possibility of military service.”

Alarcón is also concerned by the fact that universities are an economic engine of their own, yet they do not reinvest financially in their local communities. The University of California system, which is known as one of the nation’s most selective public universities, turns away three of every four students who apply. This year, more than 43,000 students applied for the 3,900 available freshman slots. The university guarantees admission to the top 12.5 percent of the state’s high schools, but does not give preference to students from schools in its immediate area. According to Alarcón, only 12 students came from three of the four low-income schools in the area, even though there was a large pool of UC-eligible students to choose from. By comparison, 141 came from schools in nearby high-income areas. Although Alarcón conceded that students from low-income areas may be unprepared due to the lack of AP classes at their high school, he

would still like to see a way to guarantee admission to talented local students. His plan to do that, called “4/15+ for Success,” would require UCLA to guarantee admission to the top 4 percent of high school graduates living within a 15-mile radius of its Westwood campus.

“We should be investing in our local talent because they are the ones, Hispanics and blacks more than any other, who come back to the community and work toward economic and social excellence. We should require community colleges and universities to reinvest in the community. We should create economic and educational empowerment zones that will help to develop local leadership from within,” Alarcón said.

Demanding Accountability

Former California State Assemblyman Marco Antonio Firebaugh (D-50), who stepped down in December 2004, added to Alarcón’s comments by saying that accountability was yet another issue of concern. Unlike Bensimon, who favored accountability via a more accurate figuring of a school’s demographics, Firebaugh said he believes that as universities and colleges turn to private funding, the public loses its power to demand better performance from its educational institutions. “We have underfunded education over the years,” Firebaugh said, “The result is that we robbed ourselves of the moral authority to demand greater responsiveness from our schools. Many still receive public money, but most fundraise privately. They find resources outside the public venue, which means we have no opportunity to hold them accountable.”

Restructuring for Smaller Learning Environments

Superintendent Roy Romer, who heads the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), has narrowed his focus over the years, going from the national landscape as the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, to the state level, where he served three terms as governor of Colorado. He now heads LAUSD, the second largest public school system in the country, with more than 745,000 students, 38,000 teachers, 2,500 administrators, 35,000 classified employees, and a budget of \$13 million.

A-G Requirements for the University of California System

The following sequence of high school courses is required by the Academic Senate of the University of California as appropriate for fulfilling the minimum eligibility requirements for admission to the University of California. It also illustrates the minimum level of academic preparation students ought to achieve in high school to undertake university level work.

- a.** History/Social Science — Two years, including one year of world history, cultures, and historical geography and one year of U.S. history or one-half year of U.S. history and one-half year of civics or American government.
- b.** English — Four years of college preparatory English that include frequent and regular writing, and reading of classic and modern literature.
- c.** Mathematics — Three years of college preparatory mathematics that include the topics covered in elementary and advanced algebra and two- and three-dimensional geometry.
- d.** Laboratory Science — Two years of laboratory science providing fundamental knowledge in at least two of these three disciplines: biology, chemistry, and physics.
- e.** Language Other Than English — Two years of the same language other than English.
- f.** Visual & Performing Arts — One year, including dance, drama/theater, music, or visual art.
- g.** College Preparatory Elective — One year (two semesters), chosen from additional “a-f” courses beyond those used to satisfy the requirements above, or courses that have been approved solely for use as “g” electives.

Source: <http://pathstat1.ucop.edu/ag/a-g/>



We need to get involved politically. These decisions are made in the political arena, whether we like it or not.

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Congresswoman, D-34, U.S. House of Representatives



When Romer was named as superintendent in 2000, one of his goals was to improve classroom instruction to better prepare students for their future. The most pressing need was for space — the district was 200,000 seats short. But just as important, Romer said, was what happened inside that space. He focused on high standards, and on developing or buying curriculum that met those standards. He implemented intensive training programs for teachers and administrators, and brought in more than 800 instructional coaches for the teachers. He put in place the means to do periodic assessments that would benchmark the district's progress and ensure LAUSD assessments would be based on facts, not fantasy or wishful thinking. Romer then embarked on the creation of "small learning units," which entailed breaking up large schools into cohorts of 300 to 500 students. The goal was to increase retention rates from 50 percent to 80 percent, and to spark academic achievement and boost graduation rates. "We're creating small learning units so everybody is involved, and the entire system is accountable for student success," Romer said.

A New York Success Story

The concept is based, in part, on a similar program in New York; the goal is to take a more holistic view of students and their social environment. The five participating high schools in the Bronx area chose the structures and models they felt best served their students. Some are theme-based institutes or houses, while others focus on vocational units, known as career clusters. Although each school is different, their strategies are the same: reduced class size; smaller counselor caseloads; additional instructional time; case-conferencing; adult advocates; and peer mentoring. Faculty and staff volunteer to stay with the same group of students from ninth grade through graduation. Area college faculty help with instruction and professional development, and work with students in an ongoing, higher education effort that involves taking them to visit college and university campuses. They also distribute college literature and facilitate informational workshops for students and their families.

As Romer continues to oversee the creation of LAUSD's small learning units, he said he also would like to see a transition among those who manage the system. Most of the district's administrators have worked their way up from the operational side of LAUSD. Romer said he would like to see more administrators come from the academic echelons.

"Although there is a great deal of vigor in this system now, we're currently examining the skill levels and the practices of our management personnel. I don't think a principal or an assistant principal or a senior administrator can manage better instruction unless they know good instruction when they see it."

Romer said he hopes smaller student cohorts, more involved teachers, and a more academically inclined management will help LAUSD evolve from an enormous student factory to one that provides a more personalized style of education and that sends qualified, prepared students to college. "We are struggling now on doing the right things, like how we can improve the quality of our instruction," Romer said. "Because the success of that youngster's academics is all of our responsibility. Not someone else's."

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

Romer/New York Program: <http://www.sedl.org/cgi-bin/mysql/slcawards.cgi?s=&l=showdistrict&v=&sr=12>

Alarcon: http://www.sen.ca.gov/ftp/SEN/COMMITTEE/SELECT/COLLEGE/_home/PUBLICATON/COMMITTEEREPORT5-02.PDF



**Solomon D.
Trujillo**

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

The Invisible People

What would happen if the world changed and nobody noticed? According to Sol Trujillo, that is exactly what has happened, at least with regard to the Latino community. Population figures in the last 20 years have skyrocketed. Latino spending in 2004 topped \$700 billion. And the waves of second- and third-generation Latinos are already threatening to overwhelm existing educational capacities.

The world is changing, said Trujillo, former chairman and CEO of U.S. West, and Orange S.A., but apparently many of these changes are happening just under the radar of America's social consciousness. Trujillo has his theories about why nobody has noticed that if Latinos were a country, their Gross Domestic Product would rank ninth in the world, just below Canada and ahead of Spain and Mexico. Or that Latino buying power in 2008 will approach \$1 trillion annually.

It's because Hispanics are the invisible people, Trujillo said. "We don't see them on corporate boards or in the upper echelons of management in the public or private sectors. They are not the decision- and policy-makers. They are rarely in careers that generate wealth – science, business, engineering, technology development. They get steered toward the social services, the helping careers. In the past, on the rare occasions when you saw a Latino on television or in the movies, that person was napping under a tree, which meant he was lazy. He wouldn't learn English, or his accent was too strong, or he used an improper grammatical construction, at which point we decided he was stupid. Now when we see Latinos in movies or on television, they're gang members. We rarely see a true representation of Hispanics; for example, that they have higher employment rates than any other demographic. Most people don't know this because Hispanics are invisible."

Politicians make a show of courting "the Latino vote," even though there is doubt that such a thing actually exists. Neither has the marketing/advertising industry made much headway on financially exploiting the burgeoning Latino marketplace. "You can't just have an ad campaign in Spanish. It will never work. What you need are Hispanics on your marketing team," Trujillo said.

He likened Hispanic-targeted advertising with the women-targeted marketing of household products in the 1950s and 60s, when women made the lion's share of household purchasing decisions, and

when companies that sold household products were almost exclusively run by men. Sales took off when corporate executives, spurred by the women's movement, began to see the value of having women in management positions, especially in companies that sold household products.

Providing opportunities and promoting Latinos into management positions is no longer a moral imperative, Trujillo said. "It just makes good business sense. The Latino market has simply become too large to ignore any longer. If companies don't populate their executive officer suites and boardrooms with Latinos, how are they going to understand how to meet this growing market's needs and influence its buying habits?"

Part of the equation, however, will be the involvement of Latinos in determining their own future by pursuing degrees in the physical sciences, in business, engineering, computer science and technology development. California lacks such a pool of talented workers, and generally has to recruit them from other states. Latinos are typically steered, whether by cultural bias or by educational institutions, into the social services. Little wealth is created in these impoverished, albeit noble professions. By extension, neither is there much impact on the overall economic picture.

"These are opportunities for us," Trujillo said. "We need to look for ways to positively exploit them. We need to pursue advanced degrees. We need to form mutually rewarding partnerships and alliances. Our leaders have to be more inclusive, and stop looking for talent in the same old places. We have to build leadership teams that are made up of the best talent, and we have to look everywhere for that talent. That's diversity. It's not about color or sex. It's about a mindset and a broad awareness that is inclusive of all cultures and experience."

Solomon Trujillo has been a successful and respected senior executive in the telecommunications industry for nearly 30 years. He has served as the chief executive officer of Orange SA, one of Europe's leading wireless companies, chairman and CEO of a high-tech start-up, Graviton Inc. and chairman and CEO of US WEST up until its merger with Qwest Communications in 2000.

Under his leadership, US WEST, a former Bell operating company in 14 western and midwestern U.S. states, ranked first among the nation's telecommunications companies in many areas including financial performance, technological innovation and customer service.

Mr. Trujillo's broader business experience, expertise and management skills are reflected in the advisory and non-executive roles that he holds. He has served as an advisor to the US government on trade policy. He serves on the corporate boards of PepsiCo, Target Corporation, Gannett and EDS and is on the advisory board of Alcatel. In addition, he is a board trustee at UCLA for Public Policy and the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute.

A leader in numerous community activities and honoured with many national and local service awards, Mr Trujillo received the Ronald H. Brown Corporate Bridge Builder Award in 1999 and the Corporate Recognition Award from A Better Chance in 2000.

Mr. Trujillo holds a Bachelor of Science degree in business and an MBA from the University of Wyoming, and has had honorary doctoral degrees conferred on him by the universities of Colorado and Wyoming.

MODERATOR:



Carol Rava Treat

Bill and Melinda
Gates Foundation

Applications of Real World Solutions

A Civic Responsibility

“What the best and wisest parents want for their children must be what the community wants for all of its children.”

John Dewey
American Philosopher and Educator
(1859-1952)

PRESENTERS:



Ronald Blackburn-Moreno

ASPIRA Association

The story about the education of Latino children isn't just about rising population numbers and the challenge of meeting these children's educational needs, or about resource shortfalls and the diminishing availability of financial aid. It is a story with a positive side, particularly when one looks at the involvement of private businesses, foundations, and non-profit organizations that have acted on the belief that a child's educational success is not the sole responsibility of the child or the school. Success requires the supportive efforts of community organizations, and perhaps more important, the involvement of the children's parents.



Miguel A. Satut

ENLACE (Engaging Latino Communities for Education),
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Parent Institute for Quality Education

“The research and evidence are overwhelming that without parental involvement, these young people don't have a chance,” said David Valladolid, president and CEO of the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE), a successful San Diego-based program that educates parents on how they can support their children throughout their school years.



David Valladolid

Parent Institute for Quality Education

PIQE started in 1987, when two local activists — one a local pastor, the other a California State University professor — brought together a group of parents to talk about why their children were failing in school. The pair focused on an elementary school that was 99 percent Latino, and ranked at the bottom of the district's elementary schools. That meeting grew into eight weeks of two-hour weekly discussions among 90 parents. The result of these weekly dialogues was the emergence of 154 areas of concern, which ultimately became the basis of a curriculum that teaches parents of K-12 students to be advocates for their children.



The research and evidence
are overwhelming that without
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these young people don't have
a chance.

David Valladolid
Parent Institute for Quality Education



The program has since evolved into a nine-week parent training class that is offered in elementary, middle and high schools in 16 counties statewide. It stresses the importance of parent involvement, and addresses six core topics: building children's self-esteem through positive feedback; understanding the American school system, and the difference between the Mexican and American educational systems; using such support strategies as reading together, supervising homework, or creating a culture of high expectation in the home; engaging with the school by communicating with teachers, attending conferences, and working with teachers to track student progress; finding ways to keep young people out of gangs and away from drugs; and understanding college admission requirements and the financial aid process, and ensuring that students take classes that meet those requirements.

contact

**Parent Institute for
Quality Education
(PIQE)**

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The groups are small, made up primarily of Latino parents. The classes are participatory. Nobody lectures. The facilitators are parents who have "known poverty, so they don't look down on the other parents," Valladolid said. Previous research has found that parents frequently find that school systems are impersonal, insensitive, and often disrespectful. "That's why our facilitators and classes are ethnically matched, and why we teach in fourteen different languages. It lets us explain the educational system in a common and primary language." To encourage parental involvement and attendance at PIQE classes, host schools are required to provide child care, meeting space, and offer classes at times that are convenient for working parents.

PIQE also offers schools a "coach" program that tracks parents for four months after they "graduate" to ensure they stay engaged with their children and the school. PIQE gives the school a monthly report to inform administrators of the issues and concerns raised by the parents. To support the teachers, PIQE has a six-hour workshop that provides them with successful techniques to engage parents as equal partners in their child's education.

The program, which started with no financial base and with a volunteer staff, now has a \$4.5-million base of public and private funding, and has effectively helped low-income and immigrant parents bridge the language and cultural divide between home and school.

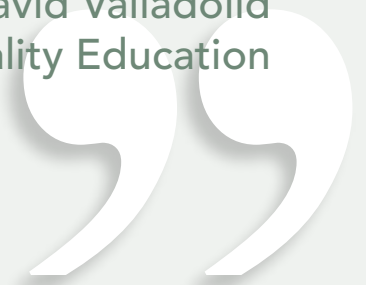
The ultimate goal, Valladolid said, is to address the two most important elements in a child's education: First, the traditional low achievement of low-income and Latino children. Research has shown that by the third grade, these children are one to two years behind their grade level. That gap widens throughout the ensuing years, resulting in inordinately high drop-out rates. Second, that Latino families rarely involve themselves in their children's education. Again, research has shown that parental involvement is one of the most significant factors in educational success.

"The founders were told in the beginning that we would never get low-income parents with multiple jobs to come in and spend nine weeks learning about their children's school. Since we started in 1987, we have graduated 330,000 parents. We understand that the greatest power on earth is the love of a parent for a child. If we can harness that love, there is no barrier a parent will not overcome for their children."



We understand that the greatest power on earth is the love of a parent for a child. If we can harness that love, there is no barrier a parent will not overcome for their children.

David Valladolid
Parent Institute for Quality Education



ENgaging LAtino Communities for Education (ENLACE)

“Enlace.” In Spanish, it means to link or to weave together, which is precisely the goal of this project. Funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, its goal is to increase the number of Latinos who graduate from high school and college. It does this by “weaving a blanket of support” that links universities, colleges, public schools, community organizations, businesses, and families to strengthen the K-16 educational pathway, and to create educational opportunities.

ENLACE’s task is to create a cohesiveness along what is typically a broken pathway through the educational system. Most programs target the various steps along the path, and rarely take a holistic look at how one gets from kindergarten through college. Student progress is not tracked; support systems are not connected. ENLACE’s projects target areas with high Latino populations, and identify best-practice models for replication. They connect regional and national Latino education efforts, and on a more local level, link families and communities to schools, and schools to each other.

Phase I of the program, which started in 1997, had researchers conducting surveys to identify the barriers to college access. The results included: lack of parental involvement; lack of financial resources; inadequate student support; low teacher expectations; low levels of literacy and academic preparation; poor coordination and communication among families, schools, and communities; and a lack of readiness on the part of schools and colleges to meet student needs.

“The current educational structure assumes that children can go from elementary school, to middle school, to high school, and to college if they simply follow the rules. But that doesn’t work for everybody,” said Miguel Satut, program director for Youth and Education at the Kellogg Foundation and lead for the national ENLACE initiative. “When you’re working with linguistic minorities, poor children, or what we call ‘vulnerable’ children — those who show two or more risk factors — that kind of a system doesn’t always work for them. Each one of our sites identified a problem and created a solution by tapping into the capabilities of their partner institutions and communities. They were able to find key transition points along the K-12 pathway where students experience the kind of problems that will ultimately lead to failure. By establishing a partnership that brings together the whole education system, with social service agencies, churches, the business community, and citizens, we found that we can effect change at the local level and provide support to those vulnerable children.”

The Kellogg Foundation funded 13 partnerships in seven states: Arizona, Florida, California, Illinois, New Mexico, New York, and Texas. In Florida, for example, two ENLACE sites worked together to measure the impact on Latino students of the “One Florida” plan, which guarantees college admission to the top 10 percent of high school graduating classes. In Phoenix, the Salt River Project, a local utilities company, and the local Coca-Cola bottler, sponsored a peer tutoring program in four schools. In Tampa, the Tampa Bay Mutiny professional soccer team sponsored an “ENLACE Night” at one of its home games, and in doing so, received a commitment of \$100,000 from the Children’s Board of Hillsborough County to support a child/family liaison program. In New Mexico, three ENLACE sites took a collaborative approach toward creating a cohesive, statewide board of K-16 education that would merge the current body overseeing K-12 schools with a separate commission on higher education. Another goal was to revise the state’s process for determining levels of funding to create an incentive for

ENgaging LAtino Communities for Education (ENLACE)

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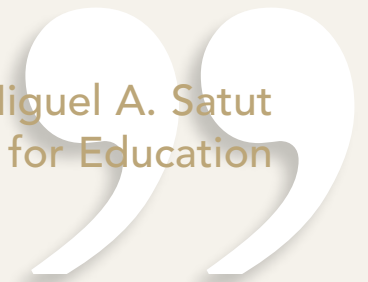
www.wkkf.org

contact



Hispanic parents do care about education. It's simply not true that they don't. It's just that they either don't speak English, or because it's not their first language, they don't speak it well enough to be understood. So when schools send home information written only in English, they don't always get the message. Or they go to the school and nobody can talk to them. That's where we get the perspective that they don't care.

Miguel A. Satut
ENgaging LATino Communities for Education



schools to improve their student retention rate. The New Mexico sites also put in place on-campus parent centers to facilitate parent involvement. It was these centers' activities and successful outreach into the community that began to debunk the myth that Latino parents don't care about their children's education.

"Hispanic parents do care. It's simply not true that they don't. It's just that they either don't speak English, or because it's not their first language, they don't speak it well enough to be understood. So when schools send home information written only in English, they don't always get the message. Or they go to the school and nobody can talk to them. That's where we get the perspective that they don't care. But we have proved that if you give parents the right information in a language they can understand, they will act on it," Satut said.

ENLACE is in its final year of implementation; its projects are looking at sustainability and the logistics of integrating successful program elements with their partner institutions. During this final phase of support, the Kellogg Foundation will promote to a more national audience the most exemplary models and approaches developed by the ENLACE partnerships.

ASPIRA

It takes a special kind of vision to see the good underlying something society generally believes is bad. Case in point: the idea that Latino gang members could become community leaders. Yet that is precisely what Antonia Pantoja, Ph.D., did in the late 1950s, when she looked at New York's Puerto Rican community and its seeming inability to move up the economic ladder. Thousands of Puerto Ricans had moved to New York in the 1940s to take jobs in the manufacturing industry. Yet even stable employment had failed to improve the community's impoverished economic situation.

Knowing that education affected economics, Pantoja turned her attention to what was then an 80-percent high-school drop-out rate, and to the Puerto Rican gangs who ruled certain areas of the Manhattan streets. The gangs ran in packs. They had individual cultures and strict codes of behavior. They used symbols — colors, language, clothing, tattoos, jewelry — to create and maintain their unique identities. Pantoja saw certain members who evidenced tremendous leadership skills, and had the ability to be self-directed. She saw the pride gang members showed in belonging to their particular group. Puerto Rican gangs, oddly enough, gave her hope.

What Pantoja instinctively understood was the adolescent need to belong. It was an undeniable instinct that drove them to join gangs. She also knew that the ability to lead, to be self-directed, or to create an identity, were good things. It was just that these very human characteristics had channeled themselves through the only opening available to a Puerto Rican youth. Pantoja believed these characteristics could be harnessed, nurtured, and developed, and ultimately turn these young Latinos into catalysts for change in their own lives and those of their community.

Thus did Pantoja and a group of Puerto Rican leaders create ASPIRA, a non-profit organization whose name means "to aspire" in Spanish. ASPIRA created special clubs to fulfill the need to belong. The ASPIRA Leadership Clubs fostered a sense of pride in its members' for their Puerto Rican heritage, and

A graphic with a dark green vertical bar on the left containing the word "contact" in white lowercase letters. The rest of the graphic is a solid brown color with white text. The text includes the ASPIRA logo, the address "1444 I Street, NW, Suite 800 Washington, DC 2005", the phone number "202-835-3600", and the website "www.aspira.org".

contact

ASPIRA

1444 I Street, NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 2005

202-835-3600

www.aspira.org



Young people need validation.

They need to be secure in their own identity, and they have to know they are worthy. That is the core of ASPIRA's success. We help to build their self-esteem by validating them as individuals, validating their culture, and promoting a sense of identity and pride.



Ronald Blackburn-Moreno
ASPIRA Association, Inc.

taught them to become advocates for themselves and their community. The clubs also took advantage of the importance of symbols, choosing as its logo the *pitirre*, a small bird known for its ability to outsmart and defeat much larger birds. It was a fitting symbol for these young Latinos, reminding them that even the smallest and seemingly powerless can take control of their lives and be a leader for change.

Today's ASPIRA organization, with its \$46-million budget and its more than 1,000-member staff, 30 percent of whom are volunteer, annually serves 35,000 Puerto Rican and Latino students through clubs established in schools in seven states. It boasts a 98-percent high-school graduation rate and a 90-percent college-going rate among its "aspirantes." Using its clubs as its vehicle, ASPIRA provides leadership training, career and college counseling, financial aid, scholarship assistance, educational advocacy, cultural activities, and most importantly, continuing opportunities to implement community action projects.

"Our goal is still the same after all these years," said Ronald Blackburn-Moreno, ASPIRA president and CEO. "To help Latino youth develop their intellectual and leadership potential so they can achieve educational excellence, and teach them how to improve their own lives and that of their community."

The mechanics of ASPIRA are simple. The organization developed an intervention model that accentuates a student's positive attributes, rather than requiring them to overcome negative characteristics. The program teaches them how to become aware of a current situation, how to analyze the situation and identify potential consequences, and then determine an appropriate course of action.

ASPIRA also has programs that address other areas of students' lives: APEX (ASPIRA Parents for Educational Excellence) consists of 10 workshops that teach parents how to improve their children's study habits, and how to get involved in their child's education. The Mentoring Program provides support and encouragement for Latino youths who want to pursue careers in health care professions. The Community Wealth Development Initiative partners with CitiBank, Morgan Stanley, and the FDIC to pull aspirantes out of the service industries, and prepare them to be business owners and entrepreneurs. ASPIRA's Community Technology Centers, which are located in 13 states, offer students hands-on workshops on computer and information technologies. The ASPIRA MCI-MarcoPolo Program provides teachers in Hispanic-serving school districts with 5,200 standards-based lesson plans and resources that cover every core K-12 subject, grade level, and class period. The organization even offers an HIV/AIDS program that teaches skills in decision-making, assertiveness, and communication.

ASPIRA is perhaps most unique among such organizations in that its charter requires that 40 percent of its national board of directors be Latinos between the age of 16 and 24. "They participate fully in the organization," said Blackburn-Moreno. "They even vote on our salaries."

"Young people need validation. They need to be secure in their own identity, and they have to know they are worthy. That is the core of ASPIRA's success. We help to build their self-esteem by validating them as individuals, validating their culture, and promoting a sense of identity and pride in their Puerto Rican heritage."

MODERATOR:



Patricia Marin

The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University

PRESENTERS:



Manuel Gómez

University of California, Irvine



Jongho Lee

The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, School of Policy, Planning, and Development, University of Southern California



Bob Shireman

The Institute for College Access and Success

Financing College: The Unspoken Obstacle

It is an interesting juxtaposition, these two divergent pictures — one of a population that has amassed a spending power upward of \$700 billion annually, and another of a community that continues to rank as the most economically strapped and the most undereducated among America's minority populations. They are, of course, pictures of the same group of people, but shot from two very different angles. The growing economic power of the Latino community has garnered the attention of marketing firms and private business, which see an untapped financial opportunity. But that wealth has not changed the financial picture for many Latino families, who still find it difficult to save money for their children's college education. Nor has it enabled community organizations or educational institutions to implement programs that will provide information about the financial options available to college students.

A Lack of College Knowledge

The result, according to the 2004, Sallie Mae-funded TRPI study, "Caught in the Financial Aid Information Divide," was a surprising lack of knowledge, not just about financial aid but about the post-secondary educational system in general. Ninety-five percent of the Latino parents surveyed said they valued a college education, and fully expected their children to attend college; 84 percent of the young adults surveyed agreed. But when asked how they would manage the cost, more than half of the parents and 43 percent of students could not name a single source of financial aid. This was in line with a previous Tomás Rivera Policy Institute (TRPI) study that found Latino parents were so far removed from the educational system that they did not know whether one earned a bachelor's degree at a community college or a university.

"We know that Latinos have a low level of college attendance, and that a lack of information is partly responsible. But that doesn't mean it's the only reason," said Jongho Lee, Ph.D., director of survey research at TRPI, where the study was conducted. "There are other important reasons. The parent's level of education and family income are perhaps the primary reasons. But the thing is, if you just say those are the primary reasons, then you are left with nothing. You cannot make everyone rich overnight. You cannot increase family income in a short period of time. The parents' level of education, you can't change that overnight. So you need to find the factors that are responsible for the level of college attendance, and are susceptible to policy interventions."



The Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance reports that nearly half of all college-qualified high school graduates cite cost as the main reason for not going directly to a four-year institution and almost a quarter say they decided to skip college altogether because of the high cost.

(Source: <http://www.house.gov/roybal-allard>, accessed December 21, 2004.)



One TRPI study found Latino parents were so far removed from the educational system that they did not know whether one earned a bachelor's degree at a community college or a university.

Disseminating Information

Information is one factor that Lee believes can make a difference. The TRPI/Sallie Mae survey showed that the majority of Latino families were never given information about college or financial aid throughout their children's K-12 years. Many did not know how or where to get information, and for those who did, it was most often written in English, which they did not understand. When asked who they trusted to advise them, their first choice was school teachers and counselors. But making use of school staff also meant crossing an uncomfortable cultural divide, especially for foreign-born, first-generation parents. "I've heard many stories of how parents react to school authorities in Mexico or other Latin American countries," Lee said. "Parents and students are expected to defer to teachers and school administrators for almost everything. So once kids go to school, the expectation is that you just respect whatever the teacher says. The parents may not want to meet with the teacher to raise issues or discuss their concerns because it might be seen as a kind of challenge to authority."

Parents also indicated that they preferred gaining knowledge through one-on-one conversation, rather than reading brochures or pamphlets. "When it comes to information dissemination, people think that once they publish a really nice-looking booklet, their job is done and they can declare victory. But that is just not true. Latino parents may not have access to copies. And even if they do, it may not be in their language, or they may not read it at all, especially if they would rather talk to a person."

Although the TRPI study showed that information was key, its additional findings about the preference for one-on-one conversation put a renewed emphasis on the role of teachers and school counselors, and on the school as the most likely conduit for information dissemination. But with school staff already overwhelmed and trying to manage with fewer resources, asking them to do more may not be an option. "We can't say to school teachers and counselors that the reason Latino parents and students are not aware of college financial aid information is because you guys didn't do a good job. We just can't say that. But one thing we can say is that school administrators, policymakers and stakeholders need to find a way to help teachers and counselors do their jobs more effectively."

Lee also recommended that information about college and financial aid be part of a regular curriculum offered throughout middle school and high school. At the very least, he said, schools should start providing information in the eighth or ninth grade. Colleges and universities also could play a more proactive role by reaching out to parents and students, possibly by sending their counselors into the schools to begin talking about the benefits of a college education. "They might be able to do some limited outreach and meet with eighth or ninth graders to talk about the importance of a college education, and that you don't have to have rich parents to go to college. That college is within reach for everyone."

The Right Message for the Right Audience

Information is important, agreed Robert Shireman, director of the Institute for College Access and Success, and a senior fellow with the Aspen Institute in Washington, D.C. But to be effective, it must be specific information targeted at the right audience. "I think we have the right idea to try to address the information gaps, but what we have to look at are the different types of information gaps."

“When it comes to information dissemination, people think that once they publish a really nice-looking booklet, their job is done and they can declare victory. But that is just not true.

Jongho Lee, Ph.D.
The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute
USC School of Policy, Planning, and Development

One of Shireman's projects has him tracking advertising campaigns that promote college attendance. For example, those in North Carolina, which focus on financial aid, or in Texas, a sophisticated, multi-media, bilingual campaign that assures potential students of the availability of financial aid, and that tells parents their child's success depends, in part, on parental support. The goal, Shireman said, is to find out whether these campaigns are effective. "We're just in the early stages of trying to do information campaigns. It's much like the early campaigns around tobacco. We're in that learning curve of figuring out what the message is, and what type of information can cause the target audience to change the behavior that you want to change. What's different about these campaigns is that they're not coming from American colleges and universities, which typically fund the local outreach programs. The money for these campaigns is coming from state and federal money, mostly from the Gear Up Program."

Shireman has a list of potential campaign messages that go beyond the basic information that is typically offered: That community college is affordable and financial aid is available. That the most important factor in qualifying for college is the rigor of the courses taken in high school. That financial aid can pay for more than books and tuition. That message alone could uncover "a huge pocket of highly qualified students who thought they had to go to a community college because they didn't know financial aid would help them pay for a dorm," he said.

Detailed, specific messages and a strategic information campaign go hand-in-hand with Shireman's other recommendations, which are that the expectation of and preparation for college attendance become a core part of the K-12 curriculum, not an add-on. Schools should be required to help lead students and families through the steps of college preparation. This is especially true, and especially difficult, for schools in low-income districts where expectations and resources are markedly lower. Wealthier districts automatically assume students will take PSATs and AP courses. Low-income districts may not have the courses available or appropriately trained teachers. "These schools lost their counseling staff in the last 20 years, and don't have separate people who are in charge of making college counseling happen. So it's left to outside groups that come in periodically, or to the teachers to whatever extent they can manage. Every teacher should have some responsibility for providing college information to be sure everyone has a base level of knowledge. But as you know, that's not always possible."

Guiding All Students to College

Creating a seamless educational system, one that fills in the gap between K-12 and college with the presumption that education doesn't end at high school, and that has the whole of the system, parents included, responsible for shepherding students through, requires systemic change, said Manuel N. Gómez, vice chancellor of student affairs at the University of California, Irvine. "It's not an issue of needing to understand more or to find new solutions. It's more about the traditional slow and uneven progress of systemic change. Of finding coordination and movement on multiple levels. But it is slow and fraught with obstacles and difficulties that have multiple layers of complexity."

Systemic change would return education to post-World War II thinking, which was to build an educational infrastructure that would meet the needs of future generations. Today's thinking, which Gómez called a "penny-wise, pound-foolish policy," is to assess the capacity of higher education, and then require its institutions to reduce their aspirations and cut resources to fit a limited infrastructure.

He questions the evolution of financial aid availability, and the current wave of increased fees coupled with a trend toward fewer grants and more loans. Not only does this increase the student's loan burden on graduation, it also could result in fewer students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Potential college students may not want to amass such a large debt; current students may be reluctant to take on the additional debt associated with graduate school.

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Broadening Eligibility and Alliances

Gómez also favors the idea of revisiting the eligibility criteria. According to California's Master Plan, access to the state's university system is limited to the top 12.5 percent of graduating seniors. Increasing that number to 15 percent would mandate access and dramatically increase the number of eligible California students. Given the state's demographic profile, it also would increase the number of Latino students. "But there are other reasons that go beyond diversity. Education is one of the engines that drives the vitality of our economy, and if we don't invest in this engine, then we basically create an even flatter horizon for future generations," Gómez said.

"It's a controversial idea because we're already at capacity," he admitted. It also points out an ideological divide in the state legislature that says universities no longer need to do outreach because they already are turning students away. Gómez contends that outreach isn't always about generating applications; it can be a tool to address educational inequality. "We wanted to make outreach more fundamental, so we're changing the mix to include those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. We hope these 'academic preparation programs,' as they are now called, will help us close that gap."

The foundation of any kind of systemic change will be built on the ability to form new alliances. Success will be the result of partnerships that cross the enormous cultural distance between higher education and K-12. It will be a delicate dance, bringing the two together to establish an authentic working relationship across the institutions, and then to invent an infrastructure that will sustain it. "I think the principles of the California Master Plan — access, achievement, accountability and affordability — are worth defending," Gomez said. "We have been able to establish an extraordinary system of higher education, which is the envy of the world and has helped fuel our economy, and produce the political, economic, social, and artistic leadership of our society. I believe that we owe no less to this next generation of students. In the end, it will come down to the quality of the relationships among our stakeholders. Why? Because we are those educational institutions, and the sooner we look at solutions as depending on the quality of our alliances as individuals and organizations, the closer we will be to changing the course of our institutions."

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

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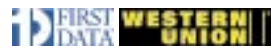
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