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UCF LaFaSA Association: Platform to support Latino Community

Introduction:

**Calderón Galdeano, E., Flores, A. R., & Moder, J. (2012). The Hispanic association of colleges and universities and Hispanic-serving institutions: Partners in the advancement of Hispanic higher education. Journal of Latinos and Education, 11(3), 157-162.**

Recent studies have shown that the presence of Latino students is significant in many of the universities in the United States. The Latino population continues to be the fastest growing ethnic-minority population in the United States (Galdeano, Flores, & Moder, 2012; Núñez, Sparks, & Hernández, 2011). It is estimated that this population will double in size by the year 2050 (Stokes-Brown, 2012). However, there are still some barriers that exist when Latino students enter the university such as lack of of information and advice in institutions that have few personnel that understand the needs of Latinos.

**JOHNS, ANNM. (n.d.) "Discourse Communities I and Communities of Practice: Membership, Conflict, and."**

In the “Discourse Communities and Communities of Practice” article, Ann Johns said that “In order to introduce students to these visions of community it is useful to take them outside the academic realm to something more familiar, the recreational and avocational communities to which they, or their families belong” (500). Many latino students and even faculty and staff face challenges such as the lack of cohesion and its own space on campus so they can be free to be themselves and feel part of the community.

**Flink, P. J. (2018). Latinos and higher education: A literature review. Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 17(4), 402-414.**

The importance of having a Hispanic Serving Institution is extremely important for the well-being of Latinos in order for them to achieve their goals and projects. According to Flink, “First-generation Latinos face unique cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic challenges on campus. (Flink, p. 402). This is where UCF LaFaSA comes in. A considerable amount of research has been made about Hispanic Serving Institutions but little research has been made about their results or what exactly are they doing to help the latino community.

**Benitez, M. (1998). Hispanic-Serving Institutions: Challenges and Opportunities. New directions for higher education, 102, 57-68.**

Hispanic serving institutions in the United states play an important role in the education. However still their role is not recognized in the higher education of Hispanics. Hispanic is growing rapidly and HSIs are 2-year and 4-year colleges and universities which include about 25% or more total undergraduate. However, still they are facing a lot of challenges that how they can grow their education. They are having many opportunities but they are still finding ways that how they can utilize to their opportunities to be recognized in the higher education of Hispanics (Benitez, 1998).

**HANSER, R. Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault on the College Campus. CRIME PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE, 1.**

UCF LaFaSA is the community of practice that I am beginning to get involved with as a latino staff member but I am not an association member yet LaFaSA is the discourse community and platform created to help latino faculty, staff and students achieved their goals, and ensure the right tools and resources are put in place to support such a significant population that is only growing in Central Florida (HANSER, n.d). This association was founded in March 2015 by Dr. Cyndia Muñiz after she noticed growth in Latino faculty and staff at UCF. Because of that, she felt it was necessary to organize Latino professionals on campus to come together and develop the strategic plan for the university and how they will move forward in the next 20 years. Prior to that, she helped students, find direction on what to do during college, and offers resources–like the career resource center and to figure out the steps after college.

**Johns, A. M. (1997). Text, role and context: Developing academic literacies. Cambridge University Press.**

As, Johns stated: “These communities use written discourses that enable members to keep in touch with each other, carry on discussions, explore controversies, and advance their aims; their genres are their vehicles for communication”. (Johns, p. 503). So this is exactly what I am trying to research and explore and see what types of communication they are using in order to reach out to the latino faculty, staff and students.

* How are they meeting their needs?
* What services do they offer?
* What can be done to engage or attract more staff and faculty on the services that they offer?
* How can we keep these associations on-going for maximum effectiveness?

I am still unclear on how all this research will keep developing based on the questions I am considering but I am hoping with the help of the annotated bibliography I will research much further around this important community of practice.

For my primary sources I will conduct an interview with the President of LaFaSA, Dr. Cyndia Muñiz, collect any materials they use to reach the families of Latino students and also take a look at their website, social media, newsletter and see how are those reaching out the latino community.

**Secondary Sources:**

Benitez, (1998). Hispanic-serving institutions: Challenges and opportunities. *New Directions for Higher Education, 102*, 57-68.

This article discusses the growth of the Hispanic population and how Hispanic Serving Institutions are addressing those needs. It gives an introduction about what is exactly an Hispanic-serving institution, “is a relatively recent educational classification that is not yet uniformly defined.” (59) which is a Hispanic student enrollment of 25 percent or more. It also provides a chart of enrollments by institutions by state/location and interesting to note that Florida has 58 HSIs. One of the challenges that mention is although Hispanics are the fastest-growing minority in the United States, it states that dropout rates are higher and dropping out occurs earlier than for most other groups making it difficult to attend universities. Basically, what they are saying is that as far as challenges, it concerns “limited funding, competition with other minority-serving institutions for federal funding and a diverse student population. But the opportunities ranges from increasing access for educationally disadvantaged students, and enhanced student services.” (67)

Contreras, F. E., Malcom, L. E., & Bensimon, E. M. (2008). Hispanic serving institutions. Understanding minority serving institutions, 71-90.

This article helps me understand the background of Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and getting familiar with how it can address the population’s needs. Recently, UCF was designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution with an enrollment of 27.5 percent Hispanic-student meaning it can now compete for federal funding to improve the educational programs for Hispanic and low-income students (Contreras, 2008). Since the article provides Hispanic’s origins, geographical information, academic offerings, and information on funding I can relate it to the Hispanic population of UCF. This will help me when I research the geographical information for UCF Hispanic students.

**Benitez, M., & DeAro, J. (2004). Realizing student success at Hispanic-serving institutions. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 127, 35-48.**

The main points for this article is to highlight the role of the Hispanic-Serving Institutions in promoting the academic success of minority students and discusses strategies used by several Hispanic-Serving community colleges. The article states that “Some HSIs that are showing promising results in improving student retention are aligning student support services with academic programs in order to provide effective support environments for students who juggle obligations of work, school and family” (40). It provides an example of LifeMap, a guide that was created at Valencia Community College,that helps students with their degrees and career goals. This is similar to the Pegasus Path that was recently created here at UCF. Institutions try to use all these resources for Hispanic students so they won’t feel lost and confused throughout their school years. It mentions all other approaches and projects to improve students learning at other institutions.

This was an interesting article and very helpful. Some of the questions that came up on this article were: What does it mean to be a Hispanic Serving Institution? How does an institution demonstrate its commitment to serve Hispanics? What is the definition of Latino student success? What are useful appropriate, and substantive indicators of Latino student success? (45). This is really useful when I am interviewing the President of LaFaSA, since my questions are similar and the purpose of my study is to find out what exactly is LAFaSA doing to provide effective services to UCF Hispanic community.

**Flink, P. J. (2018). Latinos and Higher Education: A Literature Review. Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 17(4), 402–414.**

I will include this in my CARS Model introduction to inform of challenges/issues that Latinos face on campus. The benefit of having an Hispanic Serving Institution is extremely important for the well-being of Latinos in order for them to achieve their goals and projects. According to Flink, “First-generation Latinos face unique cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic challenges on campus. (Flink, p. 402).

This article is helpful because I plan on introducing what are the challenges that UCF latinos face on campus.

**Gutierrez, M., Castañeda, C., & Katsinas, S. G. (2002). Latino leadership in community colleges: Issues and challenges. *Community College Journal of Research & Practice, 26*(4) 297- 314.**

On this article they study the importance of having Latino Leadership at universities. As student enrollments go up they also expect that Latino leadership will also increase. It examines the fact that although 56 percent of Latino students are beginning their higher education at community colleges, the percentage of Latino leadership is only at 3-4 percent. It discusses what can be done to expand the pool of prepared Latinos for leadership. (298). The leader, like every person, has many defects and virtues that he must know; this It means knowing yourself, then understanding others, reflecting what you want to achieve, and what it seeks to achieve with others to achieve success. This analysis will seek to improve the performance as a leader to go from the particular to the general, that is, from our performance as leaders, whether for personal benefit, up to performance in our universities. Some of the challenges and issues of lack of leadership has to do with cultural barriers , not having adequate education. It also examined the lack of Hispanic faculty members. During a survey at the Symposium of the National Community College Hispanic Council, respondents were asked: “Is it easier at your institution to hire a Hispanic faculty member than a Hispanic Administrator, and if so, why? Of those that responded, five indicated that it was more difficult to hire Latino faculty than it was to hire Latino administrators.” (309)

This article is relevant to my research because like I mentioned on my research proposal, based on previous observations that I made at LaFASa events there were a lack of Hispanic faculty members, and also a lack of leadership, board-of-members for such association. So I will most likely use this idea to come up with a chart to provide the number of Hispanic leaders and faculty.

Johns Ann M. "Discourse Communities and Communities of Practice: Membership, Conflict, and Diversity." *Text, Role, and Context: Developing Academic Literacies.* Cambridge, New York, Cambridge UP, 1997.51-70. Print.

Ponjuan, L. (2011). Recruiting and retaining Latino faculty members: The missing piece to Latino success. *Thought & Action*, 99-110.

This article talks about while Latino students are enrolling in greater numbers, Latino faculty have not seen similar growth, making up only four percent of faculty nationwide.

These contrasting images between the faculty and student demographics portend an inevitable truth that, while the higher education student population is dramatically changing, the faculty members of color still are not representative of the incoming cohort of students of color, especially the Latino student population. In this article, the author how leadership can improve the hiring and keeping of Latino faculty members in universities. Ponjuan provides ten specific policy and programmatic recommendations to improve conditions for Latino faculty members which are: Improve Latino Doctoral Student Socialization, Educate faculty search committees, Develop latino faculty learning communities, Create post-doctoral development programs, Develop policies for pre-tenure faculty doctoral supervision work, Implement Pre-Tenure faculty tenure policies, redefine pre-tenure faculty members mentoring policies, improve pre-tenure faculty work roles, Prioritize the allocation of department resources for faculty, and improve faculty department climate.

This is relevant for my research since I will also be investigating how UCF LaFASa are helping latino faculty members and based on my conversation/interview with the President of the Assocation, I would find out what are they doing or what support are they providing to the latino faculty members.

Rodriguez, Claudia, et al. “Unseen Differences: Cultural Diversity among Hispanic and Latino Students.” *College and University*, vol. 92, no. 3, Sept. 2017, pp. 14–26.

This source talks about how to include and provide a welcoming environment for the diverse latino that are growing in universities. It talks about how many institutions invest in many programs and resources that celebrate diversity and encourage students, staff and faculty to have meaningful interactions but sometimes those resources may fail to account for the infinite diversity of human experience. Here they do a study to expose the root causes of these misunderstandings among the members of the Hispanic/Latino community at a small private liberal arts university, as well as what students believe the institution can do to close the divide. They interview eight domestic and international Hispanic/Latino students in regards to the divisions between their subgroups, reasons and suggestions to bridge the gap. The results of the study inform recommendations for the creation and improvement of programs that will be effective in attracting and retaining Hispanic/Latino students from various backgrounds, as well as initiatives that include a welcoming environment.

This is very helpful for my research because I will be conducting interviews and one of my questions for the association president is: How LaFASa is engaging latino students, staff and faculty and providing them with a comfortable and welcoming environment and what resources/programs are they including so that the latino community at UCF feels like they truly belong.