

Some Perspectives on University Challenges for Latinx Undergraduates

Clara Burgo¹

¹ Modern Languages and Literatures, Loyola University Chicago

Keywords: recruitment, retention, higher education, sense of belonging, first generation

Hispanic Studies Review

Vol. 8, Issue 2, 2024

This article examines the factors influencing and hindering U.S. Latinx undergraduate success, and explains how a revamped higher education Spanish program with faculty mentorship could help students cope with the challenges they may encounter as first-generation college students, in order to foster success and prevent students from dropping out. To achieve a goal of inclusion, a change in higher education programs is necessary, with the aims of meeting linguistic and affective needs of Latinx students to help them become leaders within their universities and in their own communities. Since Latinx students may face discrimination in college, it is necessary that programs implement Latinx Critical Race and Critical Pedagogies frameworks, develop mentoring systems that help students succeed led by Latinx faculty and staff, and offer campus organizations where Latinx students can build a safe space on campus through activist work to become agents of change in their communities.

Introduction: The issue and challenge

This article aims to examine the factors contributing to and hindering U.S. Latinx students' success in undergraduate Spanish programs (majors and minors in Hispanic Studies). This article also proposes strategies to enhance Latinx student retention and graduation rates. Latinx students are one of the groups with the highest college dropout rates in the U.S. (McFarland et al., 2019), since they encounter many challenges in higher education, such as a hostile campus climate, low funding, rising tuition, and lack of mentorship (Pérez Huber & Cueva, 2012). An improvement is needed to benefit Latinx students.

Some research has shown that supporting (Latinx) students when choosing majors may help them complete their degrees (Morris et al., 2023). These authors' research focuses on the role of major course of study advising to improve retention rates.

Many Latinx students, who are also first-generation college students and feel impostor syndrome, usually navigate college in isolation, and carry the burden of not letting their families down (Green, 2022). Even though male Latinx students tend to carry less anxiety than female Latinx students, many tend to ascribe to traditional gender roles and often feel responsible for the financial situation of the family (Suárez-Orozco & López Hernández, 2020).

However, all these obstacles may be addressed in some way through mentorship by Latinx leaders, organizations, and mental health support groups (Espinoza et al., 2023). Latinx faculty mentors have the potential to promote feelings of empowerment, connection, and sense of belonging among students (Medina & Posadas, 2012). Bañuelos and Flores (2021) shared specific examples of mentors behaving as empowerment agents. For example, these mentors advised students on how to deal with gatekeeper professors, and improved how Latinx students respond to challenges due to systems of oppression, such as racism and sexism (López et al., 2022). Students in the study acknowledged the importance of professors who choose to work at Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) to serve underrepresented students, and those who had experience working with students of color and had developed a critical consciousness. In this article I review the factors that influence student retention in the case of Latinx undergraduates in order to explore the causes of low graduation rates.

Starting early: High school and 2-year institutions

Community colleges should have student success as a priority, since their missions are based on serving their communities' needs. Therefore, student retention and graduation rates need to be improved. In order to achieve this, professional development for faculty should be required, with equity, diversity, and inclusion being an integral part of it (Piland & Piland, 2020).

Latinx Critical Race Theory is a framework to conceptualize race, Latinx cultures, and Latinx identities (Chávez-Moreno, 2023). It can be applied by acknowledging that Latinx students may face discrimination in college, so leaders can create meaningful programs to cultivate a culture for students expecting to transfer to universities. In fact, 58.4% of the students who started college in Spring 2021, did it at a community college (National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, 2022), aspiring to transfer to a four-year university, and they can be motivated by leaders to succeed by creating support systems based on their emotional and academic needs. It is important that students are able to take advantage of all the opportunities available to them, while still performing at a high academic level (Del Real Viramontes, 2023). In fact, many students see community college as the only way to have access to higher education (Salas et al., 2018).

Community college staff must be present in high schools to promote attending college and the mission of transfer. These outreach programs should be bilingual and welcome students' families to honor students' culture and heritage (Del Real Viramontes, 2020). In order for Latinx students to develop a strong sense of transfer pride, community colleges also need to incorporate Latinx contributions into their programs, such as Latinx literature and artistic expression (Del Real Viramontes, 2023). HSIs, which represent less than 17% of U.S. universities, serve the majority of Latinx undergraduates in the U.S. (Excelencia in Education, 2022). HSIs help to create an atmosphere that favors student recruitment and retention since they foster faculty-student mentorship, offer courses that are relevant to

Latinx students, and cultivate programs that promote a sense of belonging (Allen et al., 2019). For an institution to become an HSI, it must comply with the following requirements: 25% Latinx undergraduate enrollment as full-time students; 50% of students must be recipients of financial aid; and the university must have lower average expenditure for full-time students compared to similar institutions (Pérez, 2020).

Additionally, there are several factors that may foster Latinx student success at a community college: ethnic composition of the college in terms of faculty and students, institutional practices such as financial aid, orientations, transfer programs, teaching practices, and types of courses (Domínguez-Rebollar & Acevedo-Polakovich, 2022). Academic experience and age also have an impact on retention, especially in HSIs and with non-traditional students, since universities may better serve and motivate students by enhancing their personal and academic qualities (G. A. García et al., 2019). In addition, if students enter a university with a decided major and choice of career, there is a higher chance that they will remain enrolled in college. Therefore, mentorship is key (Willcoxson & Wynder, 2010).

In short, community college Latinx student success is directly related to three factors: campus involvement, positive experiences, and sense of belonging. That is, students need to form a connection to the university, which can be achieved through committees composed of Latinx students, faculty, and staff (Museus et al., 2012). They should discuss the recruitment and retention of Latinx students (L. R. García, 2020). However, we cannot ignore the transfer shock that these students go through due to the transition from the expectations of community colleges as compared to those of four-year institutions (Solis & Durán, 2022). This shock is related to issues of adjustment, such as stigma for coming from a community college (Laanan et al., 2010), as well as the lack of knowledge about university resources and culture (Townsend & Wilson, 2009).

Sense of belonging

Most of the work on persistence of college students emphasizes students' sense of belonging (O'Keeffe, 2013). This refers to how students perceive support on campus and how connected they feel to it (Strayhorn, 2012). The difference in numbers between Latinx enrollment and graduation rates is related to their college experience. In 2021, of all Latinx students enrolled in undergraduate institutions, 34.8% of Latinx students graduated with an associate's degree, and 42.4% with a bachelor's degree (Kim et al., 2024). Often, the environment Latinx students encounter in college does not necessarily reflect their home communities (e.g., in terms of cultural differences) and students may also face stress and discrimination (Yosso, 2006). However, these obstacles can be overcome through social support and development of a strong cultural identity (Cerezo & Chang, 2013). Some Latinx students must work to pay for college and to help their families, so they do not have the time to get involved in campus events (Means & Pyne, 2017). One key strategy for student retention may be developing a

sense of belonging among students that are at risk of dropping out of college (O’Keeffe, 2013), through campus organizations or associations, despite the fact that students with a full-time job may not be able to participate if they do not offer flexibility. Additionally, discrimination directly affects Latinx students, since it raises their levels of stress and their vision of the campus ambience (Johnson et al., 2014). There are multiple benefits to the retention and recruitment of Latinx students, such as developing a more diverse and inclusive campus environment, but this sense of belonging also helps Latinx students during their time on campus and post-graduation by reducing ethnic gaps at the time of employment and encouraging students to have a positive impact on their communities (Schak et al., 2019). Furthermore, Latinx students bring a sense of *familismo*, a Latinx value consisting of commitment and loyalty to family, that can be extended to peers on campus as a surrogate family, which provides students with a sense of belonging (Kiyama et al., 2015). Family members are an important source of support for Latinx and if they feel family support, there is a higher chance that they will not drop out of college (Fernández et al., 2023).

As Latinx individuals represent one of the largest minorities in the U.S., Latinx student inclusion poses an equity and social justice matter, especially in the case of first-generation college students. Thus, as Camargo et al. (2021) argue, higher education has the responsibility to serve students through educational content rooted in their identities in order to transform their existing contexts into ones of inclusion. Latinx students with a higher sense of school belonging were found to have higher motivation (Sánchez et al., 2005). One way to create this sense of belonging is by giving minorities opportunities to create community (Means & Pyne, 2017). First-generation college students need academic mentoring to navigate the university system and emotional support (Ricci & French, 2023). Latinx undergraduates who receive mentoring from Latinx faculty and staff can benefit from enjoying a faculty and staff network that can provide them with a sense of belonging, which may be hard to find elsewhere at the university (López et al., 2021). Furthermore, Latinx students involved in a faculty mentoring program adjust better to college, primarily because their Latinx faculty mentors foster feelings of empowerment (Medina & Posadas, 2012). Latinx students showed the importance of the influence of Latinx professors on their professional path and their feelings of belonging, and how representation in academia matters, since these professors served as empowerment agents (and not only institutional agents) due to their experiential knowledge (Bañuelos & Flores, 2021).

Students with supportive faculty and staff were able to overcome academic barriers more easily, especially at HSIs. Since students at HSIs experience more financial and academic needs, universities need to build a strong support system which provides academic tutoring and peer mentoring, as well as resources to help students with financial issues (Montanari et al., 2023).

However, the pressure for Latinx faculty to mentor Latinx undergraduates and help define what it means to be Latinx in higher education can become a pedagogical challenge, since these are extra pressures that other faculty members do not experience (Cedeño & Schwarzer, 2022). In the same vein, infrastructures that support Latinx scholarship are needed so that the university system commits to investing in the Latinx community (Contreras et al., 2022).

Furthermore, campus cultural centers are critical for minorities on campus as they go through challenging experiences (Duran & Jones, 2020). They should be a safe space to build community and to foster a sense of belonging (Lazano, 2010), while also helping increase retention and improve students' well-being (Hypolite, 2019).

On another note, religion and community play an important role in Latinx lives (Pew Research Center, 2022). Latinx undergraduates with positive religious beliefs improved their management of stressors such as anxiety and depression (Holloway-Friesen, 2023). Spirituality, along with a sense of belonging, help mitigate stressors, so religious associations may be critical both for recognizing these students' spiritual beliefs and providing mental health support (Holloway-Friesen, 2023).

In sum, social support and a safe space on campus to construct a strong cultural identity are important to create a sense of belonging that is still lacking for many Latinx students. To achieve this, institutions should count on a network of faculty and staff to mentor these students.

Best teaching practices

Due to the pandemic, there has been a switch to remote learning that has alienated many Latinx college students, due to the lack of access to technology, resulting in lower retention rates that could be prevented with adequate support. In order to compensate for these factors, teaching presence is key. That means, being there for students. Teaching presence provides students with the mentorship they need and personalized instruction in online courses (Amezcuca et al., 2021). In the same vein, highlighting students' accomplishments can help combat their impostor syndrome in higher education (Espinoza et al., 2023). Traditionally, impostor syndrome refers to feelings of inferiority concerning personal accomplishments. Wright-Mair et al. (2024) found that many students of racialized minorities experienced impostor syndrome. That is why mentorship and teaching presence are essential for these students.

Unfortunately, Latinx first-generation college students do not usually count on role models, and they may carry an extra burden such as documentation status (Vega, 2016). A possible solution to this problem is a change in academic programs that includes Latinx representation beyond World Languages programs (Domínguez-Rebollar & Acevedo-Polakovich, 2022). Even in World Languages programs, the mission should be envisioned

to meet Latinx linguistic and affective needs so that students find a safe space where they can be empowered to become leaders in the university and in their own communities.

Hence, applying a theoretical framework, such as Critical Latinx Pedagogy, is important to help Latinx students feel welcome, to honor the diverse identities that make up the Latinx and university communities, and to create a safe space to challenge assumptions regarding topics that affect Latinx communities (Alarcón et al., 2011). This pedagogy empowers and celebrates Latinx students, while it also creates a space to challenge others' views on topics that affect Latinx communities. In the classroom, we should implement teaching practices following this framework that embrace, engage, and empower Latinx students (Casavantes Bradford & Morales, 2023). All these qualities will increase the probability of student graduation success.

Spanish programs for Latinx students

Spanish heritage language programs are designed to address Spanish heritage language learners' linguistics and cultural needs with a focus on their literacy skills since these students learned Spanish at home. They are aligned with anti-racist transformation (offering the tools to dismantle oppressive structures for structural transformation) that should be made to meet Latinx communities' linguistic needs (Avilés & Harb, 2022). Even Latinx students who do not speak Spanish could find a safe space in Latinx and Latin American Studies programs that offer courses in English.

Rosa and Flores (2015) propose that heritage language education's goal be dismantling racialization in the U.S. by addressing racial inequities. Heritage language courses should be grounded in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), in addition to language needs. Making first-generation students the leaders in the classroom, in the campus community, and in the wider community is an equity issue since most of them are racially minoritized (Rodini et al., 2018). Giving them the tools to criticize social structures could empower them to have a positive influence in their communities by giving back to them (Ives & Castillo-Montoya, 2020). One tool to contest social inequities could be activist archiving. This practice, which involves collecting works for social change, promotes linguistic and cultural diversity in Spanish classrooms, serving as a form of activism (Alim & Paris, 2017). It allows non-hegemonic voices to be heard, which is a fundamental part of socially responsive pedagogies through giving voice to student experiences. This practice makes archiving a social justice tool, fostering critical thinking about inequities in the community (Avilés & Harb, 2022). By implementing activist strategies in the classroom, we allow students to be agents of change in their communities and outside their communities, which ultimately starts with creating a safe place for their voices in the university first.

Conclusions

Latinx undergraduate students face many barriers to graduation from college due to their lack of sense of belonging, their financial situation, and the lack of Latinx leadership in higher-education institutions and courses. For many students, community colleges are the only way to have access to a college education and to transfer to a university. As a consequence, the faculty and staff support is key for a successful transfer culture. Creating a sense of belonging is essential for Latinx students, whose representation is often lacking in many institutions. HSIs usually serve Latinx students better through mentoring programs that can help them navigate the university system and any other challenges they may face to be able to succeed. Therefore, this article proposes higher education program changes that put Latinx students at their center and serve their communities by creating a safe space where diverse identities are honored through specific strategies such as activist archiving. It also examines the potential of revamping these programs and providing more opportunities for faculty mentorship within community colleges, emphasizing the importance of creating a sense of belonging for students, promoting best practices to teach Spanish as a second and a heritage language, and developing Spanish programs for Latinx students, whether they speak Spanish or not.

Submitted: March 17, 2024 EDT, Accepted: July 05, 2024 EDT

References

- Alarcón, W., Cruz, C., Jackson, L. G., Prieto, L., & Rodríguez-Arroyo, S. (2011). Compartiendo nuestras historias: Five testimonios of schooling and survival. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 10(4), 369–381. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2011.605690>
- Alim, S., & Paris, D. (2017). What is culturally sustaining pedagogy and why does it matter? In S. Alim & D. Paris (Eds.), *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world* (pp. 1–17). Teachers College Press.
- Allen, T. O., Thompson, M. L., & Calderón Galdeano, E. (2019). Guidelines for fostering student affairs-academic affairs partnerships in Hispanic-serving institutions. *New Directions for Student Services*, 2019(167), 75–84. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.20322>
- Amezcuca, A., Brandl, A., Durán Urrea, E., & Rodríguez, E. (2021). The switch to remote instruction in Spanish heritage language courses: Why social presence matters. *E-Journal ALL, EuroAmerican Journal of Applied Linguistics and Languages Special Issue*, 8(2), 185–214. <https://doi.org/10.21283/2376905X.14.249>
- Avilés, T., & Harb, A. J. (2022). “It wasn’t just about learning how to speak Spanish”: Engaging histories of oppression and enslavement in Spanish heritage language Education. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 22(5), 1815–1829. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2022.2051039>
- Bañuelos, M., & Flores, G. M. (2021). ‘I could see myself’: Professors’ influence in first-generation Latinx college students’ pathways into doctoral programs. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 27(5), 599–619. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2021.1969906>
- Camargo, E., Ramos, D., & Bennett, C. (2021). Siendo Latinx en el Nuevo South: Defining identity, social justice, and equity. *Innovative Higher Education*, 47, 533–563. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-021-09588-0>
- Casavantes Bradford, A., & Morales, A. E. (2023). Toward a Critical Latinx Pedagogy: A multi-generational reflection on teaching and learning in the U.S. Latinx history survey and beyond. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 22(3), 1107–1117.
- Cedeño, D., & Schwarzer, D. (2022). Latina faculty developing a bilingual family studies class at a newly designated Hispanic serving institution: “These are safe spaces.” *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2022.2115090>
- Cerezo, A., & Chang, T. (2013). Latino/a achievement at predominantly White universities: The importance of culture and ethnic community. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 12(1), 72–85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192712465626>
- Chávez-Moreno, L. C. (2023). Examining race in LatCrit: A systematic review of Latinx Critical Race Theory in education. *Review of Educational Research*, 20(10), 1–38.
- Contreras, F., Prado Robledo, S., & Gómez, V. (2022). Cultivating the Chicano/Latina/o/x faculty pipeline across Hispanic serving institutions (HSI) systems: The potential role of HSRIs in transforming the professoriate. *Journal of Leadership, Equity, and Research*, 8(2), 87–106.
- Del Real Viramontes, J. (2020). Transforming the community college transfer pipeline for Latinx community college students. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 27(2), 161–171.
- Del Real Viramontes, J. (2023). The role of community college leaders in developing a transferring culture for Latinx students. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2023(202), 131–143. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20574>

- Domínguez-Rebollar, R., & Acevedo-Polakovich, I. D. (2022). Factors and interventions that foster success of Latinx students in public community colleges: A theory-driven systematic review and content analysis of psychological research. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 21(4), 386–400. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192721994962>
- Duran, A., & Jones, S. R. (2020). Complicating identity exploration: An intersectional grounded theory centering queer students of color at historically white institutions. *Journal of College Student Development*, 61(3), 281–298. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2020.0028>
- Espinoza, L., Sanchez, M., Pilo, A., & Muro-Rodriguez, N. J. (2023). Higher education: Latinx individuals luchando for higher education. In *Latinx mental health: From surviving to thriving* (pp. 165–181). IGI Global.
- Excelencia in Education. (2022). *Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) fact sheet: 2020-21*.
- Fernández, L. R., Girón, S. E., Killoren, S. E., & Campione-Barr, N. (2023). Latinx college students' anxiety, academic stress, and future aspirations: The role of sibling relationship quality. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 32(7), 1936–1945. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-022-02474-z>
- García, G. A., Núñez, A. M., & Sansone, V. A. (2019). Toward a multidimensional conceptual framework for understanding “servingness” in Hispanic-serving institutions: A synthesis of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 89(5), 745–784. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654319864591>
- García, L. R. (2020). The intersections of race and gender for Latina midlevel leaders. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 2020(191), 117–126. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cc.20412>
- Green, A. (2022). Who's really the imposter here? An examination of the relationship between first-generation college students and institutions of higher education through a collection of oral histories. *Tapestries: Interwoven Voices of Local and Global Identities*, 12(1), Article 6. <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/tapestries/vol12/iss1/6>
- Holloway-Friesen, H. (2023). Is there anybody out there? Coping and belonging strategies: Correlations with depression, anxiety, and stress among Latinx undergraduates. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 51(2), 208–222. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00916471221144671>
- Hypolite, L. I. (2019). People, place, and connections: Black cultural center staff as facilitators of social capital. *Journal of Black Studies*, 51(1), 37–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021934719892238>
- Ives, J., & Castillo-Montoya, M. (2020). First-generation college students as academic learners: A systematic review. *Review of Educational Research*, 90(2), 139–178. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654319899707>
- Johnson, D. R., Wasserman, T. H., Yildirim, N., & Yonai, B. A. (2014). Examining the effects of stress and campus climate on the persistence of students of color and white students: An application of Bean and Eaton's psychological model of retention. *Research in Higher Education*, 55(1), 75–100. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-013-9304-9>
- Kim, J., Soler, M. C., Zhao, Z., & Swirsky, E. (2024). *Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: 2024 Status Report Executive Summary*. American Council on Education.
- Kiyama, J. M., Museus, S. D., & Vega, B. E. (2015). Cultivating campus environments to maximize success among Latino and Latina college students. *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2015(172), 29–38. <https://doi.org/10.1002/he.20150>
- Laanan, F. S., Starobin, S. S., & Eggleston, L. E. (2010). Adjustment of community college students at a four-year university: Role and relevance of transfer student capital for student retention. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 12(2), 175–209. <https://doi.org/10.2190/CS.12.2.d>

- Lazano, A. (2010). Latino/a culture centers: Promoting a sense of belonging and promoting student success. In D. Patton (Ed.), *Culture centers in higher education: Perspectives on identity, theory, and practice* (pp. 3–22). Stylus Publishing.
- López, R. M., Honey, M. L., Pacheco, H. S., & Valdez, E. C. (2021). Creando comunidad: Experiences of Latina faculty and staff mentors at a Hispanic-serving institution. *Journal of Women and Gender in Higher Education*, 14(1), 100–120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26379112.2021.1888746>
- López, R. M., Honey, M. L., Rendon, S., & Pérez-Gill, S. (2022). The uncertain path toward college: How intersectionality shaped the experiences of Latinas enrolled at a Hispanic-serving institution. *AERA Open*, 8(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584221101552>
- McFarland, J., Hussar, B., Zhang, J., Wang, X., Wang, K., Hein, S., Diliberti, M., Cataldi, E., Mann, F., & Barmer, A. (2019). *The Condition of Education 2019*. National Center for Education Statistics. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2019/2019144.pdf>
- Means, D. R., & Pyne, K. B. (2017). Finding my way: Perceptions of institutional support and belonging in low-income, first-generation, first-year college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 58(6), 907–924. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2017.0071>
- Medina, C. A., & Posadas, C. E. (2012). Hispanic student experiences at a Hispanic serving institution: Strong voices, key message. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 11(3), 182–188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2012.686358>
- Montanari, S., Vogel, R., & Vasquez, M. (2023). Student stop out and retention at a Hispanic-Serving Institution in Southern California: The role of background, academic, and environmental factors. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 22(3), 342–360. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15381927221113736>
- Morris, P., Castro-Faix, M., Hengtgen, K., Rapp, K., Winkler, C., & Xu, T. (2023). Virtues of academic exploration: Impact of major changes on degree completion. *Journal of College Orientation, Transition, and Retention*, 30(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.24926/jcotr.v30i1.4904>
- Museus, S. D., Jayakumar, U. M., & Robinson, T. (2012). Modeling racial differences in the effects of racial representation on 2-year college student success. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 13(4), 549–572. <https://doi.org/10.2190/CS.13.4.g>
- National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. (2022). *Overview: Spring 2022 enrollment estimates*. National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.
- O’Keeffe, P. (2013). A sense of belonging: Improving student retention. *College Student Journal*, 47(4), 605–613.
- Pérez Huber, L., & Cueva, B. M. (2012). Chicana/Latina Testimonios on effects and responses to microaggressions. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 45(3), 392–410. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2012.698193>
- Pérez, L. (2020). To what extent are Title V grants and educational expenditures associated with educational attainment of Latinx at Hispanic-Serving Institutions? *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 19(4), 323–334. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192718801792>
- Pew Research Center. (2022). *Religious composition of Latinos: Religious Landscape Study*.
- Piland, W. E., & Piland, A. (2020). Enhancing the faculty role in fostering the community college completion agenda. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 27(2), 135–144.
- Ricci, L. A., & French, R. (2023). Aiming for alignment: Faculty and student perspectives on effective teaching for first-generation students. *Journal of Effective Teaching in Higher Education*, 6(1), 25–46. <https://doi.org/10.36021/jethe.v6i1.67>

- Rodini, A. C., Richards, B. N., & Simon, N. P. (Eds.). (2018). *Clearing the path for first-generation college students: Qualitative and intersectional studies of educational mobility*. Lexington Books.
- Salas, S., D'Amico, M. M., Rios-Aguilar, C., Canché, M. S. G., & Atwell, A. K. (2018). Selecting pathways: Latinxs, choices, and two-year colleges. *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*, 12(1), 48–66. <https://doi.org/10.24974/amae.12.1.377>
- Sánchez, B., Colón, Y., & Esparza, P. (2005). The role of sense of school belonging and gender in the academic adjustment of Latino adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 34(6), 619–628. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-005-8950-4>
- Schak, J. O., Bentley, C., Nichols, A. H., & Pilar, W. D. (2019). *Broken mirrors II: Latino student representation at public state colleges and universities*. The Education Trust.
- Solis, B., & Durán, R. P. (2022). Latinx community college students' transition to a 4-year public research-intensive university. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 21(1), 49–66. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1538192719899628>
- Strayhorn, T. L. (2012). *College students' sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students*. Routledge.
- Suárez-Orozco, C., & López Hernández, G. (2020). Waking up every day with the worry: A mixed-methods study of anxiety in undocumented Latinx college students. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 11, Article 568167. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2020.568167>
- Townsend, B. K., & Wilson, K. B. (2009). The academic and social integration of persisting community college transfer students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 10(4), 405–423. <https://doi.org/10.2190/CS.10.4.a>
- Vega, D. (2016). “Why not me?": College enrollment and persistence of high achieving, first-generation Latino college students. *School Psychology Forum*, 10, 307–320.
- Willcoxson, L., & Wynder, M. (2010). The relationship between choice of major and career, experience of university and attrition. *Australian Journal of Education*, 54, 175–189. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000494411005400205>
- Wright-Mair, R., Ramos, D., & Passano, B. (2024). Latinx college students' strategies for resisting imposter syndrome at predominantly white institutions. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, 23(2), 725–743. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2023.2180366>
- Yosso, T. J. (2006). *Critical race counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano pipeline*. Routledge.