

Grant Proposal

Building Bridges: Empowering Latinos through student-profession Networking

Colmenares, Vanessa

University of Washington, Tacoma

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Dr. Anindita Bhattacharya, MSW, PhD

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Abstract

First-generation Latino students fall short of achieving post-secondary degree attainment compared to their leading White and Asian peers, causing a long stream of effects. To address this social issue, we propose an intervention aimed at expanding college preparation resources for FGLS. Drawing on social capital and validation theory, our goal is to connect Latino students with role models they culturally identify with. This connection will help expand their knowledge of attainable occupations and provide them with critical information for successful college and career choices. Additionally, by fostering a sense of capability and self-worth, we hope students can acknowledge their inherent value.

Introduction

First-generation Latino/ Hispanic students (FGLS) are the first in their families to attend or pursue a college degree. Although typically acknowledged more in a college setting, it is important to recognize that first-generation identities start at the high school level where they are the first in their family to graduate from high school. Latinos believe college education is important for success in life (Kim et al., 2024), which is evident as there has been a huge increase in Latino college enrollment since the 2,000's (Excelencia in Education, 2019). However, FGLS are not attaining their higher education degrees. This leaves a lasting impact on not only Latinos but also on the greater society, causing a lack of upward mobility and economic inequities. Despite advancements in enrollment within the Latino population, in 2022 only 29.5 percent of Latinos held an associate degree or higher which is significantly lower compared to Whites and Asians at 52.9% and 66.5% respectively (Kim et al., 2024)

Background

Defining the problem

The number of Latinos with a degree has increased since the 2000s, however, the attainment gap is still large. The attainment gap refers to the large difference in secondary degree attainment for Latinos when compared with the leading ethnic groups. Additionally, there are distortions based on gender, ethnic group, citizenship, or foreign-born status. Latino women have outnumbered men in degree attainment by about 290,000. As of 2021 Latino women with degrees increased by more than a million women. While men also increased, their gain was smaller at about 860,000 (Mora & Lopez, 2023). Additionally, most Latinos with a graduate degree are US-born (63%), immigrants, or foreign-born, accounting for 37%. Furthermore, Mexicans are the largest group of immigrant Latinos with degrees. It is unclear how many Latino immigrants with a doctorate, or advanced degrees earned their degrees outside of the US (Mora & Lopez, 2023).

Latino students are primarily second or third-generation immigrants, making them US Citizens, about 16% are first-generation immigrants, while some may be US residents, others may not be (Excelencia in Education, 2019). Latinos are more dependent on federal aid and

receive the lowest amount of this aid when compared to all students, about \$1,000 less (Excelencia in Education, 2019). Latinos are more likely to be first-generation college students, almost half were the first in their families to attend college compared to African American, Asian, and White students and use community and technical college options as their pathway to higher education (Contreras, 2013; Excelencia in Education, 2019)

Each person's intersecting identities shape a unique experience of the problem because their complexities can add advantages or shape disadvantages. This means all aspects of a person's identity need to be looked at to understand the layered discrimination and or privileges they may have. For instance, while a Latina may be in a better standing to gain a degree, that same identity as a female may influence a pay gap when compared to either their male counterpart or a white female in the same professional field.

Latinos encounter a variety of risk and mitigating factors through their college trajectories toward degree attainment. First, their families serve as both a push for persistence toward graduation and vulnerability. Families often serve as the most significant support system for students as they help meet their basic needs, offer financial support, and offer an environment where they feel a safe sense of belonging, protecting against discrimination. According to Valdivieso-Mora, et al., (2016), Family supportiveness or Familismo serves as a protective factor in distressing times, but at times can provide the opposite and could increase the stress. Family can also become a risk factor when their expectations exert undue pressure on students, particularly when cultural viewpoints diverge. On a community level, there are Latino-based organizations that offer support through a variety of programs that may assist in necessities and social aspects, but they do not target Latino students and the challenges they face in degree attainment. On a larger scale, the lack of Latino representation in positions of power can lead to a lack of aspirations for Latino students. Representation in politicians, advocacy organizations, or in the media, could promote change and increase visibility among the community. Each factor may influence one another by either limiting or enhancing their abilities.

Overview of impact

When Latinos do not complete their college degrees, they may be faced with limited job opportunities and pay disparities which contribute to limited social mobility for them, their families, and communities. In King County, Washington, local employment is shifting from lower-paying manufacturing jobs to more well-paying professional ones that require higher education degrees (*Educational Attainment in King County - King County, Washington, 2021*). With a decrease in job options for Latinos without degrees, job options are minimized to low-earning working-class jobs with limited or no benefits (Terriquez, 2014). Unidos US (2020) reported that a typical White family had 5x the wealth than a Latinx family despite Latinx having 65.6% of participation in the labor force. These statistics demonstrate a never-ending cycle of poverty or advancement in society, allowing for the Latino population to maintain the attainment gap. Additionally, Latino youth are likely to come from working-class families and will likely

remain in these classes with the changing economy and racial barriers (Terriquez, 2014). Latinos may have a lower quality of life as their socioeconomic status may limit the opportunities and privileges they can receive (American Psychological Association, 2017)

Furthermore, the Hispanic or Latino population is projected to increase to 111.2 million or 28 percent of the US population by 2060 (Kim et al, 2024). If the status quo continues, this growing population with low degree attainment can impact society greatly on its ability to have a competitive workforce, to close economic disparities, or to show economic growth. In 2021, King County, WA contributed to importing educated workers from around the world and the US to meet their need for professional jobs as 70% of residents that moved to King County held college degrees (EAKC, 2021). This importation of workers leaves native Washingtonians with fewer chances or opportunities for professional advancement. As Latinos continue to be in low socioeconomic status (SES), they may face health challenges in adulthood, low access to quality education, and poor income which perpetuate these associated issues in the community (APA, 2017). Additionally, low SES communities may experience higher rates of crime, and fewer public services, and recreation which affects the quality of life of all in the community (Ochoa et al., 2023), ultimately moving away from equity and inclusion in society.

Causes

Many reasons contribute to FGLS not being able to complete their college degrees. These may include the importance of family and cultural values, along with an inability to access quality education and resources, and financial resources. Latino culture upholds the importance of family in decision-making. However, these family ties can be a barrier to focusing on their academic aspirations or exploring other pathways that go outside of their family norms. For instance, 74% of Latinos say a large reason they did not perform well in school or advance to higher education was a result of choosing to support their families as they felt a duty or obligation to repay the sacrifices of their parents (Valdez, 2008; Lopez, 2009). Latino students may go to work in place of their parents or send remittances to family members either in the US or in their country of origin (Lopez, 2009). A Latino study found that 64% of immigrant Latinos and 21% of US-born Latinos between the ages of 18 to 25 participated in sending money to family (Lopez, 2009). This highlights the choices that FGLS makes to agree with the cultural collective norms, causing them to give up their aspirations.

Systemic barriers rooted in racism, that promote inequality, result in FGLS being excluded from receiving equal access to higher education, services, programs, and support. School systems in low SES communities where FGLS reside are underfunded and understaffed, which provides negative academic progress and outcomes (APA, 2017). Attainment gaps are seen as early as primary school as children in low SES have lower reading, literacy, and math scores compared to White and Asian students (APA, 2017; Lopez, 2009). Additionally, a lack of diversity in educators and support staff can greatly impact the trajectory of FGLS students as they may face discrimination, narrowed learning experiences, limited accommodation, or

devaluations of their primary languages (Mendoza et al., 2024). About 47% of Latino adults agreed that the different cultural backgrounds of their teachers were a major reason for not performing well in school (Lopez, 2009). A review of these students' experiences revealed four types of structural racism in schools where Latinos attend; School segregation, lack of high-quality educational resources, low engagement with parents, and misdiagnosis of special education needs (Mendoza et al., 2024). These barriers contribute to low self-efficacy and show limited access to resources that could help develop career aspirations such as preparedness groups, high-level role models, or career offices (Ali et al., 2005; APA, 2017).

Last, data indicates Latinos facing financial barriers contribute to limited access to college at the same rate as Whites or Asians (Elliott & Parks, 2018). Latino families of FGLS are often in low SES with minimal financial resources and savings which leave them with little to no contributions to their children's education, leaving students to compensate for the shortfalls by contributing financially at an early age or throughout their time in college (Elliott & Parks, 2018). Typically, parents with higher levels of education can offer a range of resources to their children in hopes of helping them attain college enrollment; however, Latino youth are less likely to have parents with post-secondary education and thus have little to no resources to offer (Terriquez, 2014).

Current interventions

Addressing the attainment gap among Latino students requires implementing tailored intervention programs designed to provide equitable support, resources, and opportunities that empower them to thrive academically and beyond. The following interventions have demonstrated notable results and align with the social challenges affecting Latino students.

In Araque, et al. (2017) article, the 10 Education Commandments for Parents curriculum was introduced that sought to reduce the achievement gap by educating parents about the American education system and empowering them to take an active role in their child's education. The curriculum was divided into three parts: helping children improve academically, understanding expected educational outcomes, and navigating post-high school options, including financial aid. This article effectively addresses all three levels of evidence-based interventions. It provides micro-level intervention through in-person sessions, mezzo-level intervention through community partner involvement, and macro-level intervention by fostering relationships among individuals and groups with similar goals. The article consistently emphasizes that this is not merely a micro-level program. To foster real change, it must involve community and government-level action, which we identified in previous assignments as essential for addressing the achievement and wealth gaps in Latino populations. Additionally, it highlights the power of existing communities to drive meaningful change in tackling these gaps, while also supporting students in overcoming mental health challenges and discrimination.

In a study completed by Wibrowski et al. (2016), evaluates the impact of a Skills Learning Support Program (SLSP) for first-generation college students. Participants in the

intervention were required to attend a 6-week intensive summer academic program during their freshman year, aimed at preparing them for the academic and social demands of college. The intervention was based on self-regulation and motivational theories. The findings emphasize the importance of targeted support programs, as well as ongoing assistance throughout the college experience. The study revealed that academic achievement improved significantly for students in the program, bringing their performance in line with that of their peers who were initially considered to be at a higher academic level. The intervention includes micro-level support such as individual counseling, academic assistance, goal setting, and self-monitoring; mezzo-level support through group workshops, peer support groups, and summer bridge programs; and macro-level support involving policy advocacy and institutional support programs.

In the article by Rivera-Mosquera et al. (2007), the authors introduce a program called *Latinos en Camino al Éxito Universitario*, which serves as an intervention strategy to address the low number of Latino students pursuing postsecondary education. Developed in collaboration with a Catholic church serving a large Latino community and the nearby university's counseling center, the program focused on three critical areas of academic achievement: college preparedness, career exploration, and academic skill-building. It integrated bilingual and culturally sensitive resources to work with both parents and students, fostering motivation and promoting sound decision-making. I believe the program effectively engaged the community to ensure student success, aligning with the cultural practice of *Familismo* by involving parents, the community, and promoting the child's self-efficacy. The program also highlights an often-overlooked issue: the lack of culturally appropriate programs in areas with a low concentration of Latinos. This is particularly relevant to our project, as Pierce County, especially Tacoma, lacks sufficient resources for outreach programs due to the low Latino population. As a result, Latino students are at a higher risk of facing educational barriers and other challenges. One important aspect that seems to be missing and should be addressed is the "lack of role models in all occupations," which the authors cite as a key empirical basis for the program.

The intervention presented by Parnes et al., (2020) was a bridge program that served as a condition of acceptance. The program held classes four days a week for six weeks during the summer before college began. Participants were provided with information on financial aid, academic services, and enrolled in ESL classes, depending on their needs. This approach utilized both micro and mezzo strategies, as there were opportunities to interact and build relationships with individual students. However, the program was primarily designed in a classroom setting, with about 20 students per class to accommodate the 212 participants in the intervention condition. What stands out is that the interventions demonstrated positive outcomes specifically within the first-generation (FG) student population, showing improvements in relationships with instructors and GPA. This suggests that targeted support can play a significant role in closing the achievement gap. What is lacking in this intervention, in terms of directly addressing our problem, is a design that is specifically centered around the unique needs of the first-generation Latino population. To further enhance its impact, the program should incorporate guidance on

mental health support, offering clear information on how, when, and where students can seek help. Additionally, the intervention fails to address broader systemic barriers, and, in fact, may inadvertently create one by making college admission contingent on completing this course, with little flexibility. This approach could disproportionately affect students who face external challenges, adding another layer of difficulty to an already complex process.

Saunders & Serna (2004) provide valuable information and statistics on the degree attainment and challenges faced by Latino college students, with a particular focus on first-generation college students (FGCS). The article emphasizes the importance of high school intervention and college access programs and examines the long-term effects of one such program. It also explores the concept of social capital and its theoretical framework. The intervention, called the Futures Project, is designed to increase college access and persistence for Latino FGCS. It offers mentoring, counseling, academic tutoring, college field trips, parent information sessions, assistance with college and financial aid applications, and research seminars. The program aims to disrupt social reproduction by fostering relationships and providing critical information to help students prepare for college. Although the study began in 1998 and was at its six-year mark at the time, it is important to recognize that, given the changes in Latino and FGCS enrollment statistics, some of the information may now be outdated. Despite spanning a six-year period, the intervention falls short by not tracking students through graduation or the completion of their college careers. Without follow-up data at the end of their academic journey, it remains unclear whether the interventions had a lasting impact on degree attainment or contributed to students' success in completing college.

Stakeholder information

Meeting with a first-generation Latina, the Vice Chancellor for Social Mobility for the University of Washington Tacoma, the assistant director for the Office of First Gen, and a deputy director at Mi Centro provided me with valuable insights and information to shape my intervention program. Aside from providing many resources, some of the most valuable information was to consider Validation Theory to acknowledge and affirm that students come with varying strengths, cultural stresses, and the need to leverage an intervention with things that FGLS already knows. All stakeholders addressed the inequitable access to preparation for higher education, many highlighting areas that surprise students as hidden curricula such as gaining an internship, networking, getting a job in their field, and going to events hosted on campus. One of the most critical pieces of information came from the first-generation Latina student who shared that her childhood role model was the receptionist at her doctor's office. As an adult, she became a receptionist and grew in that field. As she reflected, she wondered what other career paths she could have pursued if she had had a different group of role models around her. This information helped to incorporate cultural aspects to create a sense of belonging, narrow down my focus, shift verbiage to terms appropriate for this audience, and incorporate the understanding of students' identities to break down cultural barriers they feel hold them back.

Reflexivity Statement

I associate and empathize with this population because I understand the challenges they encounter in their pursuit of a better life on a personal level. I often put my younger self in their shoes and seek to provide answers and solutions to the difficulties they face. I hold my cultural identity close to my heart and genuinely want to see Latinos thrive both academically and professionally. My experience in school social work has revealed significant gaps that persist for first-generation Latino students. I have observed that many Latino students face systemic challenges in the educational system, resulting in them being overlooked and disengaged in school. Furthermore, first-generation college students have been the focus of my research throughout undergrad and graduate studies, demonstrating my commitment and competence in helping this population become successful.

Proposal

Needs statement

First-generation Latino (High School) seniors need exposure and guidance from Latinos pursuing successful careers, and in a variety of fields, to encourage them to persist to college graduation and make informed career decisions.

Theoretical framework

Social capital relationships provide individuals with access to resources in an instrumental way, which can lead to positive outcomes like achieving their goals (Roth, 2013). This framework guides the exposure and guidance components of this intervention. In a study examining the role of social capital in education success and inequalities, Roth (2013) found it to play an important role as aspects of social capital contribute to the inferior school performance of lower-class and migrant students. Social capital can offer a child resources such as role modeling, and resource-rich social networks to orient them into the educational system (Ashtiani & Feliciano, 2015). Furthermore, mobilized social capital, such as mentorships, is a critical factor for low-income youth in their persistence to degree completion (Ashtiani & Feliciano, 2015)

In collaboration with social capital theory, validation theory is essential for identity development, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging and affirming Latino experiences, identities, and contributions. This framework shapes the intervention by creating an inclusive and culturally affirming environment where students feel valued and understood. As stated by Rendon (1994), in- and out-of-class agents foster academic and interpersonal development, while validation helps students feel capable of learning, experience a sense of self-worth, and recognize the value of their contributions. The goal is to enhance students' sense of belonging and self-worth to boost their engagement with mentors and in activities to help mobilize the social capital they will be exposed to.

Goals and objectives

The goal of this intervention is to expose first-generation Latino high school seniors to a variety of successful Latino role models in order to expand their social capital and help them meet their goals, such as earning postsecondary degrees. Additionally, based on Validation Theory, we aim to help students feel capable of learning, foster a sense of self-worth, and acknowledge their inherent value. Long-term goals include reaching a larger senior population by expanding to the other 4 local high schools, seeing a decrease in the degree attainment gap for Latinos at the local level, and that there will be more Latino professionals in positions of power.

We aim to have at least 70% of the school's Latino seniors attend the Latino Career Social. By collaborating with community partners, we hope to have at least 15 professionals available for the event. During the event, we expect all students and staff to participate in the six different cultural activities and enjoy a lunch meal. While we aim to have 100% of the students learn at least six new occupations, we hope that at least 50% will sign up for a mentor follow-up.

Description of project

A Career Social is proposed to be hosted at Lincoln High School in Tacoma, Washington. This high school has the highest Latino enrollment rate out of the 5 high schools in the city, giving the largest access to the targeted population. The optimal time to host this event would be during Autumn. This would allow senior students to make college and career decisions before major institutional deadlines such as financial aid or college applications. This event would be ideal to host during a school day to rid of transportation challenges and costs, add a layer of comfortability, and ensure easy access for first-generation Latino seniors. The goal is to create an all-Latino team to host this event. This includes having Latino staff coordinate the event and Latino professionals overseeing the role model and mentorship part of this program.

On the day of the event, first-generation Latino seniors will be welcomed by a motivational speaker. This speaker, a successful Latino professional, will focus on exploring their identity, addressing common challenges, and sharing inspiring success stories. Following the motivational talk, there will be an informative session to provide insight into what the college trajectory may look like, explaining the application process and demonstrate how college education relates to career aspirations. Since first-generation students may feel anxious about navigating an unfamiliar system, it is important to introduce and dismantle the academic system and landscape.

This will begin with an overview of how financial aid works, the available options, and how it gets distributed. Students will then learn how to choose colleges, whether they are near or far, and whether they prefer private, public, community, or trade schools. Key steps such as the application process, associated fees and potential essay requirements will also be highlighted. Next, it will be empirical to discuss class rankings, timeline for completing degrees, the process

of declaring a major, the differences between undergraduate and graduate, as well as opportunities for internships and work study programs.

After the first hours of speakers and presentations, students will have the opportunity to network with Latino professionals from various fields through six different cultural activities; 1) baking Conchas (a traditional Mexican sweet bread), 2) Latin dance, 3) Spanish literature, 4) identity drawing, 5) bracelet making, and 6) Act it out, a skit activity (Appendix B). These activities will enable students to connect and network in culturally familiar ways. By creating an environment that fosters easy communication, they will have the chance to gain valuable insights into various occupations and career pathways. This networking strategy will continue during lunchtime, allowing students and professionals to engage in conversations while enjoying culturally familiar foods.

Some students may feel a strong connection to a career represented by a Latino professional. To support and enhance this interest, students may sign up for a mentorship opportunity. This program would allow them to pair with a Latino professional, of their choice, for a one-on-one question-and-answer session. While only one meeting is guaranteed, additional follow-ups may be possible depending on the professional's availability.

Program Activities and participant engagement

To successfully implement this intervention, several activities need to take place. These include partnering with Lincoln High School, recruiting Latino professionals, designing various cultural activities, organizing the necessary arrangements such as catering, and creating the logistics for the mentorship program. Once a partnership with the school is secured, we will begin recruitment of participants, including both students and Latino professionals. We aim to collaborate with as many partners as possible from UW Tacoma's Celebrando Comunidad leaders. If needed, the coordinating staff will recruit additional Latino professionals through their social networks. The objective is for these volunteers to give back to younger versions of themselves and serve as role models by participating in this effort. Promotion will be conducted through school flyers and by having the program host visit senior classrooms to deliver concise and informative elevator speeches. Although the cultural activities are already outlined, it will be necessary to plan these further by gathering physical materials and narrowing down instructional materials.

Timeline and Scope

Considering the requirements for preparation and planning, meeting with stakeholders, the event day itself, feedback collection, and flexibility buffers, a realistic timeline for this project is approximately 12 weeks. The first 4 weeks would focus on hiring a team to carry out this program. During the preparation phase, the team would establish a partnership with the high school to host the event, secure guest speakers and presenters, and begin to recruit professionals. Ongoing collaboration with stakeholders such as students, school administrators, and community

leaders will be crucial for audience support, promotion of the event, and ensuring overall execution. In the 2 weeks leading up to the event, we would need to finalize all materials, food arrangements, and attendee permission slips. After the event, an additional 2 weeks will be required to complete the one-on-one mentorship sessions and to analyze and document results.

To ensure that this project addresses the identified need, all components need to be aligned with our goals. Collaborating with students, Latino professionals, and community leaders will be crucial in refining our program to resonate with our target population. Seeking feedback from these stakeholders will be vital for adjusting and improving our interventions for future socials to be hosted. Ensuring the guiding frameworks are reflected in our success measurement will help us stay on track. Finally, it will be indispensable to document the process, best practices, and lessons learned during this intervention to allow the project to be expanded or replicated in other schools. In the long run, communicating student success stories or testimonials will showcase the potential changes this intervention can bring and reinforce its value.

Potential barriers and mitigation strategies

Implementing this intervention may face several potential barriers. Some challenges could include limited engagement, a shortage of professionals, a cultural disconnect, time constraints, and difficulty in sustainability. Students may not fully participate due to a lack of interest. While professionals may not be compelled to invest more time outside the in-person event or have competing priorities. Holding the event during the school day could encourage participation from students by providing a break from the routine. For professionals, it will be essential to provide an incentive that compensates them for their time, without requiring an ongoing salary. Additionally, it may be challenging to secure enough professionals or mentors for the event as scheduling conflicts may arise and require extra effort to work through. Securing them as early as possible will help to have advanced notice of the event date. It will be vital to tailor activities to reflect a variety of Latino cultures, not only the dominant group. This will help students with varying levels of cultural familiarity find a shared identity. To avoid time constraints with the post-mentorship, it will be helpful to schedule these activities ahead of time, before the event and sign-ups occur. Last, it may be challenging to maintain students' motivation after the Career Social. If the program expands, creating long-term mentorship opportunities and check-ins may sustain the engagement.

Evaluation

To measure the success of this project, we will assess three different outcomes: 1) Students show increased knowledge of career options, 2) Students exhibit a greater understanding of the college trajectory, and 3) Students leave Latino Career Social feeling motivated to pursue a career path. Each of these outcomes will align with two specific indicators.

For the first outcome, we will determine success by whether students can create a career plan with short- and long-term career aspirations, as well as whether they learn about new occupations after the social event. The second outcome will be assessed by evaluating students' ability to outline the steps in the college application process and if they know how a college education can help them achieve their career aspirations. Finally, for the third outcome, we will analyze student feedback to gauge whether it is predominantly positive and track how many students sign up for one-on-one mentorship. In addition, we will encourage students to maintain a connection with some of these mentors. In the long run, we hope to see higher enrollment and persistence rates in college. Lastly, other schools will be interested in implementing this program for their students.

Tools and Methods

The tools that will be used to measure these outcomes will be a combination of surveys and an analysis of career plan templates and 1:1 sign-ups. A survey will be used to measure outcomes 1 (indicator 2) and outcomes 2 and 3(indicator 1) (Appendix A). Surveys will be accessible digitally and on paper. A QR code will be available for students who wish to complete them on their mobile devices. For students who don't have a mobile or prefer to do it on paper, these will be handed out and collected by a staff member at the end of the event. The possible platforms for the digital versions will be Google Forms, Microsoft Forms, or Survey Monkey. The survey will include various Likert scale questions to assess the varied indicators. For outcome 1, indicator A, students will be given templates to set a career plan, including the opportunity to note short- and long-term ideas, tasks needed, and a timeline. Outcome 3, indicator 2, a sign-up for one-on-one follow-ups will be available at the end of the survey.

Surveys completed electronically will automatically upload the data on the chosen platform. Paper surveys will be collected by event staff and manually input into the data platform. The key source of our data will be the students attending the career social who will be asked to complete the survey and template at the end of the event. It is important to note that once every student has a survey and career templates, staff will go through every question with students (as a whole, not 1:1). This will provide the opportunity to ask clarifying questions about what the survey may be asking and the chance to discuss the questions and templates with peers. This will also ensure there is time scheduled for this task.

Cultural Consideration

For accessibility, it is essential to provide surveys in both English and Spanish. Many Latino students may be multilingual or English language learners, resulting in varying levels of English proficiency. Offering the surveys in their preferred language will ensure they fully understand the questions. Additionally, some students may come from mixed-status homes or be immigrants themselves. To address privacy concerns, we will emphasize confidentiality. No identifying information, such as date of birth or address, will be requested to avoid any implications regarding citizenship status. This message will be communicated before the event as

well. To honor the values of collectivism and the importance of community support among Latinos, the survey will be conducted in large groups. This format will allow students to ask questions for clarification and to discuss their thoughts with peers if necessary. However, their responses will still be submitted individually. Last, to make the survey more relatable and engaging, we will use culturally relevant colors and images, depending on platform capabilities.

Budget

Venue and set up	\$500 – \$1,000. Hosting at a school may eliminate a venue rental fee. However, tables, chairs, speakers, and microphones may be needed depending on the available space and equipment accessible.
Staff	\$32,000 This would cover the salary for 5 part-time staff for a 12 week period, at a wage of \$20.00 an hour. Five staff would be needed to help plan and coordinate the event.
Speakers and professionals	\$1,000- \$2,000 – to cover for extra services from professionals outside of the volunteered time. This would also be allocated to provide incentives for participation and travel costs.
Cultural activities	\$500 – materials for DIY Conchas, bracelet making and literature sessions.
Marketing and Outreach	\$200-\$500 – for printing flyers, posters, surveys, and any other office supplies
Food	\$1,000-\$2,000 – culturally relevant meals for students, staff, and professionals
Miscellaneous	\$500-\$1,000 it will be important to have a bank for any unexpected expense that may arise.
Total	39,000.

Appendix A: Survey Questions

Outcome 1

1. I learned about new career options that I was not previously aware of
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
2. The career social introduced me to different jobs roles within my field of interest
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
3. The event helped me understand the variety of career paths available to me
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
4. I feel more confident about exploring different career options after the career social
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree

Outcome 2

5. I understand the steps involved in the college application process (researching schools, testing, applications, financial aid)
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
6. I can identify the different types of college degrees (Associates, Bachelors, Masters, etc)
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
7. I am aware of how to declare a major and the importance of the decision
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
8. I know the value of internships and why students apply for them
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
9. I am aware of the opportunities for continuing education after obtaining a college degree (advancing to a Masters, PHD)
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
10. I can explain how a college education can help me achieve my career aspirations
 - a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neutral
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree

Outcome 3

11. I feel more motivated to pursue a career in my field of interest after attending the career social

a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Neutral d. Agree e. Strongly Agree

12. The career social inspired me to take concrete steps towards my career goals

a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Neutral d. Agree e. Strongly Agree

13. I am more confident about my career choices after attending the career social

a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Neutral d. Agree e. Strongly Agree

14. I feel more determined to achieve my career aspirations after the event

a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Neutral d. Agree e. Strongly Agree

Appendix B: Cultural Activities

Activities should be kept to a minimum of 35 minutes. This may need to be adjusted based on the school's schedule. Students will be split into 6 large groups, 1-6. Each group will start at their designated station, IE – group one will start with activity one, group two will start with activity two. From here all groups will rotate with the next activity in numerical order until they have had the opportunity to experience all activities.

1. **Baking Conchas** (a traditional Mexican sweet bread) – Prepare bread dough prior to event. Students will be completing the Concha toppings. Once all students have completed their toppings, a staff coordinator will be in charge of placing them in the school oven for baking. Students will be able to take home their Conchas at the end of the event. Here is a [link](#) to a recipe for Concha bread with all the ingredients needed.
2. **Latin dance** – decide which Latin dances to incorporate (Cumbia, Salsa, Bachata, Merengue etc). Share a very brief history of the dance to make it an educational experience. Use a YouTube instructional video to be displayed on a big screen. Ensure there is enough open space for participants that wish to dance alone or with partners. Choose the music prior to event. This can be done by creating a playlist and making sure the lyrics are appropriate for a school setting. Have a coordinator assigned to demonstrate the basic steps and keep the activity as low-pressure as possible.
3. **Spanish literature** – Choose work in Spanish by Latin authors with plots and stories that can resonate with high school seniors. Text should highlight themes of identity, perseverance, and be inspirational. This could be in the format of poems, short stories, or longer novels. It will be best to have these texts available in physical form for students to look through and explore. Recommended authors could be found on any library platform.
4. **Identity drawing** – prepare materials for coloring such as paper, markers, colored pencils, print out of Latin flags, and other art supplies that may help express one's identity (magazine cut outs, various arts and crafts). Provide an introduction about identity and share examples of why its important and how it shapes who we are. Ask probing questions to guide students creativity. Such as, “what symbols represent you, what are things you are proud of, what dreams do you have”. Set the environment by having cultural music playing in the background. Invite students to share their work if desired, but do not pressure as this could be sensitive to some students.
5. **Bracelet making** – Provide thread to all students in a variety of colors. Include materials like scissors, clipboards, and tape if necessary. Introduce a background to bracelet making and how it can display your cultural identity. Have a demonstration available, step-by-step instructions and a staff member to go around in case support is needed. Allow students to be creative and make their own designs.
6. **Act it out, a skit activity** – Gather a variety of props and a small selection of scenarios students can choose from. Explain the activity and select participants and audience while ensuring everyone has a role in execution. Allow scripts and time for students to practice before presenting to the larger groups. At the end, share a list of popular movies with Latin protagonists or directors.

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