Understanding Latino Males’ Sense of Belonging in HBCUs

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Overview

- Introductions
- Key terms
- Rationale
- Literature Review
- Methods
- Findings
- Implications and Conclusion
Introductions

- Turn and talk: Name, professional role, institution

- Audience Poll:
  - Administrators?
  - Faculty members?
  - Graduate students?
  - Experience working at an HBCU?
  - Experience working with retention programs for Latino students?
Key Terms

- Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)

  “Any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited . . . [or] making reasonable progress toward accreditation” (Department of Education, 2010)

- Latino and Hispanic

  The terms Hispanic and Latino refer to “a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).
Rationale

- College Completion Agenda
- My Brother’s Keeper
  - Need to increase postsecondary access and success for Latino students
- Latino student enrollment in HBCUs
- HBCUs have fostered sense of belonging among African American college students
- Limited research on Latino college students in HBCUs
# Understanding the Continuing Crisis

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<th>Issue</th>
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<td>Many are unaware of the depth of the gender gap; It’s a SILENT CRISIS</td>
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<th>Skeptics &amp; Naysayers</th>
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<td>Some are unwilling to discuss; some find it counter-productive</td>
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<th>College enrollment</th>
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<td>Latina women represent 61% of the total number of Latina/o students enrolled in higher education</td>
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<th>Degree Attainment</th>
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<td>In 2009, Latino males represented only 37% of the 91,147 associate's degrees awarded to Latina/o students</td>
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<td>Latino males represented only 39% of the 120,722 Latina/o bachelor's degrees earned</td>
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Hispanic High School Completers (NCES, 2010)

Figure 1. Comparison Within Gender and Ethnicity of 18-24 Year Olds With Less Than a High School Diploma (NCES, 2010)

- Latino Males: 34.2%
- All Males: 21.7%
- Latina Females: 27.1%
- All Females: 17.3%
Hispanic Degree Attainment (AA & BA) (NCES, 2010)

Hispanic Male AA’s, 36,739
Hispanic Male BA’s, 50,628
Hispanic Female AA’s, 61,182
Hispanic Female BA’s, 78,898

61.6%
38.4%
Literature Review

- Latinos in HBCUs
- First Year Experience
- Sense of belonging
  - Definition: “Sense of belonging refers to students’ perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectendess, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about…to others and the campus” (Strayhorn, 2012, p. 3)
Research Questions

- How do Latino males enrolled in Texas HBCUs describe their sense of belonging that was shaped in their first year?

- What individuals, relationships, and experiences, if any, helped their sense of belonging that was shaped in their first year?

- What individuals, relationships, and experiences, if any, hindered their sense of belonging that was shaped in their first year?
Methods

- Qualitative, phenomenological studies
- Participants
  - 10 Latino males, second- to fifth-year in college
- Sites
  - Two, four-year HBCUs in Texas
- Data collection
  - Interview #1
  - Interview #2
Key Findings

- Latino males sense of belonging at HBCUs influenced by:
  - Faculty Members
  - Peers
  - External Challenges
  - Institutional Context
Findings: Faculty Members

- Personable
  - “I like the fact that by the end of the first week they knew our names, you know?” - Raul
  - So everybody, the faculty was, they were friendly, you know... I can say that all of my professors, I got pretty close to all of my professors that I know them. - Luke

- Very helpful
  - “If you need that little extra help, (then) this is the place for you.” - Miguel
What programs or practices foster positive interactions between Latino male college students and faculty (at an HBCU)?
Findings: Peers

- Be friendly: It's like a, it's pretty much like if you're cool with everybody it's just like a big family. -Edward

- Athletics: With teammates to rely upon, Latino males began their collegiate career with an immediate support system and network. Mateo said his teammates were “the first people I interacted with...because we’d seen each other before, uh, from recruits, school visits.”

- Student organizations: Pros and cons
What programs or practices help facilitate positive peer-to-peer interactions between Latino males and other college students?
Findings: External Challenges

- Well, it's pretty hard. A lot of people tell me you're doing too much. But, if somebody tells me I'm doing too much, I'm gonna do it anyways to prove them wrong. Like to this day, people are like, "How do you, how do you, how do you wake up? You go to sleep. You just wake-, eh, you just sleep for three hours. I don't know how you wake up, bro. How you doing all these things?" I just, you know, feel there's time to do everything.... Well, my dad got laid off from his work, so...at the point, I was like, I'm ready to go back home and help my family. I didn't know how, but, you know, I had to find a way. -Francisco

- I have two jobs and my, one of my jobs is in North [City] and the other one is in Downtown [City]. It's really hard for me to be commuting everyday and it's going to cost me too much money, so.” - Raul
What external responsibilities have influenced Latino male students’ sense of belonging at your institution?
Findings:
Institutional Context

- Culture Shock

They were all so friendly, you know, they, they didn't really discriminate or nothing. They were just real cool. But it was just like a whole different type of environment, different culture than I'm used to 'cause the African-American culture, you know, I guess they, their type of fun is like different from mine. Their hobbies are different. What they like to do is different and, but it was just like, it was like, it was friendly and everything. It was all good but it was just a whole different environment for me. -Larry

- Be yourself. Just because we all go to school here, we're all different people. You know, we all have different backgrounds. We all come from different places, and that's what college is about, you know. Interacting with people from different cultures. -Miguel
Findings: Institutional Context

- Latino representation on campus

- I know we have like a big emphasis like on Black History Month and, um, and, um, MLK Day, obviously because we’re a Black university...At the same time, I wouldn’t mind seeing maybe a week dedicated to Hispanic Week or something like that. –Stephen

- I’m not trying to change the school or nothing like that, you know, because I still want it to be an HBCU, you know, I’m really proud of that, that it’s an HBCU, but, um, you know, just to put more familiar faces on there.” -Miguel
How can institutions (particularly HBCUs) foster a campus culture that promotes a sense of belonging for Latino males?
Research Implications

- Future research should:
  - Examine other aspects of Latino males’ experiences (e.g., engagement, self-efficacy, college transitions)
  - Explore the sense of belonging from the perspectives of other constituents (e.g., HBCU faculty members or administrators)
  - Investigate the development of Latino student organizations and Latino Greek Letter Organizations and their influence on students’ experiences and sense of belonging
Conclusion

- Latino student success is a national imperative, particularly for Latino males
- As the Latino population continues to grow, HBCUs can offer a viable postsecondary educational experience
- Increased diversity has direct influences on campus policies, practices, and culture
- Each HBCU will need to proactively and promptly respond to the shifting demographics and specific needs on their campus
Questions, Comments, Reflections?
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