

# Project MALES Newsletter

Spring 2014

## Project MALES STAFF

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**Project MALES**  
is an initiative of the  
Division of Diversity and  
Community Engagement  
at UT-Austin.

## Sáenz & Ponjuán Participate in White House Webinar on Latino Males

Dr. Victor Sáenz and Dr. Luis Ponjuán were the featured speakers for an April 2014 webinar hosted by the White House Initiative on Education Excellence for Hispanics. The topic focused on improving educational outcomes for Hispanic males, and it featured Project MALES and our new Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color. In their presentation they highlighted the rationale behind the creation of Project MALES, a multi-faceted research and mentoring initiative created to shed greater light on the plight of Latino males in education. Through the embodiment of praxis, Project MALES has been able to gain national attention but most importantly has served over 200 Latino male students in the past three year.

The Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color—launched last summer—was also a focal point of the presentation, especially in light of President Obama’s new My Brother’s Keeper initiative focused on improving life outcomes for young men and boys of color. The Consortium is affecting change in the state of Texas through our strategic statewide collaboration with P-16 partners. Project MALES looks forward to our continued collaboration with the White House Initiative on Education Excellence for Hispanics. To access the power point, audio file, and/or transcript of the presentation visit our Consortium website <http://txedconsortium.org/>.

## Project MALES to co-host inaugural Male Leadership Summit



Project MALES and the Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color will co-host the inaugural male student leadership summit on June 27th-28<sup>th</sup> on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin. The Consortium is a statewide network of school districts, community colleges and public universities that was launched last summer in an effort to leverage their collective expertise to advance research on best practices in order to improve educational outcomes for male students of color. This two-day Summit, to be held at the Student Activity Center at UT-Austin, is an invite-only event designed to build fellowship among

Consortium member institutions as well as bring together emerging student leaders from across the state of Texas. The Summit agenda will focus on building leadership, networking, and career skills among young men of color enrolled at Consortium institutions across the state. It will feature two workshop tracks; a professional track focused on best practices and research dissemination on men of color, and a student track featuring workshops on leadership and career development. The Summit will also feature two keynote speakers: Mr. Marco Davis from the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics and Dr. Luis Ponjuán, Associate Professor at Texas A&M University. Mr. Davis’ appearance comes on the heels of President Obama’s recently launched My Brother Keeper Initiative focused on young men and boys of color.

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## UT-Austin Male Student Leadership Summit (continued)

Dr. Victor Sáenz, associate professor of educational administration and executive director of Project MALES, leads the Consortium and will serve as the official host of the Summit. “The UT Male Student Leadership Summit is the inaugural convening of our Consortium institutional partners and students. We expect this annual event to build a robust social and professional network of male students of color across high schools, community colleges, and four-year institutions in the state of Texas.” Narrowing the gender gap for educational attainment among students of color is not just a statewide priority but also a national imperative. “We are honored that UT-Austin is hosting this inaugural event which has gathered the attention of the White House’s My Brother’s Keeper initiative, and this Summit is certain to build a strong legacy of engaged male student leaders across the state of Texas,” said Sáenz.

This statewide gathering of educational leaders dedicated to the educational success of male students of color is only the first step in addressing their attrition rates in college. We look forward to sharing highlights from the UT-Austin Male Student Leadership Summit in upcoming newsletter, our website and social media.

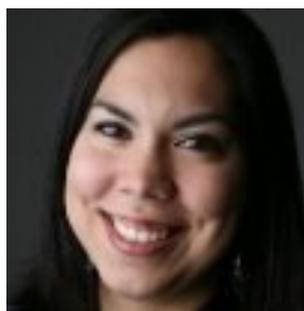
## New Mentoring Partnership with UT Elementary School

Project MALES is pleased to announce its newest partnership with UT Elementary School. The new pilot-mentoring program was launched during the Spring 2014 semester after Dr. Melissa Chavez, CEO and Superintendent, sought to partner with Project MALES on this collaboration. The success of our current mentoring program at Travis, Lanier, and Reagan High Schools prompted Dr. Chavez to extend these services to her elementary school children. Through our Project MALES Student Mentoring Program, we recruit undergraduate students at UT-Austin to serve as mentors to young males of color at local schools. Additionally, our student mentors build lasting relationships with their mentees and help them develop important life skills and college knowledge. Our weekly activities address opportunities after high school graduation, types of higher education institutions, financial aid literacy, and résumé workshops among other college-related topics.



The mentorship program at UT Elementary will follow similar goals but make it age appropriate. Dr. Chavez and her staff want to provide some of their elementary school male students with mentors that will get them thinking about their long-term educational goals. She wanted to engage these young boys at an early age in order to instigate conversations about college readiness and academic success. The collaboration is very much in its infancy stages, and we look forward to spotlighting this new partnership in future updates and newsletters.

## Dr. Taryn Ozuna, Project MALES Faculty Affiliate



In support of Project MALES’ research initiatives, we have launched the Project MALES Faculty Affiliate program. We are pleased to announce our first faculty fellow, Dr. Taryn G. Ozuna, assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Texas at Arlington. Dr. Ozuna is a graduate of the Higher Education Administration program from the University of Texas at Austin. Her research interests include: the educational experiences of traditionally under-represented student populations, particularly Latino students, as they access, transition, and persist in Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), first-year experiences of traditionally underrepresented student populations, access and degree completion for students of color, and Latino Greek letter organizations.

The Project MALES faculty affiliates program will seek to recruit additional emerging (and established) scholars whose research focuses on the educational experiences of males of color. This program will develop learning and research communities and link research with best practices. We anticipate producing reports, policy papers, and articles that policy makers, stakeholders, community leaders, and the community-at-large can use to facilitate meaningful change in the lives of males of color. Additionally, faculty affiliates will also give occasional lectures and/or presenting at conferences to disseminate our work. Congrats to Taryn, and welcome to the Project MALES family!