American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education, Inc.

Building a Latina/o Student Transfer Culture: Best Practices and Outcomes in Transfer to Universities

Patricia A. Pérez
California State University, Fullerton

Miguel Ceja
California State University, Northridge

This Scholarly Paper was commissioned for the 4th Annual Conference of the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education, 2009.

Abstract

While most Latina/o transfer students declare intentions to transfer from a community college, few move on to four-year colleges and universities. In this paper, we provide an overview of the existing information related to transfer objectives and rates. Using the theoretical models of Latina/o Critical Race Theory and Validation Theory we also highlight key practices that promote transfer. Finally, based on previous scholarship we outline a Latina/o transfer culture and provide recommendations for future research and policy.

Keywords

Latina/o Transfer Students; Community College Transfer; Latina/o Education; Latina/o Critical Race Theory; Validation Theory

Table of Contents

Introduction

The majority of Latina/o[1] students that decide to pursue higher education begin at the community college level. Because community colleges offer a multitude of benefits not necessarily available at a four-year postsecondary institution, community colleges become much more alluring to students. Such factors include but are not limited to convenience of location, ability to attend part-time, open accessibility, diversity of students, and cost. While most Latina/o transfer[2] students declare intentions to transfer from their respective community colleges, few move on to four-year colleges and universities. For example, a California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) study of community college students followed for six years found that only 17 percent of Latina/o students transferred to a four-year institution— this is compared to 31 and 39 percent of whites and Asian students, respectively (CPEC, 2007). Losing such a large proportion of students who have every intention to transfer and obtain their degree is problematic, especially knowing the importance of higher education to remain competitive and advance in future career opportunities. As such, the educational and wage gap between

[1] The term "Latina/o" refers to all groups of Hispanic origin, including, but not limited to people of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Central American and South American descent.

[2] In this paper we are not referring to students that reverse transfer, that is move from the four-year to the two-year institution (McGlynn, 2006), or students that lateral transfer, moving from a postsecondary institution to a comparable institution. For purposes of this paper we discuss transfer students and scholarship associated with moving from a two-year to a four-year institution.

Latinas/os and other racial/ethnic groups will widen as more and more students continue to attend community colleges without transferring and obtaining degrees. As a result of these concerns this paper outlined the following objectives:

- To provide an overview of the current information available on Latina/o transfer students including attendance, persistence, and transfer rates;
- To highlight best practices and outstanding programs that facilitate Latina/o student transfer;
- To document a Latina/o transfer culture to assist educators, policymakers, and individuals committed to providing educational equality of opportunity for Latina/o students and other underrepresented minorities and;
- To identify directions for future research, practice, and policy to aid Latina/o transfer students.

Towards this end, we address the plight of Latina/o transfer students in three primary sections. First, we provide a demographic overview of Latina/o transfer students. More specifically, we highlight the current information available on Latina/o student attendance, persistence, and transfer rates. Within the framework of select theoretical models, in the next section we pay special attention to promising practices, outreach initiatives, and an exemplary transfer program model used to facilitate Latina/o student transfer. Herein, among the conceptual theories addressed are Latina/o Critical Race Theory and Validation Theory. Finally, we conclude with suggestions for future policy, practice, and scholarship. That is, based on our synthesis of the literature on Latina/o transfer students and the theoretical models outlined, we document how to build a Latina/o transfer culture. Ultimately, we argue that creating a transfer

pipeline for Latina/o students begins early on and ideally is a partnership at minimum between high schools, community colleges, and universities.

Overview/Literature Review

Latinas/os make up the largest racial/ethnic minority group in the United States, and they're one of the fastest growing groups, second only to Asians/Pacific Islanders (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2007). Despite the growth experienced by the Latina/o population in the United States, particularly in states like California and Texas, accessing equitable higher educational opportunities and achieving educational success has proven to be a substantial challenge. Preparation for and entry into college, in particular, have been major hurdles for many Latina/o students. Compared to all other youth age 16 to 19, Latinas/os are more likely to drop out from high school (Fry, 2003), which has resulted in a national high school completion rate of 60 percent for these students (Harvey, 2002). This severe leakage from high school contributes to the low overall levels of enrollment of Latina/o high school students in higher education institutions. Among high school graduates, an estimated 37.6 percent of Latina/o students enroll in higher education—approximately ten percent below the national average college enrollment rate of all high school students (Cook & Cordova, 2007).

When Latina/o students do transition into postsecondary education, they are less likely to enroll directly in a four-year institution immediately after graduation and more likely to be begin their higher education careers in the community college system (Kurlaender, 2006). Nationally, fifty-five percent of Latina/o students enroll in community colleges in comparison to 42 percent of African Americans, 40 percent of Asian Americans, and 36 percent of white students (Cook & Cordova, 2007). The community college, as the preferred college choice, is particularly evident

in California, the state with the largest Latina/o population, where an estimated 80 percent of college-going Latina/o students enroll in the community college system (CPEC, 2008). In Texas, close to two-thirds of Latina/o students (63 percent) choose the community college as their entry point to higher education (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2008).

According to national data about two-thirds of high school seniors who enroll in community colleges do so with some intention to pursue a bachelor's degree (NCES, 2008b). The reality is that a high percentage of these students will fail to achieve this feat even after long periods of enrollment at these institutions. These trends are particularly disturbing for Latina/o community college students, for whom the opportunity to complete a degree or transfer to a four-year institution is among the lowest of all ethnic groups (Shulock & Moore, 2007; NCES, 2003). Nationally, for example, of all first-time community college Latina/o students in 1995 with intentions to transfer, only 5.5 percent of these students managed to do so by 2001 (NCES, 2003). This same report suggests that after six years, an estimated 48 percent of these students were no longer enrolled at the community college and had departed their respective institutions without obtaining any degree. In Texas, the percentage of Latinas/os that enter and leave the community college with no degree surpasses that of the national average alluded to above. Six-year enrollment and completion data of first-time community college students enrolled for 12 or more student credit hours reveals that 60 percent of Latina/o students leave the community college without obtaining a degree (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2008). A similar pattern of community college non-completion is also true in California. In their study of California community college degree-seekers, Moore and Shulock (2007) examined the six-year completion rate of students and found that only 24 percent of all California community college

students earned a certificate or degree, or transferred to a four-year institution. In their study, Latina/o and African American students experienced a lower overall completion rate, 18 and 15 percent, respectively, and an even lower transfer rate, 13 and 11 percent, respectively.

The data on community college enrollment and completion rates indicates discouraging outcomes for Latina/o students, especially in light of their higher than average propensity to enroll in community colleges and their low success rate in transfer to baccalaureate institutions. This critical juncture in the educational pipeline, the high school and community college transition into four-year institutions, explains why once enrolled in college, Latinas/os lag behind every other student population group in college degree attainment (Fry, 2003). Many of the challenges experienced by Latina/o students in community colleges and the factors that hamper the successful transfer to four-year universities have been well-documented. For example, research notes that Latinas/os are more likely to be the first in their families to attend college, making navigating the community college setting and accessing resources and information regarding transfer options problematic (Ornelas & Solorzano, 2004; Wassmer, Moore, & Shulock, 2004). Latina/o students are also more likely than their counterparts to delay their entry into college directly after high school, enroll in college on a part-time status, attend community colleges with lower overall transfer rates, and more frequently "stop out" and experience interruptions in their enrollment (Fry, 2002; Lee & Frank, 1990; Wassmer, Moore, & Shulock, 2004). Additionally, Latina/o students are more likely to enter higher education, and more so community colleges, with low levels of college readiness and a greater need to enroll in remediation courses (Venezia, Callan, Finney, Kirst, & Usdam, 2005). Research by Adelman (1998, 2006) and Hagedorn, (2004), show that students who begin community colleges with

remediation needs and enroll in these classes are far less likely to persist towards graduation or transfer into four-year institutions. Indeed, remediation, particularly in writing, is cited as the most serious barrier to degree completion amongst community college students (NCES, 2004).

Low levels of success and completion rates at the community college raises policy concerns over postsecondary access and completion opportunities available for Latina/o students. The data on Latina/o community college students makes it clear that the current transfer culture is failing Latina/o students, many of whom enter the community college with a goal of earning a four-year college degree. These poor postsecondary outcomes have resulted in a growing adult Latina/o population that is increasingly undereducated. Currently, the college attainment of Latinas/os twenty-five years and older in the United States is 12 percent, compared to 18 percent for African Americans, and 31 percent for white adults (Cook & Cordova, 2007). These disparities in educational outcomes between the growing Latina/o population and the white population also yield significant patterns of income stratification. In California for example, the median income gap between white adults with a bachelor's degree and minorities with the same educational level is an astonishing $13,000 (NCHEMS, 2007). Shulock (2007) warns us that given the current disparities in educational attainment and the projected growth among the Latina/o population, states like California, run the risk of having their state income fall below the national average in the near future.

Promoting a viable community college transfer culture for Latina/o students is an important educational policy necessity. Identifying the components that help facilitate successful transfer for Latina/o students must be at the forefront of discussions of access and success in higher education. The section that follows explores and discusses promising practices that have

shown a level of effectiveness at increasing Latina/o community college transfer rates. In addition we frame our discussion of promising practices in the context of existing theoretical frameworks that help illuminate the importance of these efforts for Latina/o students.

Promising Practices

While there is extensive research on barriers to retention and persistence for transfer populations, less scholarship is dedicated to the successful practices and promising programs that facilitate transfer from a two-year to a four-year higher education institution (Wirth & Padilla, 2008). Additionally, fewer studies have focused specifically on the plight of students of color and their transfer process although literature has documented inequalities across race and ethnicity. For example, Wassmer, Moore, and Shulock (2004) propose, "the finding of disparities in transfer rates by racial/ethnic composition…who demonstrate[d] intent to transfer, makes a stronger case that there are differences associated with race/ethnicity that are important to acknowledge, understand and monitor" (p. 664). While recognizing the importance of race and ethnicity, we set out to reveal select existing programs, partnerships, and practices that support Latina/o students' transfer to four-year postsecondary establishments. Moreover, while highlighting these exemplary strategies is important, we also draw from critical conceptual models to offer an analysis and a framework to discuss these strategies. Specifically, we address how Latina/o Critical Race Theory and Validation Theory can offer a better understanding of Latina/o transfer culture given existing research. To this end, our primary goal is to document a "transfer culture" to enhance the transfer rates of Latina/o students specifically, and students of color more broadly (Wassmer, Moore, & Shulock, 2004, p. 666).

Latina/o Critical Race Theory

Within education, Critical Race Theory (CRT) has played a role in challenging our perspectives on how we understand and analyze inequalities in the educational system for students of color. For example, in a 2004 study, Solorzano and Ornelas employ CRT to investigate the availability and enrollment patterns of Advanced Placement courses for Latina/o and African American students in public Los Angeles high schools. In a separate examination, Yosso (2006) uses counterstories, a methodology drawing from CRT, to demonstrate resistance to and persistent inequalities throughout the Chicana/o educational pipeline. According to Yosso (2005), she defines "CRT in education as a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses" (p. 74). Based on previous literature we paraphrase the key tenets ascribed to Critical Race Theory within the discipline of education. They include the following: Intersectionality of race/racism with other forms of oppression; challenge to dominant ideology; commitment to social justice; centrality of experiential knowledge; and an interdisciplinary perspective (Yosso, 2005; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

Keeping these themes in mind, we put forward several practices that shed light on several of the principles outlined by Latina/o Critical Race Theory. For example, Suarez (2003) scrutinizes factors that contribute to the "forward transfer" of Latina/o community college students through her case study that includes 10 students, 6 administrators, and 2 counselors from a California community college and a partnering California State University. Among her findings, the author observes:

> Counselors, students, faculty, and administrators served as important role models for students, especially, if they were of Hispanic descent. Students told me that it was

> important for them to be able to identify with someone on the campus (counselors, faculty, staff, administrators) who had shared similar experiences, either academic or personal, who had succeeded. The knowledge that they were not the first to encounter and overcome adversity provided a certain degree of comfort and security. (p. 113)

In a separate study, Hagedorn et al. (2007) notes that a sizable population of Latina/o students is positively associated with academic success, as defined by course completion, GPA and other academic variables, as well as enrollment in transferable coursework. In addition, the proportion of Latina/o faculty results in comparable effects. Hagedorn et al. (2007) offer the following:

> The level of representation of Latina/o faculty on campus was also found to have a significant impact on Latina/o student success. Results indicate that the presence of Latina/o faculty on campus may increase the availability of role models for students and foster a sense of belonging and social integration among students. Therefore availability of, and contact with, Latina/o faculty may be more important than previously thought. Overall, results from this research indicate that, as the numbers of Latina/o students and faculty on campus increase to a critical mass, academic success increases as well. (p. 89)

For Latina/o students, the scholarship noted draws attention to the importance of faculty, staff, and students who reflect the students' backgrounds—this includes ethnic/racial background, first-generation college student status, and shared academic/personal experiences—in facilitating transfer. Moreover, students cite that these conditions provide them with a sense of security and sense of belonging as first generation college students. Indeed, campus racial

climates influence the extent to which Latina/o students and other students of color feel well-received in their new campus environments (Hurtado, 2002).

Validation Theory[3]

> In- and out-of-class validating experiences are especially important with nontraditional student populations such as returning adults, low-income students, first-generation students, and many women and minority students from working-class backgrounds. Many nontraditional students come to college needing a sense of direction and wanting guidance but not in a patronizing way. (Rendón, 2002, p. 644)

Rendón (1994, 2002) articulates six principles attributed to the theory of validation, including the following: "an enabling, confirming, and supportive process initiated by in- and out-of-class agents that fosters academic and interpersonal development" (Rendón, 1994, p. 44); when supported students feel a sense of self-worth and that they can learn; student development is contingent upon validation; through multiple agents validation is not limited to the classroom; "validation is a developmental process" (Rendón, 2002, 645); and validation is crucial early on in students' careers (Rendón, 1994; 2002).

[3] Rendón (1994; 2002) offers two types of validation—academic and interpersonal. Rendón (2002) notes that academic validation "occurs when in- and out-of-class agents take action to assist students to 'trust their innate capacity to learn and to acquire confidence in being a college student' (Rendón, 1994, p. 40), while interpersonal validation "occurs when in- and out-of-class agents take action to foster students' personal development and social adjustment" (p. 645).

Undoubtedly, as noted previously, in addition to having a sense of security, students in Suarez' (2003) study sample were provided with a sense of "validation" (Rendón, 1994) as first-generation college students. Indeed, Rendón (2002) acknowledges, "In a validation model, institutional agents, not students, are expected to take the first step to not only promote involvement but to affirm students as knowers and valuable members of the college learning community" (p. 645). The scholar adds, "Validation theory poses that college faculty, counselors, and administrative staff take a proactive role in reaching out to students to affirm them as being capable of doing academic work and to support them in their academic endeavors and social adjustment" (p. 645). Similarly, Hagedorn (2004) argues in reference to lessons learned from the TRUCCS (Transfer and Retention of Urban Community College Students) project, "success is elusive, but when it does occur it is due to supportive institutional structures coupled with administrators and faculty who care about students" (p. 21).

Per Martinez and Fernandez (2004), in order for community colleges to increase transfer rates "they must become relationship-centered institutions that focus on internal and external collaboration with all stakeholders" (p. 57). These include summer bridge and partnerships programs that couple two-year and four-year institutions (Ornelas & Solorzano, 2004). Employing validation theory, Rendón (2002) targets and acknowledges the manners in which a model transfer partnership, *Puente* (Spanish for bridge), assists and promotes Latina/o transfer students to move on to four-year institutions. Currently functioning in 33 high schools and 59 community colleges in California, the Puente Project's mission is the following: "increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students who enroll in four-year colleges and universities, earn college degrees, and return to the community as mentors and leaders to future

generations" (www.puente.net). Originally targeting Latina/o students, Puente started in 1981 at Chabot College in Northern California—the High School Puente program encourages four-year higher education participation while the Community College Puente program is geared towards facilitating transfer. According to Rendón (2002), almost half of Community College Puente participants who complete the program transfer to a four-year institution. Rendón (2002) explains:

> This [Community College Puente] validating team provides students with (a) information and an education plan about what it takes to transfer and earn a degree from 4-year institutions— addressed through the counseling component; (b) a solid academic preparation, especially literacy skills—addressed through the writing component; and (c) knowledge about the pay-offs of getting a college education, including knowing what it takes to secure a high-income career, as well as how to put student talents to work in their communities to nurture the next generation of leaders—addressed through the mentoring component. (p. 662)

Through a multi-pronged approach and educational partnership that is sensitive to the needs of Latina/o students, Puente provides participants with "a focused, sustained, and engaging learning environment" (www.puente.net) that is unquestionably doing its part to facilitate transfer rates. According to Saenz (2002), "By employing targeted early intervention as well as ongoing exposure to culturally enriched environments, the Puente model serves as a prime template in designing programs geared toward increased persistence and transfer of Hispanic students" (p. 4).

Building a Latino/a Transfer Culture

While research documents that institutional agents play a large role in facilitating transfer for Latina/o students (Ornelas & Solorzano, 2004; Hagedorn, 2004; Hagedorn & Cepeda, 2004; Hagedorn, Cypers, & Lester, 2008), studies tend to target faculty, counselors and other support services staff. With few exceptions (see for example, Ornelas & Solorzano, 2004; Suarez, 2003) fewer studies narrow in on the function of administrators or institutions in supporting Latina/o student transfer. Community colleges have at their disposal many opportunities to enhance the overall success of Latina/o students by committing themselves to institutional changes that have been shown to increase overall completion and transfer.

For one, adequately addressing the developmental needs of Latina/o students is critical, particularly in light of the disproportionate number of Latina/o students who enter community colleges with low levels of college readiness. Research shows that students who start in developmental education and transition into college level courses have success rates that are equal to those who start directly in college-level courses (McCabe, 2000). Additionally, national data from community colleges involved with the Achieving the Dream Initiative community have demonstrated that students who successfully complete a developmental course in their first semester, are from that point forward, more likely to succeed and persist than other students, including non-developmental students (JBL Associates, 2006). This finding supports earlier research indicating higher retention rates over three years among students taking some developmental courses compared to non-developmental students (Waycaster, 2001). Community colleges can increase Latina/o student success by ensuring that Latina/o students who enter community colleges with low levels of college readiness are appropriately assessed and advised to take the necessary developmental courses.

Evidence suggests that community college students who participate in orientation or success courses experience higher rates of completion and transfer than their counterparts who do not participate in such activities (Derby & Smith, 2004; Stovall, 1999; Zeidenberg, Jenkins, & Calcagno, 2007). Moore and Shulock (2007) found that Latina/o students who participated in orientation had an overall six-year completion rate of 24 percent compared to a 17 percent completion rate for Latina/o students who never participated. For Latina/o students who are typically first-generation college students and whose parents are less likely to have formal experience with higher education institutions, participating in an orientation can provide additional support and guidance regarding how to best navigate the community college and access the resources necessary to support their transfer aspirations.

Research points to certain enrollment behaviors that show some relationship to an increase in student success amongst community college students and that facilitate the likelihood of completing degrees or transfer to four-year institutions. For instance, directly enrolling in college after high school, along with increased academic preparation is linked to increased degree completion among Latina/o community college students (Adelman, 2006). Moreover, Moore and Shulock (2007) found the older the age of Latina/o students at the time of entry into community college was related to a decrease in their likelihood of completing any degree as well an overall lower transfer rate. For example, Latina/o students enrolling directly in community college after high school completed degrees and transferred at 20 and 15 percent respectively, compared to rates of 14 and 8 percent when taken into consideration the same indicators for students who enrolled in community colleges in their twenties. Existing evidence on the benefits of direct enrollment in higher education supports the idea of creating partnerships with

neighborhood high schools to promote greater direct-to-college participation among Latina/o students.

Community colleges also have an opportunity to implement institutional policy changes that can deter negative course enrollment behaviors such as dropping courses, "stopping out", and late registration. Hagedorn (2006), in her study of urban community college students, finds that "frequent cyclic shoppers" or students who drop courses at high rates are less likely to have strong grade point averages and successful rates of course completion. Similarly, Moore and Shulock, (2007), put forward that Latina/o students who drop more than 20 percent of their courses had an overall completion rate of 7 percent compared to 28 percent for those dropping less than twenty percent of their courses.

Like dropping courses, interrupting enrollment or "stopping" out reduced the likelihood of completing degrees for community college students. Bailey, Jenkins, and Leinbach (2005), through their analysis of data from the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) note that students who interrupt their enrollment have substantially lower completion rates. These findings were similar to those of Moore and Shulock (2007), which highlight that Latina/o students who are not enrolled continuously complete degrees at lower rates than their counterparts who do not interrupt their studies. Moore and Shulock (2007) also argue that Latina/o students who register late for classes are less likely to complete degrees or transfer to four-year institutions. Informed by this body of work, community colleges have an opportunity to effect positive change in successful completion and increase transfer by developing and implementing policies that encourage, support, and create incentives for students to adopt healthy enrollment behaviors.

The use of dual access programs offers an alternative manner by which to augment Latina/o student transfer. Karp et al. (2007) posit that dual access or enrollment programs, where high school students can take college courses either at their home campus or at a local college campus, can offer a number of benefits. These include increasing college aspirations, reducing the cost of college, acclimating students, improving high school dropout rates, and improving coursework rigor. Similarly, Golann and Hughes (2008) report, "Students who struggle academically or who are at risk of dropping out may also realize significant benefits from dual enrollment" (p. 3). Focusing on technical education, preliminary research on Florida and New York City dual enrollment programs indicate positive outcomes for "at-risk" students, notably low-income and male students (Karp et al., 2007). Specifically, over time, participation resulted in students earning more college credits, higher GPAs, and persistence. However, additional research is needed to substantiate these promising results (Golann & Hughes, 2008). Given the importance of academic preparation with regard to transfer (Roksa & Calcagno, 2008), results from the previous studies may provide key opportunities for low-income Latina/o students, especially males, to increase their community college persistence rates and as a result, transfer.

Lastly, while many community colleges have existing transfer articulation agreements with four-year universities, scholars document that merely institutionalizing a transfer articulation agreement between two- and four-year institutions does not guarantee an increase in transfer student rates (Gross & Goldhaber, 2009; Anderson, Sun & Alfonso, 2006). However, a 2009 study reviewing the impact of varying transfer articulation policies on first-generation and minority students uncovers a statistically significant positive effect on student transfer rates for Latino students (Gross & Goldhaber, 2009). According to Gross and Goldhaber (2009):

> It appears that Hispanics students, who have on average a 20 percent lower odds of transferring to a four-year college, have a 78 percent higher odds of transferring when in a state with a transfer policy than they do in states without transfer policies. (p. 15)

Gross and Goldhaber (2009) hypothesize that their results may be attributed to concentrations of Latino students in non-agreement (e.g. California) and agreement (e.g. Florida) states, as well as an increased aspiration to transfer relative to their peers. After controlling for these factors, the scholars find that their results still hold true for Latino students only. Additional research is necessary to understand the phenomenon underlying the potential of articulation agreements for Latina/o students.

Recommendations

What is apparent based on the previous research analyzed is that in order to increase the number of Latina/o students that transfer to four-year colleges and universities and obtain their degrees, a number of institutional structures, policies, and partnerships need to be in place. In order to build a Latina/o transfer culture, we offer the following suggestions:

1) High school, community college, and university faculty and staff should reflect the Latina/o student population. Latina/o role models and mentors that mirror the students provide invaluable resources that reveal college attendance, transfer, and graduation are possible.
2) Educational partnerships should connect middle schools with high schools and high schools with higher education institutions to begin preparing Latina/o students early for college. This includes focusing on improving academic skills, strengthening 3R subject matter, and providing necessary college and financial aid information preferably in small

learning communities. This type of strategy would also give students the tools necessary to enroll directly from high school to some form of higher education.

3) Colleges and universities must streamline their articulation agreements. These agreements are not limited to community college to state system transfer requisites but also include individual community college to university requirements necessary for transfer into a specific discipline.
4) College outreach programs should be culturally responsive and ought to reflect the specific needs of the Latina/o student population they serve. Such programs would promote college attendance and transfer while instilling in participants a sense of pride in their heritage.
5) Higher education institutions need to prioritize and fund outreach programs, practices, and partnerships that facilitate transfer. Part of this funding should be set aside for program evaluation and assessment for constant improvement. An additional related recommendation includes earmarking funding for a higher education administrator whose sole responsibility is to coordinate appropriate constituencies and support student transfer.
6) Incentives ought to be provided to higher education institutions that support transfer through evidence-based practices such as an increase in the rate of students that maintain continuous enrollment, or a decrease in the rate at which students drop classes, or an increase in the percentage of students that complete an orientation program/course.
7) Financial need-based scholarships must be available for Latina/o students at the community college and four-year institution. Such scholarships would increase the

possibility that students can maintain continuous enrollment, attend full-time, and perhaps reduce work hours.

While these recommendations purposely place the onus of building a Latina/o transfer culture on higher education institutions, this is not to say that students are not powerful agents in this process. However, it is important that critical institutionalized and structural interventions are in place so that students can demonstrate their utmost potential.

Conclusion

In this paper, we provided an overview of the existing information related to transfer goals and rates. Using the theoretical models of Latina/o Critical Race Theory and Validation Theory we also highlighted key practices, programs, and policies in order to encourage transfer. Finally, based on previous scholarship we outlined a Latina/o transfer culture and provided recommendations for future research and policy.

There is no question that Latina/o students prefer the community college. However, in order to capture the tremendous "untapped potential," as referred to by Chavez (2008), institutions need to come together to prioritize and support the transfer of Latina/o students. Preferably, this begins in middle school, continues in high school (at the latest), and translates into a community college where ultimately transfer is the goal. In the end, given the future growth of the Latina/o population and the advanced education necessary to remain competitive in a global economy, it is essential that we come together to promote a practical community college transfer culture for Latina/o students.

References

Adelman, C. (1998). The kiss of death? An alternative view of college remediation. In *National Crosstalk, 6*(3). San Jose, CA: National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. National Center for Education Statistics. (ERIC Document Reproduction No. ED496111).

Adelman, C. (2006). *The toolbox revisited: Paths to degree completion from high school through college*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. (ERIC Document Reproduction No. ED490195).

Anderson, G., Sun, J., and Alfonso, M., (2006). Effectiveness of statewide articulation agreements on the probably of transfer: A preliminary policy analysis. *The Review of Higher Education, 29*(3), 261-291.

California Postsecondary Education Commission (2007). California higher education accountability: Goal – student success. Commission Report 07-06.

Chavez, L. (2008). Untapped potential: Latina/os and California community colleges. Berkeley, CA: Institute for the Study of Social Change- Center for Latina/o Policy Research. Policy Reports and Research Briefs. Accessed 2/21/09 at http://repositories.cdlib.org/issc/clpr/pr/Chavez2008

Cook, B.J., & Cordova, D.I. (2007). *Minorities in higher education: Twenty-second annual status report: 2007 supplement*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Derby, D. C. & Smith, T. (2004). An orientation course and community college retention. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 28,* 763-773.

Fry, R. (2003).*Hispanic youth dropping out of U.S. schools: Measuring the challenge*.

Washington DC: PEW Hispanic Center.

Golann, J.W., and Hughes, K.L. (2008). Dual enrollment policies and practices: Earning college credit in California high schools. New York, NY: Columbia University Community College Research Center.

Gross, B. and Goldhaber, D. (2009). *Community college transfer and articulation policies: Looking beneath the surface.* Working Paper #2009_1. Seattle, WA: Center on Reinventing Public Education. Accessed 2/13/09 at http://www.crpe.org/cs/crpe/download/csr_files/wp_crpe1_comcoll_jan09.pdf

Hagedorn, L.S. (2006). Traveling successfully on the community college parthway: The research and findings of the transfer and retention of urban community college students project. University of Southern California, Rossier School of Education.

Hagedorn, L.S. (2004). The role of urban community colleges in educating diverse populations. *New Directions for Community Colleges,* 127, 21-34.

Hagedorn, L.S. and Cepeda, R.M. (2004). Serving Los Angeles: Urban community colleges and educational success among Latina/o students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice,* 28, 199-211.

Hagedorn, L.S., Chi, W.Y., Cepeda, R.M., and McLain, M. (2007). An investigation of critical mass: The role of Latina/o representation in the success of urban community college students. *Research in Higher Education, 48*(1), 73-91.

Hagedorn, L.S., Cypers, S., and Lester, J. (2008). Looking in the review mirror: Factors affecting transfer for urban community college students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 32*(9), 643-664.

Hurtado, S. (2002). Creating a climate of inclusion: Understanding Latina/o students. In W. Smith, P. Altbach & K. Lomotey (Eds.), *The racial crisis in American higher education* (pp. 121-136). New York, NY: State University of New York Press.

JBL Associates. (2006). Developmental education. *Data Notes: Keeping Informed About Achieving the Dream Data*, *1*(6).

Bailey, T., Jenkins, D., & Leinbach, T. (2005). *Is Student Success Labeled Institutional Failure? Student Goals and Graduation Rates in the Accountability Debate at Community Colleges*. Community College Research Center. Teachers College, Columbia University.

Karp, M. M., Calcagno, J. C., Hughes, K. L., Jeong, D. W., and Bailey, T. (2007). *Dual Enrollment students in Florida and New York City: Postsecondary outcomes.* CCRC Brief No. 37. New York, NY: Columbia University Community College Research Center.

Kurlaender, M. (2006). Choosing community college: Factors affecting Latina/o college choice. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, *133*, 7-16.

Lee, V. E., and Frank, K. F. (1990). Students' characteristics that facilitate the transfer from two-year to four-year colleges. *Sociology of Education*, *63*(July): 178-193.

Martinez, M., and Fernández, E. (2004). Latina/os at community colleges. *New Directions for Student Services*, 105, 51-62.

McCabe, R. H. (2000). *No one to waste: A report to public decision-makers and community college leaders*. Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges, Community College Press.

McGlynn, A.P. (2006). Transfers from four-year to two-year colleges grow. *The*

Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education, 16, 28-29.

Moore, C., & Shulock, N. (2007). *Beyond the open door: Increasing student success in the California community colleges*. Sacramento, CA: Institute for Higher Education Leadership & Policy.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), (2003). 1996/01 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study (BPS:96/01). Retrieved March 24, 2009 from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07_318.asp.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2005). Postsecondary institutions in the United States: Fall 2003 and degrees and other awards conferred: 2002-03, (NCES 2005-154).

National Center for Education Statistics. (2008a). *Digest of education statistics*. United States Department of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2008b). *The condition of education, 2008*. United States Department of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2004). *The condition of education, 2004: Remediation and degree completion*. United States Department of Education. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Ornelas, A. and Solorzano, D.G. (2004). Transfer conditions of Latina/o community college students: A single institution case study. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice,* 28, 233-248.

Rendón, L.I. (1994). Validating cultural diverse students: Toward a new model of learning and student development. *Innovative Higher Education, 19*(1), 33-50.

Rendón, L.I. (2002). Community college Puente: A validating model of education.

Educational Policy, 16, 642-667.

Roksa, J., and Calcagno, J.C. (2008). Making the transition to four-year institutions: Academic preparation and transfer. Working Paper #13. New York, NY: Community College Research Center.

Saenz, V.B. (2002). Hispanic students and community colleges: A critical point for intervention. Eric Clearinghouse for Community Colleges, ED477908.

Shulock, N. (2007). Latina/o college success and the California dream: Presentation to greater Los Angeles Chicano-Latina/o administrator, faculty, and staff community college association. Monterrey Park, CA, March 24, 2007.

Solorzano, D. & Ornelas, A. (2004, February/March). A critical race analysis of Latina/o and African American advanced placement enrollment in public high schools. *The High School Journal, 87*(3), 15-26.

Stovall, M. (1999). Relationships between participation in a community college student success course and academic performance and persistence. Unpublished dissertation, as reported in Stovall, M. (2000). Using success courses for promoting persistence and completion. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, *112*, 45-54.

Suarez, A.L. (2003). Forward transfer: Strengthening the educational pipeline for Latina/o community college students. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice,* 27, 95-117.

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. (2008). Community and technical colleges 6-year graduation rates of first-time entering undergraduates, Fall 1999 enrolled for 12 or more student credit hours. Retrieved on March 26, 2009 from

http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/Reports/PDF/1274.PDF

Wassmer, R., Moore, C., and Shulock, N. (2004). Effect of racial/ethnic composition on transfer rates in community colleges: Implications for policy and practice. *Research in Higher Education, 45*(6), 651-672.

Wirth, R.M. and Padilla, R.V. (2008). College student success: A qualitative modeling approach. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, *32*(9), 688-711.

Waycaster, P. W. (2001). Factors impacting success in community college developmental mathematics courses and subsequent courses. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, *25*, 403-416.

Yosso, T. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education, (8)*1, 69-91.

Yosso, T. (2006). Critical race counterstories along the Chicana/Chicano educational pipeline. New York, NY: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Zeidenberg, M., Jenkins, D., & Calcagno, J. C. (2007). *Do student success courses actually help community college students succeed?* New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.