

Chapter 9

Higher Education: Latinx Individuals *Luchando* for Higher Education

Leslie Espinoza

University of Georgia, USA

Monica Sanchez

University of Georgia, USA

Alexina Pilo

University of Georgia, USA

Nancy Muro-Rodriguez

University of Georgia, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter focuses on the history and educational experiences of current and past Latinx students. It helps understand governmental policies and systemic barriers that Latinx students and faculty face in the education system. This chapter provides information regarding higher education by highlighting the different experiences of first-generation college students. Authors help identify multicultural considerations when working with Latinx students both in higher education and in the counseling space. Lastly, the authors focus on future directions and resources to support and better help Latinx students create a pipeline towards higher education.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about the history and educational experiences of current and past Latinx students. It examines the educational pipeline of Latinx Persons from undergraduate education to the professoriate. It helps understand systemic barriers that Latinx students and faculty face in the education system in the U.S. This chapter also identifies multicultural considerations when working with Latinx students

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4901-1.ch009

in higher education. Lastly, it acknowledges supporting factors that better help Latinx students cope in higher education.

Positionality

Latinx people with graduate degrees have helped guide and pave the way for many Latinx persons through mentorship, community, support, and the mere fact of being a Latinx individual succeeding through the advancement of their higher education. Through our positionality, we would like to give the reader insight into the experiences of Latinx mentorship, peer support, and the positive impact Latinx culture and identity have had on the author's educational journey.

I, Leslie Espinoza, have roots from Zacatecas, Mexico, born in Riverside, California and raised in Houston County, Georgia. I am a counseling psychology student working on my doctoral degree under the mentorship of Dr. Delgado-Romero at the University of Georgia (UGA). My academic journey has always been a lonely one due to the *Mexicana* minority status I hold and the *Español* that is my first language. My lonely journey changed when I met my colleague Dr. Ruben Atilano and my future mentor Dr. Delgado-Romero who both looked and spoke like me. I was amazed by their work and how both individuals gave back to the Latinx community within their profession. I always believed that it was challenging to work in an ethnocentric monocultural space when catering to clients that are multicultural, bilingual, and hold different world views from what students are taught in textbooks and research. Dr. Delgado-Romero has helped me feel safe in my views, research, and therapy work as a psychologist-in-training. He has provided unique spaces for his mentees that have been composed of support, familiarity, value, security, and an amazing academic family. In the Latinx culture the concept of closeness is very important, and Dr. Delgado-Romero has fostered and shown that value to all of his students both in academic and personal settings. Having a Latino as a mentor has been inspiring, but most importantly, has made me feel heard.

I, Monica Sanchez, was born and raised in Georgia, but my family is from Tarimoro, Guanajuato, México. I am a first-generation PhD student at UGA in the Counseling Psychology program where I also completed my master's degree. Within my academic journey, building a community has always been very important to me. I rarely met Latinas who were on the same academic journey as I was, so it was so refreshing coming to UGA and seeing so many Latinas working towards the same goal. As I began connecting with these women, I felt so seen and understood. Their reassurance, support, stories, guidance, and authentically showing up as themselves within academic spaces has helped me to refine my academic goals and pursue a doctoral degree. Mentorship for Latinx students is so important in fostering academic growth and wellness. Latinx individuals in higher education uplift our communities by being an example of "*Si se Puede!*" because sometimes it may feel as if these spaces are not for us. As I continue my education, I hope to also be a support for other Latinx students. The authors of this chapter (and many more throughout the book) have been a great support system and I am so grateful to have so many Latinx individuals with me for my academic journey!

I, Alexina Pilo, am a doctoral student in Counseling Psychology at UGA, under the mentorship of Dr. Edward Delgado-Romero. Prior to attending UGA, I obtained my master's degree from Boston College (BC) and my bachelor's degree from the University of California, Irvine (UCI). At UCI, I began to learn the power of mentorship. Being mentored by Dr. Jessica Ortega and Dr. Jeanett Castellanos, I was challenged and embraced with love and passion while pursuing my degree and furthering my journey of self-love and self-discovery. While at UGA, I continue to be mentored by Dr. Delgado-Romero who

15 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/higher-education/314198

Related Content

Higher Education Transitions and Autism

Scott Browning and Loren Pease (2018). *Autism Spectrum Disorders: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice* (pp. 281-290).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/higher-education-transitions-and-autism/189352

"More Than Peer Support: Organizational and Relational Intervention Model": First Responder Assistance Program (F.R.A.P.)

Mario Jose Gonzalez, Marie Guma and Bernardo Jose Gonzalez (2021). *Research Anthology on Mental Health Stigma, Education, and Treatment* (pp. 269-286).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/more-than-peer-support-organizational-and-relational-intervention-model/276024

Mindfulness Through Mantram and Inspired Passage Meditation: Toolkit for Diversity

Doug Oman and Jill E. Bormann (2022). *Handbook of Research on Clinical Applications of Meditation and Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Mental Health* (pp. 214-236).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/mindfulness-through-mantram-and-inspired-passage-meditation/287067

Health and Mental Health

Cheryl Green (2021). *Research Anthology on Mental Health Stigma, Education, and Treatment* (pp. 1235-1256).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/health-and-mental-health/276081

Human Trafficking

Jessika C. Boles and Cheryl Murray Miyamasu (2023). *The Role of Child Life Specialists in Community Settings* (pp. 300-325).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/human-trafficking/313817