



Knowing our Students

Latina/o and Hispanic Student Views on Learning



Student Equity and Achievement



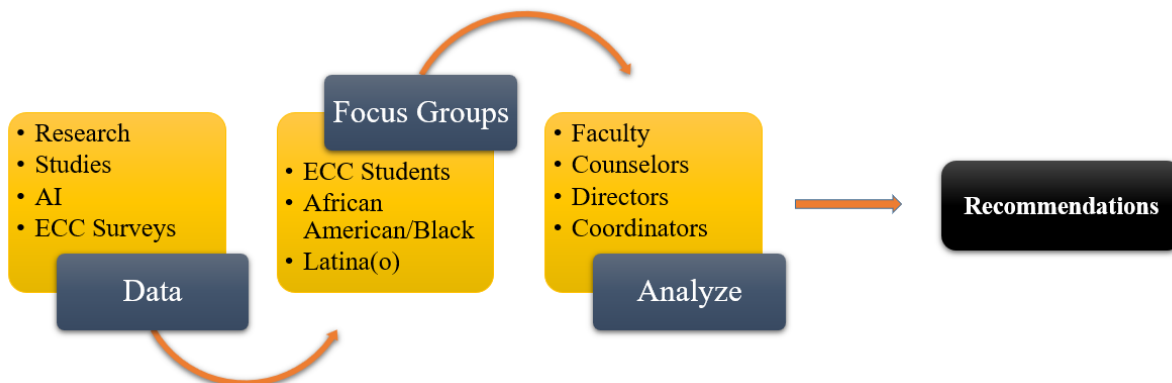
PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 outbreak has profoundly impacted the California Community College (CCC) system in multiple ways. For instance, CCCs have experienced significant drops in enrollment, with historically minoritized students being disproportionately affected. Several factors have pulled students away from completing their educational goals at CCCs, including limited access to technology, excessive work demands, and family responsibilities. The transition to online learning environments has been equally disruptive. Many students lack foundational digital literacy, and combined with inadequate access to technology, this shift has worsened retention and success rates for students already facing equity gaps.

Compounding these challenges is the financial crisis many CCCs are experiencing. Reduced funding and budget cuts have placed enormous strain on these institutions at a time when the demand for student support services and mental health resources has skyrocketed. Students striving to achieve their educational goals in a post-pandemic world are met with insufficient institutional resources to support their needs. The disruptions caused by the pandemic have not only intensified existing barriers for historically minoritized students but have also created new ones, further contributing to declining retention and graduation rates among students already experiencing equity gaps.

In response to these challenges, initiatives, programs, and divisions such as the Student Equity and Achievement, Ethnic and Social Justice Studies, myPATH, and Behavioral and Social Sciences have focused their efforts on addressing equity gaps among El Camino College's student populations, with a particular emphasis on Latina/o students. The purpose of this initiative is twofold: first, to explore the findings and recommendations from research, studies, student surveys, and focus groups regarding obstacles to learning and student success; and second, to engage counselors, faculty, and program leaders in analyzing this data to propose a holistic set of recommendations. These efforts aim to concretely address the equity gaps faced by Latina/o students at El Camino College and support their academic success.

Recommendations Model



KEY FINDINGS: LATINA/O STUDENT VALUES AND PERCEPTIONS ABOUT LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS, DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, AND THE INTERNET

The following table was compiled from language extracted from research, studies, and Scholar AI queries on student perceptions of online learning. This table serves as a point of reference to begin dialog on equity gaps and student retention and success.

<i>AREA</i>	<i>PERSPECTIVE/EXPERIENCE</i>
<i>Learning Environment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Latino students may struggle with balancing their cultural identity with the expectations of the broader academic environment, which may not always be inclusive of diverse perspectives. ▪ Findings indicate that knowledge, appreciation, and sensitivity to Hispanic cultures and an understanding of the preferred learning styles of Latino students are important considerations to establishing classroom environments that engage Latino students and, thus, facilitate their retention and academic success. ▪ Latino/a culture influences online motivations and behaviors used to build social presence. Understanding other aspects of Latino/a culture and its use to perceive social presence may be a critical factor in student success in online spaces. ▪ Socio-academic integration had the most contribution to sense of belonging. Policy implications suggest academic and student affairs of a community college could increase the sense of belonging among Latino males by focusing on socio-academic integration. ▪ The absence of in-person interaction in online learning can make it challenging for Latino students to connect with peers, which is important for community and support, especially for those who may be first-generation college students. ▪ Latino students frequently rely on familial support and navigational capital to overcome educational barriers. Online learning formats may lack the collaborative and social elements that support this group. ▪ The importance of validation and community for Latino students is often lacking in online settings. Social isolation in online learning negatively affects motivation and can increase dropout rates among Latino students.
<i>Digital Divide and Access to Technology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Latino students face significant barriers to reliable access to digital technology and high-speed internet, particularly in rural areas and lower-income urban neighborhoods. This can lead to disparities in educational outcomes, as access is crucial for homework, research, and online learning platforms. ▪ While smartphone ownership is relatively high, access to computers or tablets for academic purposes can be limited, affecting the type and depth of digital engagement students can have. ▪ Latino parents and families may have less access to digital technology, which can limit their ability to support their children's education online. Schools that offer tech training for families, in English and Spanish, often see increased parental involvement. ▪ Many Latino students lack access to reliable computers or tablets, relying instead on smartphones, which are less conducive to extensive coursework, especially when handling complex software or larger assignments. ▪ Many community colleges have shifted support services like advising, tutoring, and counseling online. However, Latino students may find it difficult to access these

<i>Instructor and Course Quality</i>	<p>services due to a lack of internet access, language barriers, or a limited understanding of how to navigate these services virtually.</p>
<i>Lack of Support and Guidance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Latino students often do not see themselves represented in faculty or administrative roles, which can make it difficult to find mentors or role models who understand their cultural background. ▪ When African American and Latinx students are taught by their same race-ethnic faculty, their course completions increase. ▪ Latino men made meaning of their faculty experiences based on (a) the accessibility and approachability of the faculty member, (b) their own hesitancy to seek help from faculty members, and (c) the level of investment or authentic care exhibited by the faculty member. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Latino students may come from underfunded or underserved high schools that do not provide adequate academic preparation for college-level work, particularly in subjects like math and English. ▪ Some Latino students, especially first-generation immigrants, may not be fully proficient in English. This can make it difficult to succeed in courses that require strong reading and writing skills, and it may also limit their access to resources, counseling, and support services. ▪ Many Latino students are the first in their families to attend college, and they may lack role models or family members who can guide them through the complexities of the higher education system (e.g., understanding financial aid, choosing courses, or planning for transfer to a four-year institution). ▪ Latino students may also struggle with navigating a college culture that may not always reflect their experiences or values, leading to feelings of isolation or imposter syndrome
<i>Socioeconomic Challenges</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Latino students often have significant family obligations, such as taking care of siblings, children, or elderly family members, which can make it hard to prioritize schoolwork. ▪ There may be cultural expectations that students focus on immediate work or family responsibilities rather than pursuing higher education, which can create tension or conflict within families
<i>Cultural and Institutional Factors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many Latino students are the first in their families to attend college, and they may lack role models or family members who can guide them through the complexities of the higher education system (e.g., understanding financial aid, choosing courses, or planning for transfer to a four-year institution). ▪ Latino students may also struggle with navigating a college culture that may not always reflect their experiences or values, leading to feelings of isolation or imposter syndrome. ▪ Cultural factors, including low acculturative stress and strong ethnic identity, had significant positive effects on emotional wellbeing and GPA.
<i>Financial and Institutional Barriers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many Latino students come from low-income families and struggle to afford the cost of tuition, textbooks, and other academic fees. Community college is often chosen as a more affordable option, but even then, financial stress can be significant.

*Psychosocial Factors and
Mental Health*

- A large proportion of Latino students work part-time or full-time jobs to support themselves or their families, which can affect their ability to focus on school, participate in extracurricular activities, or take on a full course load.
 - Community colleges often have limited resources, and many may not offer targeted support for Latino students, such as mentorship programs, Latino student organizations, or advisors who understand the specific challenges faced by Latino students.
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- The pressures of balancing financial challenges, academic responsibilities, and family obligations can take a toll on Latino students' mental health, contributing to higher rates of stress, anxiety, and depression.
 - In some Latino communities, there is stigma surrounding mental health issues, which may prevent students from seeking counseling or mental health services when they need them.
 - Some Latino students may be undocumented, which can limit their access to financial aid, scholarships, and in some cases, state or federal support. This adds an additional layer of stress and insecurity regarding their educational future.

LATINA/O STUDENT FOCUS GROUP INSIGHTS

The following table was compiled from Latina/o/Hispanic focus groups in Chicano history courses. Insights from the dataset reveal that students chose El Camino College (ECC) primarily for its proximity, affordability, and academic opportunities, including transfer pathways and career advancement prospects. The college's supportive and inclusive environment, enhanced by programs like EOPS and Puente, was highly valued, along with essential resources such as financial aid counseling and tutoring. However, mixed feedback on counseling underscored issues with accessibility and inconsistent guidance. Students praised supportive professors who fostered connections through empathy and availability, though experiences varied depending on teaching styles. In-person classes were preferred for building stronger relationships, and cultural representation among faculty was seen as motivational, with calls for greater diversity in hiring. Key challenges included limited course availability, economic barriers, and balancing personal responsibilities, exacerbated by inadequate awareness or access to resources and events. Students expressed the need for improved communication, expanded academic and personal support, and year-round cultural representation to promote inclusivity and stronger community engagement.

QUESTION	INSIGHTS
<i>What influenced your decision to attend ECC?</i>	<p>Proximity and Convenience: Many students chose ECC because of its close proximity to home, making it a practical and accessible option.</p> <p>Affordability: Financial constraints influenced decisions, especially for first-generation students and those with limited savings.</p> <p>Academic and Career Goals: Students were drawn to ECC for its programs, transfer opportunities, and career advancement potential.</p> <p>Supportive Environment: The college's welcoming atmosphere and inclusivity appealed to students.</p>
<i>What ECC student services and academic support services have been helpful?</i>	<p>Highly Valued Programs: Programs like EOPS, Puente, and the Warrior Welcome Center were repeatedly praised for their support and resources. Services like financial aid counseling and tutoring were noted as essential for academic success.</p> <p>Mixed Feedback on Counseling: While some students found counseling helpful, others highlighted challenges with accessibility and inconsistent guidance.</p> <p>Underutilized Resources: Some students expressed difficulty navigating or accessing resources, citing a need for better communication and direction.</p>
<i>Do you feel your professors are supportive and approachable? Why or why not?</i>	<p>Positive Relationships: Many students found their professors supportive, particularly those who used office hours effectively and showed empathy for student challenges.</p> <p>Inconsistent Experiences: While most professors were described as approachable, a minority were seen as less welcoming, leading to variability in student experiences.</p> <p>Online vs. In-Person Dynamics: In-person classes fostered better connections with professors compared to online formats.</p> <p>Room for Improvement: Students emphasized the need for clear communication, detailed explanations, and relatable teaching styles.</p>
<i>How important is it to have faculty or mentors</i>	<p>Significant Importance for Representation: Shared backgrounds were seen as motivational and supportive, helping students feel understood and connected.</p>

that share your ethnicity/culture/heritage?

Ease of Communication: Faculty with similar cultural experiences were perceived as more relatable and easier to approach.

Calls for Diversity: Students emphasized the need for diverse faculty, including LGBTQ+ and Hispanic representation, to reflect the student body's demographics.

Balanced Views: Some students valued professionalism and teaching quality over shared cultural backgrounds.

Are there barriers/challenges you've encountered in your academic journey at ECC?

Course Availability and Scheduling: Limited availability of required and night classes delayed progress for some students, especially working individuals.

Counseling Issues: Frustration with inconsistent guidance, difficulty accessing counselors, and lack of proactive support were recurring themes.

Economic Barriers: High textbook costs and financial challenges impacted students' ability to complete courses.

Motivation and Emotional Struggles: Maintaining motivation and balancing academic, personal, and professional responsibilities were significant challenges.

Have you found opportunities to celebrate or engage with your ethnicity/culture/heritage at ECC?

Positive Cultural Events: Events like Hispanic Heritage Month and clubs such as Puente and MICASA were highlighted as opportunities for cultural engagement.

Underutilized Opportunities: While opportunities exist, many students were unable to participate due to time constraints or lack of awareness.

Desire for Year-Round Representation: Some students wished cultural celebrations were not limited to specific months and were more integrated into campus life.

Is there anything ECC could do to better support students academically, socially, or personally?

Academic Support: Students called for more tutors, additional night classes, and better guidance for course selection and transfer processes.

Social Engagement: Increased social gatherings and better communication about available resources were seen as essential for building community.

Personal Support: Mental health resources and financial aid for part-time students were identified as critical areas for improvement.

Representation and Inclusivity: Calls for more diverse faculty and inclusive courses highlight a desire for broader representation.

LATINA/O STUDENT SURVEY ON LEARNING INSIGHTS

An anonymous survey of Latino students at El Camino College reveals insights into their academic goals, preferences, challenges, and support systems. Most students aim to transfer to four-year institutions, with diverse academic interests ranging from Childhood Education to Nursing. In-person learning is preferred, with subject interest and career relevance driving engagement. Challenges include time management, motivation, and balancing family and work responsibilities, compounded by unmet basic needs. Counseling and support programs are underutilized, while technological access is generally sufficient but not universal.

<i>AREA</i>	<i>INSIGHT</i>
<i>Which factor is most important to you in choosing a college?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Career preparation: 52.63% ▪ Affordability: 21.05% ▪ Location: 10.53% ▪ Campus environment: 10.53% ▪ Other: 5.26%
<i>What is your primary educational goal at El Camino College?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transfer to a 4-year university: 63.64% ▪ Earn an AA/AS degree: 18.18% ▪ Career advancement: 9.09% ▪ Personal interest/self-improvement: 9.09%
<i>How many semesters have you completed at El Camino College?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 semester: 60.87% ▪ 2 semesters: 17.39% ▪ 3 semesters: 8.70% ▪ 4 or more semesters: 13.04%
<i>Do you enroll in 12 units or more each semester?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes: 63.33% ▪ No: 36.67%
<i>What is your field of study at El Camino College?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biology: 17.39% ▪ Childhood Education: 13.04% ▪ Education: 8.70% ▪ Film: 4.35% ▪ Other fields: 56.52%
<i>Have you worked with a counselor within the last two semesters?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes: 78.26% ▪ No: 21.74%
<i>Which English courses have you completed?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No courses completed: 31.58% ▪ 1A/1AH: Reading and Composition: 21.05% ▪ 1C/1CH: Critical Thinking and Composition: 10.53% ▪ Other courses: 36.84%
<i>Have you completed a transferable math class?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes: 34.78% ▪ No: 50.00% ▪ Not sure: 15.22%

<i>Check the learning environment you prefer the most.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-person (classroom-based learning): 45.65% ▪ Hybrid (mix of in-person & online): 34.78% ▪ Fully online (asynchronous or synchronous): 19.57%
<i>Check the three that most motivate you to engage in learning.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interactive activities: 39.13% ▪ Supportive faculty: 26.09% ▪ Clear course structure: 15.22% ▪ Relevance to career goals: 10.87% ▪ Other: 8.70%
<i>Check the three that you find most beneficial for assessing your learning.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multiple-choice quizzes: 30.43% ▪ Group projects: 26.09% ▪ Presentations: 15.22% ▪ Hands-on exams (e.g., labs, real-world problem-solving): 19.57% ▪ Other: 8.70%
<i>Check the three biggest challenges you face when it comes to learning.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Time management: 38.89% ▪ Engaging content: 22.22% ▪ Understanding difficult concepts: 16.67% ▪ Staying motivated: 16.67% ▪ Distractions in study environment: 5.56%
<i>check the three that define what you appreciate most about faculty.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Straightforward communication: 44.44% ▪ Use of engaging teaching methods: 27.78% ▪ Integration of real-world examples: 16.67% ▪ Personalized support for students: 11.11%
<i>Check the reasons that have moved you to withdraw (drop) a course. Check the first box if you have never withdrawn (dropped) a course. Check all that apply.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Never withdrawn from a course: 38.33% ▪ Academic challenges: 15.00% ▪ Personal responsibilities: 10.00% ▪ Lack of interest in subject: 10.00% ▪ Other reasons: 26.67%
<i>Do you have access to personal WiFi/Internet?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yes: 95.00% ▪ No, use campus WiFi: 5.00%
<i>What is the primary technology you will use to participate in your courses?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Laptop computer: 58.33% ▪ Cell phone: 10.00% ▪ Tablet: 6.67% ▪ Desktop computer: 11.67% ▪ Chromebook: 13.33%
<i>What are the most critical needs and challenges you are facing as a student in college? Check all that apply.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employment: 8.33% ▪ Family responsibilities: 11.67% ▪ Food insecurity: 5.00% ▪ Childcare needs: 3.33% ▪ No critical needs at this time: 36.67%

Are you enrolled in any of the following programs? Check all that apply

- Other (including housing, access to healthcare, academic support, financial aid, etc.): 35.00%
- Employment: 8.33%
- Family responsibilities: 11.67%
- Food insecurity: 5.00%
- Childcare needs: 3.33%
- No critical needs at this time: 36.67%
- Other (including housing, access to healthcare, academic support, financial aid, etc.): 35.00%

Survey Analysis and Recommendations for Hispanic/Latino Students at El Camino College

This survey provides insight into the experiences, challenges, and preferences of Hispanic/Latino students at El Camino College. The data highlights key areas such as educational goals, learning preferences, challenges, faculty appreciation, and critical needs. Based on the findings, I have outlined key observations and actionable recommendations to enhance student success and engagement. Key Takeaways:

- **Educational Goals & Course Completion:** 63.64% of students aim to transfer to a 4-year university, while 18.18% seek an AA/AS degree. 34.78% have completed a transferable math class, while 31.58% have not completed any English courses. 78.26% have worked with a counselor in the past two semesters. Implication: The high percentage of students planning to transfer indicates the importance of transfer support programs, articulation agreements, and academic planning. However, math and English completion rates are relatively low, which can hinder transfer readiness.
- **Learning Preferences & Faculty Appreciation:** 45.65% prefer in-person learning, while 34.78% prefer a hybrid model. The most motivating factors include interactive activities (39.13%), supportive faculty (26.09%), and clear course structures (15.22%). Students appreciate straightforward communication (44.44%), engaging teaching methods (27.78%), and real-world examples (16.67%) in faculty instruction. Implication: While many students prefer in-person learning, over one-third value hybrid options, suggesting that a mix of online and face-to-face instruction may be optimal. Faculty members play a pivotal role in student engagement through interactive and structured teaching.
- **Biggest Learning Challenges:** 38.89% struggle with time management, while 22.22% find it difficult to engage with course content. 16.67% cite difficulty understanding complex topics, and 16.67% report challenges with staying motivated. 5.56% struggle with distractions in their study environment. Implication: Time management and motivation are primary challenges, which suggests that academic support services, peer mentorship, and structured course guidance could help students stay on track.

- **Student Needs & Barriers to Success:** 36.67% report no critical needs, but many struggle with employment (8.33%), family responsibilities (11.67%), and food insecurity (5.00%). 95.00% have personal WiFi access, ensuring that most students can participate in online learning. 58.33% primarily use laptops for coursework, while 10.00% rely on cell phones. Implication: While many students feel secure, a significant portion faces economic hardships. Support programs for food, childcare, and financial aid awareness can help address these concerns.
- **Course Withdrawals & Assessment Methods:** 38.33% have never withdrawn from a class, while 26.67% withdrew for personal reasons (family/work). Multiple-choice quizzes (30.43%), group projects (26.09%), and hands-on exams (19.57%) are the most beneficial assessment methods for learning. Implication: Course withdrawals are often due to external responsibilities, not just academic difficulties. Flexible learning options, online tutoring, and deadline extensions may help students complete courses.

Recommendations

- **Strengthen Transfer & Academic Support Programs:** Expand academic counseling outreach to ensure math and English completion rates improve for transfer-bound students. Offer targeted workshops on transfer pathways, financial aid, and university applications. Encourage students to complete English and Math early in their academic journey through priority counseling.
- **Enhance Course Design for Student Engagement:** Faculty should incorporate interactive learning techniques (e.g., hands-on activities, real-world case studies). Hybrid learning options should be expanded, as one-third of students prefer a mix of online and in-person instruction. Instructors should provide clear, structured guidance in coursework to support motivation and understanding.
- **Provide Targeted Support for Learning Challenges:** Time management workshops and productivity coaching can help students struggling with deadlines. Offer peer tutoring and mentoring to help students understand difficult topics and stay motivated. Develop faculty training to recognize and support students facing academic engagement challenges.
- **Address Financial & Basic Needs Barriers:** Promote awareness of food, childcare, and financial assistance programs available to students. Establish emergency funds or flexible work-study options to support students balancing employment and studies. Develop community partnerships to provide additional resources, such as subsidized childcare and food pantries.
- **Improve Retention Strategies & Flexibility in Learning:** Encourage faculty to offer flexible deadlines and asynchronous learning options to accommodate students with family and work commitments. Expand course withdrawal alternatives, such as pass/no-pass options or academic probation programs instead of withdrawal. Implement faculty-led "check-ins" for struggling students to ensure early intervention in cases of potential dropout.

Hispanic/Latino students at El Camino College overwhelmingly aspire to transfer, yet many face barriers in course completion, time management, and personal responsibilities. While faculty engagement and interactive learning are key motivators, economic and personal challenges contribute to course withdrawals. By expanding academic support, providing flexible learning options, and addressing financial barriers, the college can improve student retention, transfer rates, and overall success.

DRAFT

LATINA/O STUDENT RESEARCH/STUDIES INSIGHTS ON ONLINE LEARNING

The following insights were compiled from a ScholarAI-generated analysis of Latina/o/Hispanic online learning experiences and challenges housed in academic databases. These findings provide a foundation for dialogue on equity gaps and strategies to enhance student retention and success in online learning. Latino community college students face significant struggles in online courses due to limited instructor engagement, socioeconomic and technological barriers, cultural responsibilities, and difficulties in fostering a sense of belonging in virtual environments. To address these challenges, it is essential to implement comprehensive support systems that are specifically tailored to meet their unique needs and circumstances.

<i>QUESTION</i>	<i>INSIGHTS</i>
<i>Lower Perceived Instructor Presence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students often report a lack of interaction and guidance in online courses, which leads to a perception of having to "teach themselves." This is particularly problematic for students who rely on faculty engagement to succeed.
<i>Academic Preparedness and Integration Issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many Latino students face difficulties with self-directed learning and academic readiness, making online courses particularly challenging. These students often lack adequate support to navigate the online system effectively.
<i>Socioeconomic Challenges</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many Latino students balance work, family responsibilities, and education. Online courses require self-discipline and time management, which can be difficult with competing priorities. ▪ Financial constraints also mean that many students have to work part-time or full-time, leaving less time and energy for studies. ▪ Socioeconomic barriers such as limited access to reliable internet and technology hinder the ability of Latino students to participate effectively in online courses.
<i>Cultural and Family Expectations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Family responsibilities and cultural expectations often conflict with the demands of online education, reducing the time and focus available for coursework. This is compounded by a lack of understanding of the online education system. ▪ Family responsibilities often take precedence for Latino students. In a virtual setting, the boundaries between home and school blur, making it challenging to focus solely on academics. ▪ Many Latino students are the first in their families to attend college, adding pressure to succeed while navigating unfamiliar systems.
<i>Sense of Belonging and Engagement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Online courses can exacerbate feelings of isolation, which are already prevalent among Latino students in community colleges. A lower sense of belonging and engagement in the online environment negatively impacts academic performance. ▪ Online courses often fail to foster a community-like atmosphere. Latino students report feelings of isolation due to a lack of culturally inclusive content and interaction opportunities. ▪ A study found that culturally responsive teaching and representation in online courses were significantly lacking, further alienating students.

Digital Divide and Access to Technology

- Many Latino students lack consistent access to high-speed internet and reliable devices, limiting their ability to participate fully in online learning environments.
- Studies also reveal that families in lower-income brackets, where many Latino students belong, often cannot afford the necessary technological resources, compounding educational disparities.
- Some students express skepticism about the effectiveness of online learning compared to face-to-face instruction, particularly in building skills for their career paths. A lack of training in online learning tools adds to frustration and disengagement.

Inadequate Institutional Support

- Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) have been slow to adapt to the unique needs of Latino students in online courses. This includes a lack of advisors, technical support, and culturally relevant outreach.
- Insufficient mental health resources also limit their ability to manage the stress of balancing multiple roles.

Recommendations

- **Enhanced Digital Equity:** Invest in providing subsidized technology and internet access for low-income students to reduce the digital divide.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Establish virtual mentoring and academic support systems to help students navigate online platforms effectively.
- **Active Faculty Engagement:** Encourage faculty to use interactive teaching strategies, such as video conferencing and discussion boards, to foster a sense of community.
- **Family and Community Inclusion:** Create programs that involve families in the educational journey, helping students balance responsibilities while staying committed to academic success.
- **Peer-to-Peer Learning Models:** Peer mentoring programs like "Latino Success in Online Learning" at El Paso Community College pair successful Latino online learners with new students to share strategies and motivation.
- **Real-Time Interaction Opportunities:** Providing synchronous online options where students can interact with instructors and peers in real-time helps foster a sense of connection, particularly for students who feel isolated in asynchronous settings.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acevedo-Gil, N. (2017). College-conocimiento: toward an interdisciplinary college choice framework for Latinx students. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 20(6).

Article's Abstract: This paper builds upon Perna's college choice model by integrating Anzaldúa's theory of *conocimiento* to propose an interdisciplinary college choice framework for Latinx students. Using previous literature, this paper proposes college-conocimiento as a framework that contextualizes Latinx student college choices within the inequitable distribution of institutional resources in the K-12 system. In particular, the framework centers on the notion that a lack of adequate college guidance can influence a cyclical Latinx college choice process. College-conocimiento is defined as a serpentine process where Latinx students reflect on the college information that they receive, in relation to their intersectional identities when preparing for college. **The pathway of college-conocimiento entails seven cyclical spaces and aims for students to develop a reflective college consciousness, exemplified through self-advocacy and supporting peers with the college choice process.** This paper challenges college choice as a sequential process by noting that students can repeat stages as needed.

Arteaga, B. E. (2014). Applying Cultura in the Community College Counseling Practice. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(8).

Article's Abstract: Latino students represent the fastest-growing population in the state of California, the United States, and the California Community College (CCC) system. Unfortunately, compared to other ethnic groups, Latino community college students continue to lag academically. Given the importance of counseling services and the scarce research related to community college students and community college counseling services, this study explored how 26 first-generation, low-income, Latino community college students perceived, negotiated, and developed a relationship with their community college counselor. Using a qualitative grounded theory research design, participants' counseling experiences were captured through face-to-face semistructured in-depth interviews, and a theoretical model was developed. This study extended the literature on the importance of community college counseling services in assisting and motivating students to reach transfer and graduation and emphasized students' positive and negative counseling experiences. The research findings suggest a need to improve community college counseling services. **Thus, based on the research findings and other published research, this study proposes a set of the following: (a) guidelines for applying cultura (culture) to community college counseling that can assist relationship building between students and counselors; (b) questions that can be included in students' evaluation of counselors; (c) counselor interview questions that may elicit behavioral response and assess cultural competence; and (d) community college students' preferred counselor characteristics that may be used by hiring committees.**

Bensimon, Estela Mara and Alicia Dowd. (2007) Dimensions of the Transfer Choice Gap: Experiences of Latina and Latino Students Who Navigated Transfer Pathways. *Harvard Educational Review*: 79 (4).

Article's Abstract: This article draws on the voices of three Latina and two Latino students who navigated transfer pathways from a community college to four-year colleges. Although all but one of these students was eligible for admission to the selective University of California system, none of them exercised that choice. In fact, only one enrolled in a selective university. The transfer outcomes for the group interviewed illustrate the informational and cultural barriers that students must overcome in order to exercise choice in the selection of transfer institutions. **The findings indicate that institutional "transfer agents" are needed to help qualified community college students overcome informational and cultural barriers to transfer into selective institutions.** The students' transfer stories reveal the detrimental consequences of lack of access to transfer agents.

Bukoski, B. E., & Hatch, D. K. (2016). "We're Still Here . . . We're Not Giving Up": Black and Latino Men's Narratives of Transition to Community College. *Community College Review*, 44(2).

Article's Abstract: This study examines masculinity in a manner commensurate with established feminist frameworks to deconstruct a patriarchal system that ill-serves both men and women. Method: We utilized standpoint theory and narrative analysis to examine longitudinal, qualitative data from first-year Black and Latino males as they transition into community college through their second semester. Findings: Positionality is critical to understanding the success of Black and Latino males and their response to institutional structures. In many instances, men leveraged normative constructions of masculinity as aids to their success, and their resilience and confidence were filtered through their perceived development into adults. Conclusion: **Implications for practice include the creation of spaces for men to talk about what it means to be a man in college and ways to influence men to make the most of resources when proffered, even if they tend to avoid seeking them out on their own.** Further research should seek to understand how men develop and evolve their concepts of masculinity as well as how and to what extent spaces for men actually work to dismantle hegemonic masculinity.

Burshnick Genthe, Christine and Christine Harrington (2022). "Low Completion Rates of Latinx Community College Students. *Impacting Education*. 7(2).

Article's Abstract: Completion rates for Latinx students are unacceptably lower than White and Asian students (NCES, 2019). Shapiro et al. (2017) reported that the completion rate for Latinx students attending community colleges was 33%, while the completion rate was 45% for White students and 44% for Asian students. This literature review aimed to discover the root causes of these low completion rates for Latinx students. Having a deep understanding of the factors that contribute to low success rates can enable community college professionals to take action to improve success outcomes and reduce equity gaps. **Based on this systematic literature review of 24 peer-reviewed articles and five public scholarship articles, the following root causes emerged: financial barriers, lack of institutional support, educational preparation,**

psychosocial considerations, and familial and cultural issues. Recommendations for institutional actions are provided.

Carales, V. D. (2020). Examining Educational Attainment Outcomes: A Focus on Latina/o Community College Students. *Community College Review*, 48(2).

Article's Abstract: This study examined how a set of theoretically derived factors predicted the educational attainment outcomes of Latina/o community college students. The guiding research question was, "What precollege and background characteristics, college experiences, and environmental pull factors uniquely predict persistence, certificate or associate degree completion, and transfer or bachelor's degree completion for a national sample of Latina/o community college students?" Method: Three logistic regression analyses were conducted using a nationally represented sample from the Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS: 04/09). Results: Latina/o community college student educational outcomes were found to be related to demographic or precollege variables including primary language spoken in the home, citizenship status, socioeconomic status, degree expectations; college experiences including academic integration, first-year college grade point average (GPA), enrollment intensity, co-enrollment; and environmental pull factors including the receipt of a federal student loan and Pell Grant. Conclusion: **Findings underscore the importance of financial aid in promoting success outcomes and alleviate affordability concerns for Latina/o community college students. Findings also reinforce the notion of considering educational intentions when developing advising services and programs that foster or match those ambitions.** Doing so will improve both student outcomes and institutional effectiveness.

Castro, E. L., & Cortez, E. (2016). Exploring the Lived Experiences and Intersectionalities of Mexican Community College Transfer Students: Qualitative Insights Toward Expanding a Transfer Receptive Culture. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 41(2)

Article's Abstract: This qualitative study examines the experiences of six Mexican community college transfer students attending a research-intensive institution in the Pacific Northwest. Using semi-structured interviews, the objectives of this study were to 1) understand how Mexican students made meaning of their transfer experiences and 2) how those experiences could inform conceptual and practical thinking toward building a transfer receptive culture at the receiving institution. We use intersectionality as a site of material and discursive possibility to encourage predominantly White receiving institutions to recognize how they position Mexican community college transfer students on campus. **Concluding are conceptual and practical recommendations that emphasize institutional and organizational responsibility in creating equitable environments for Mexican community college transfer students.**

Cejda, B. D., & Hoover, R. E. (2010). Strategies for Faculty-Student Engagement: How Community College Faculty Engage Latino Students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 12(2).

Article's Abstract: Student-faculty engagement has been identified as the best predictor of Latino student persistence (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). This study explores the strategies that community college faculty employ to engage Latino students. **Findings indicate that knowledge, appreciation, and sensitivity to Hispanic cultures and an understanding of the preferred learning styles of Latino students are important considerations to establishing classroom environments that engage Latino students and, thus, facilitate their retention and academic success.**

Chun, H., Marin, M. R., Schwartz, J. P., Pham, A., & Castro-Olivo, S. M. (2016). Psychosociocultural structural model of college success among Latina/o students in Hispanic-serving institutions. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 9(4).

Article's Abstract: Previous studies of college entrance and graduation have identified strong ethnic identity, cultural congruity, and low acculturative stress as protective factors for academic persistence among Latina/o college students. However, lacking in the literature is a more differentiated and complete understanding of the complex relationships between cultural and psychosocial factors that may lead to college success for students attending Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) of higher education. Proposing a structural equation model, we examined positive effects of ethnic identity, cultural congruity, and low acculturative stress on emotional wellbeing and GPA of Latina/o students attending HSIs. Further, we explored whether sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy mediate the relationships between the aforementioned cultural factors and emotional wellbeing and GPA. Participants were 289 Latina/o college students attending a Hispanic-Serving Institution in a Southwest city. **Results showed that cultural factors, including low acculturative stress and strong ethnic identity, had significant positive effects on emotional wellbeing and GPA.** However, the effects of cultural congruity were not substantiated. The mediating effects of sense of belonging and academic self-efficacy on cultural factors and college success outcomes were partially supported. Implications for improving adjustment among Latina/o college students attending Hispanic-Serving Institutions are discussed.

Crisp, G., Taggart, A., & Nora, A. (2015). Undergraduate Latina/o Students: A Systematic Review of Research Identifying Factors Contributing to Academic Success Outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 85(2).

Article's Abstract: A systematic review was conducted to produce an up-to-date and comprehensive summary of qualitative and quantitative evidence specific to the factors related to undergraduate Latina/o student academic success outcomes during college. The purpose of the study was to make sense of and provide critique to this rapidly growing body of research, as well as to direct future research efforts. **Findings indicate that a combination of (a) sociocultural characteristics; (b) academic self-confidence; (c) beliefs, ethnic/racial identity, and coping styles; (d) precollege academic experiences; (e) college experiences; (f) internal motivation and commitment; (g) interactions with supportive individuals; (h) perceptions of the campus climate/environment; and (i) institutional type/characteristics are related to one or**

more academic success outcomes for Latina/o students. The article concludes with specific recommendations including the use of additional methods, frameworks and perspectives that we hope will be useful in advancing this line of work.

García, H. A., & Garza, T. (2016). “Retaining Latino males in community colleges: A structural model explaining sense of belonging through socio-academic integration.” *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 23(2), 41-58

Article’s Abstract: Due to the American compulsory educational system's structured inequalities and the stratification mechanisms embedded within it, Latino students' academic performance and higher education participation and persistence are problematic. The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that facilitate sense of belonging among Latino male students who are enrolled in community colleges. Additionally, this study will examine how these experiences influenced their persistence. We integrate Tinto's (1993) constructs of academic and social integration, with Deil-Amen's (2011) socio-academic integration construct to inform this study. **Results indicate that socio-academic integration had the most contribution to sense of belonging. Policy implications suggest academic and student affairs of a community college could increase the sense of belonging among Latino males by focusing on socio-academic integration.**

Gross, J. P. K., Zerquera, D., Inge, B., & Berry, M. (2014). Latino Associate Degree Completion: Effects of Financial Aid Over Time. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 13(3).

Article’s Abstract: Lack of financial resources to pay for postsecondary education—perceived and actual—has been cited as a barrier to student access and persistence, particularly for Latino students. This study investigates the following question: “To what extent does financial aid affect the educational attainment of Latinos enrolled in Associate’s degree programs, and how do these effects change over time?” **We find receiving aid of any type was positively associated with degree completion, though the effect declined over time.**

Hund, J. (2020). “Effect of same-race ethnic faculty on the course completion of students of color.” *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 27(2), 7-24.

Article’s Abstract: While qualitative studies point to the role played by faculty of color in promoting the success of students of color, few quantitative studies examine institutional data to determine such effects. This quantitative study set out to examine the main effects of race-ethnicity of faculty members, race-ethnicity of students, and the interaction effects of these variables on course completion. Analysis of large institutional data (N=71,255 course completion records) revealed no effect of the race-ethnicity of faculty members; however, the effect of the race-ethnicity of students was found to be significant as was the interaction effect of race-ethnicity of faculty members and race-ethnicity of students. **Using Bonferroni post-hoc analysis, the results revealed that when African American and Latinx students are taught by their same race-ethnic faculty, their course completions increase. Critical race and identity**

theories provide a framework for understanding the findings. Recommendations for practice are provided.

Ingram, T. N., & Gonzalez-Matthews, M. (2013). Moving Towards Engagement: Promoting Persistence Among Latino Male Undergraduates at an Urban Community College. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 37(8).

Article's Abstract: Latinos are being educated in American colleges and universities in greater numbers than ever before. Yet, despite the increases in population growth, Latinos are still falling behind. Little attention has been given to the experiences of Latino males enrolled at the community college. However, research shows that it is the community colleges in which a large portion of the college-going Latino population is enrolled. The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine how community colleges can increase Latino male engagement in the quest to promote their academic persistence. **Findings suggest these 12 Latino men are faced with unique circumstances (familial commitment, employment, peers) both on and off campus that impedes their involvement. Institutions of higher education are encouraged to be more supportive by offering opportunities for engagement that are sensitive to lifestyle of these participants in order to maintain their enrollment.**

Matos, J. M. D. (2015). La Familia: The Important Ingredient for Latina/o College Student Engagement and Persistence. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 48(3).

Article's Abstract: This article utilizes Yosso's (2005) community cultural framework and the six forms of cultural capital (aspirational, familial, linguistic, navigational, resistant, social) as corrective reframes of the cultural deficit model. Although the prevailing literature on Latina/o parents and families portray this population as being unmotivated and uninterested in education, this article highlights findings from my study on the impact of Latina/o parental involvement on college students that contradicts sentiments held by the cultural deficit model. **Participants in the study identified how they use the cultural capital transmitted to them by their families and communities, and how they create "finishing," a new form of capital.** The article also contains strategies for how students and practitioners in K-12 and higher education settings can use the findings within the study to improve the educational climate and conditions for Latina/o students in U.S. schools.

Moore, K. P., Miller, R. C., & Diaz, S. (2023). "Utilizing the community of inquiry survey to inform student satisfaction and sense of belonging in a community college environment." *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 30(1), 91-108.

Article's Abstract: The abrupt shift in higher education following the COVID-19 pandemic restricted course offerings to distance education modalities, limiting learning and socialization to online environments. This study utilized the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework to investigate student experiences in a rural community college. The mixed-methods survey, containing 34 CoI items and questions introduced by the researchers, was administered to 196 humanities and social sciences courses during 2022, yielding (n=457) responses. The data

revealed several distinct findings. **Teaching Presence, Cognitive Presence, and Social Presence are associated with course satisfaction, with Teaching Presence as the largest predictor.**

Additionally, Teaching Presence and Social Presence are significant predictors of institutional-level sense of belonging. Furthermore, Teaching Presence and Cognitive Presence are significant predictors of course-level sense of belonging. Finally, Teaching Presence is the common thread between course satisfaction and sense of belonging.

Pérez II, D. (2017). In Pursuit of Success: Latino Male College Students Exercising Academic Determination and Community Cultural Wealth. *Journal of College Student Development* 58(2).

Article's Abstract: Discourse about Latino male college students centers on their low enrollment, persistence, and graduation rates. Two asset-based theoretical frameworks were used to understand how 21 Latino males' academic determination was nurtured and sustained by cultural wealth at selective institutions. Although most participants entered college with unclear educational goals, they aspired to become ideal college students who effectively balanced personal, academic, and social commitments. **Most participants relied on peer networks instead of faculty and administrators to achieve their educational goals. Implications** for research, policy, and practice focus on the role cultural wealth can play in Latino male college students' academic determination.

Plotts, C. (2018). Latino/a cultural perspectives of social presence: a case study. *International Journal of Educational Technology*, 5(1).

Article's Abstract: Many Latino/a students select online learning as a viable option for completing a college degree. Yet, Latino/a perspectives regarding online social presence is unknown. This study explored Latino/a students' perceptions of social presence in online courses as related to their culture perspectives of interpersonal communication, values, norms and social behavior. Data collection semi-structured interviews. Interview recordings were transcribed. Relevant themes emerged. The findings of this study showed that participants used culturally specific attributes to build, create, and maintain social presence in the online learning environments. Further research is needed to understand the extent of cultural influences on building social presence. **This research demonstrated that Latino/a culture influences online motivations and behaviors used to build social presence. Understanding other aspects of Latino/a culture and its use to perceive social presence may be a critical factor in student success in online spaces.**

Ponjuán, L., & Hernández, S. (2016). "Untapped potential: Improving Latino males academic success in community colleges." *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 23(2), 1-20.

Article's Abstract: The plight of Latino males in higher education has gained considerable attention over the last decade. There is a growing concern about the educational experiences of male students of color in higher education, especially Latino male students. Specifically, Latino male students are beginning their postsecondary careers at community colleges, yet are trailing their White male student peers in degree completion rates. There are various factors that highlight

why Latino male students are not successfully navigating the pathway to community college enrollment and degree completion. The unique challenges this segment of students face provides a compelling incentive to better understand the various factors that affect their educational success. The purpose of this conceptual paper is to provide a comprehensive discussion about the educational experiences of Latino males in community colleges. We believe this paper can provide compelling evidence for educational policymakers, community college leaders, and families to improve Latino male students' community college enrollment, participation, and degree completion. We conclude our discussion by providing recommendations to guide community college programs and policies to address the unique needs of Latino male students.

Rodriguez, S. L., Massey, K., & Sáenz, V. B. (2016). "Engaging Latino men in community colleges: The role of student-faculty interactions." *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 23(2), 21-40.

Article's Abstract: Community college faculty members are essential to promoting student engagement and success, yet little research in this area has focused on the interactions of Latino men with their faculty members. The study utilized Harris and Wood's (2013) Socio-Ecological Outcomes (SEO) model which focuses on the educational success of men of color in community colleges, to examine how Latino men made meaning of their interactions with faculty members and how these interactions influenced their community college success. **Latino men made meaning of their faculty experiences based on (a) the accessibility and approachability of the faculty member, (b) their own hesitancy to seek help from faculty members, and (c) the level of investment or authentic care exhibited by the faculty member. These student-faculty interactions influenced the way in which Latino men engaged both inside and outside of the classroom as well as the way in which they sought support from faculty members.**

Rodriguez, S., Jordan, A., Doran, E., & Sáenz, V. (2020). "Latino men & community college environments: Understanding how belonging, validation, and resources shape experience." *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 26(1), 1-14.

Article's Abstract: This phenomenological, qualitative study explored how Latino men at community colleges made sense of their campus environments and how those experiences influenced the college-going process. Using Harris and Wood's (2013, 2014) socio-ecological outcomes (SEO) model, this study included the perspectives of 130 Latino men who participated in focus groups at seven community colleges in the southwestern United States. The study found that professors, academic advisors, and peers played an important role in creating an environment that validated and fostered a sense of belonging. In addition, the study found that Latino men had difficulty accessing resources. Latino men expressed concern regarding transferring to a university and how that transition might influence access to resources. **Findings suggest that Latino men may benefit from a sense of belonging and feelings of validation uniquely fostered by community college environments.** Results also underscore gender and cultural norms for navigating resources and the transfer process.

Salinas, C., & Hidrowoh, J. R. (2017). Promoting Financial Literacy and Latino Males' Success at Community Colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 42(5).

Article's Abstract: Latino males across the country enroll in community colleges with the purpose of obtaining an educational degree, which could lead to accomplishing professional and personal aspirations. Even if Latino male students enroll in post-secondary education, they continue to be disenfranchised, vanished, and often rejected through the higher education pipeline. **Research regarding access to education shows that money matters to the success of Latino students.** Through a metasynthesis, this practice briefly identifies that there is little to no empirical research conducted that explores how Latino male community college students elicit, engage, and explore financial literacy programs. This paper makes recommendations for post-secondary institutions, practitioners, and policymakers to promote Latino males' success at community colleges.

Tovar, E. (2015). The Role of Faculty, Counselors, and Support Programs on Latino/a Community College Students' Success and Intent to Persist. *Community College Review*, 43(1).

Article's Abstract: This study examines how interactions with institutional agents (faculty and academic counselors) and select student support programs influence success (i.e., grade point average) and intentions to persist to degree completion for Latino/a community college students. Using social capital theory and college impact models, the study controls for the effects of select pre-college student characteristics, transition-to-college experiences, and academic and social factors. **Findings indicate that interactions (quantity and type) with institutional agents exercise a small, but significant effect on Latino/a students' success. Similarly, participation in an academically rigorous program and a counseling-intensive support program influences students' success and intent to persist. Implications for practice are addressed.**

Viramontes, J. D. R. (2020). "Transforming the community college transfer pipeline for Latinx students." *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College*, 27(2), 157-168.

Article's Abstract: This practice brief provides leaders at four-year institutions recommendations to develop a transfer receptive culture for Latinx community college students. Despite the majority of Latinx students attending a community college with intentions to transfer and graduate from a four-year institution, only a few achieve this goal. Part-time enrollment, financial challenges, academic obstacles, and limited access to information about transferring to a four-year institution prevent Latinx students from transferring. At the university, Latinx students experience isolation and discrimination due to their race/ethnicity, gender, age, class, and perceived abilities. **To address issues in the transfer process, four-year institutions must engage and re-engage Latinx students at multiple points during the transfer process to assess and re-assess what Latinx students' needs may be.** Four-year institutions may face obstacles implementing some of these recommendations. Anticipating obstacles provide four-year institutions opportunities to prepare themselves and confront these barriers before they get passed on to the student.

Zell, M. C. (2010). Achieving a College Education: The Psychological Experiences of Latina/o Community College Students. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, 9(2).

Article's Abstract: This study examines the psychological and subjective experiences of Latina/o community college students. The impact of these experiences on their persistence toward achieving their education goals is also examined. **Interviews with 17 community college students yielded 8 themes: overcoming personal and social challenges, maturation, self-discovery and college adjustment, self-efficacy, continuously strategizing, sense of purpose, perception of faculty, perception of advisors, and guided and groomed by family to succeed.** Implications for practice and recommendations for community colleges are discussed.