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**HIGHER EDUCATION: UNDERSTANDING THE IDENTITY AND
RETENTION OF LATINO(A) STUDENTS**

by

Nelcy Y. Jimenez

A Thesis

Submitted to the
Department of Educational Services, Administration, and Higher Education
College of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirement

For the degree of

Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration

At

Rowan University

June 14, 2012

Thesis Chair: Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D

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ABSTRACT

Neley Jimenez

HIGHER EDUCATION: UNDERSTANDING THE IDENTITY AND RETENTION OF LATINO(A) STUDENTS

2011/12

Burton R. Sisco, Ed.D.

Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration

The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes of the undergraduate Latino (a) students currently enrolled at Rowan University during the 2012 spring semester. More specifically, the two-part study focused on how they identify as Latino(a), their experiences at Rowan as Latinos, their views on Latino(a) role models, the influences that encouraged/motivated them to continue their college journey and their views of the services and programming that can help them graduate. Student attitudes were gathered through a mixed method, a survey administered to 437 undergraduate Latino(a) students and individual interviews were administered to six Latino(a) students from the United Latino Association.

Results of the survey and of key themes revealed that their experience while in higher education was satisfactory, while a comparable number of students were uncertain. Latino(a) mentors/role models are important in higher education, family and parental influence are very strong among the Latino(a) students, and Rowan University programming/services can encourage/motivate Latino(a) students to graduate by offering more financial aid support, scholarships, more activities on Hispanic culture, networking, and clear communication.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I want to thank my Lord Jesus Christ for enabling me to achieve such an amazing accomplishment in my life, my faith has sustained me through this journey. This study was completed in loving memory of my father, Luis E. Robles. I dedicate this work to my husband, Henry. He has been unconditionally supportive by motivating and encouraging me to reach for the stars. Thank you, babe, for all your love and support while I tracked through this journey.

I also want to thank my children, Jose, Zarylyn, Anthony, and Noah. They have been my motivation and inspiration through my college experience. Thank you, because without your hugs, kisses, and understanding I could not accomplish this study.

Lastly, I want to thank Dr. Sisco for challenging and believing in me when I felt I could not do it. Your words of encouragement helped me to get through this study, thank you.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The United States has grown racially diverse in recent years. According to the U.S. Census 2010, the growing Hispanic population in the United States has reached a new milestone, topping 50.5 million, or 16.3% of the nation, officially solidifying its position as the country's second-largest group. The massive Latino expansion increased by 15.2 million between 2000 and 2010 and accounted for more than half of the nation's overall growth of 27.3 million people, to a new overall U.S. population of 308.7 million, with a Hispanic population growth of 43% or four times the nation's 9.7% growth rate. Most policy makers recognize that it will be nearly impossible to meet President Obama's college completion goals without significant improvement in the graduation rates of Hispanic students, which have lagged behind other racial and ethnic groups (Admin, 2010). As Hispanics continue to grow in numbers, colleges and universities are faced with the challenge of understanding, retaining, and graduating more Latino(a) students.

According to the Census (2010), 37.6 million, or 75%, of Hispanics lived in eight states with Hispanic populations of one million or more (California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, Arizona, New Jersey, and Colorado) with increasing rates all over the country. In the midst of the increasing rate of Latinos in the United States, colleges and universities have also seen an increase of Hispanic students. The Pew Research Center states, the number of Hispanics ages 18 to 24 years old grew by 349,000 between 2009

and 2010 compared to 88,000 blacks, 43,000 Asian Americans and a decrease of 320,000 non Hispanic whites, raising the enrollment of Hispanics from 13% in 1972 to 27% in 2009 to 32% in 2010. College age Hispanics accounted for 1.8 million, or 15%, of the overall enrollment of 12.2 million young adults in two or four year colleges in 2010 (Pew Research Center, 2011).

Despite the growing numbers of Hispanics enrolled in colleges, Hispanics are not the largest minority group in four year college campuses. Black students continue to outnumber Hispanic students by a small margin at four year colleges and universities (2011). Much of Hispanic growth in college enrollment has been at community colleges. In this past year, 46% of Hispanics were enrolled at a two year college and 54% attended a four year college, in comparison to 73% of whites, 78% Asian Americans, and 63% blacks who were enrolled in a four year college (2011).

Statement of the Problem

This study focuses on the undergraduate Latino(a) students at Rowan University and is centered on Latino(a) identity, the importance of Latino(a) role models, the barriers that Latino(a) students encounter, and what colleges can do to recruit and retain Hispanic students until they graduate. According to Lynch and Engle (2010), Latinos are the least prepared educationally to contribute to and benefit from the rapidly changing and demanding economy. Only 13% of young Hispanics hold a bachelor's degree, compared to 39% of whites, and 29% of blacks (2010). Fewer than half of Hispanic Students who enter four-year colleges and universities graduate within six years, compared to about 60% of white students. Colleges and universities need to learn

strategies about creating inclusive and multicultural learning environments, if not they will run into the trouble of retaining Latino (a) students (Colon, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes of the undergraduate Latino(a) students enrolled at Rowan University during the 2012 spring semester. More specifically, the study focused on how they identify as Latino(a), their experiences at Rowan as Latinos, their views on Latino(a) role models, the influences that encouraged/motivated them to continue their college journey, and their views of the services and programming that could help them graduate.

Assumptions and Limitations

As of the spring of 2012, there are 956 Latino(a) or Hispanic students at Rowan University. The scope of the study was limited to the 874 Hispanic undergraduate students, who identified themselves as Latino(a)/Hispanic at Rowan University. Part one of the research used a survey that was sent via e-mail, using survey monkey, to half (50%) of the 874 students. Part two of the study employed an interview with approximately six Latino(a) students that participated in the United Latino Association (ULA). It is assumed that the Latino(a) students were willing to participate in the survey and /or interview since it allowed them to express their opinions about how they identify as Latino(a), how their experience in higher education has helped them through college, and how the institution contributed to their overall academic success. Some limitations may include researcher bias since I am a Latina, students may not have participated in the survey or interview, students under the age of 18 were excluded from the survey and/or

interview, and the sample size was limited to Rowan University Latino(a) undergraduate students.

Operational Definitions

1. Culture: The behaviors, values, customs, and beliefs of Latino families.
2. Diversity: The difference of values, customs, beliefs and traditions that are unique to each group that is part of the multicultural Rowan community.
3. Hispanic: Rowan students and /or families that are from Spanish heritage during the spring 2012 semester.
4. Identity: The ethnicity and culture to which an individual defines with.
5. Latino(a): Rowan students that are descendents of Central or South American, Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, or other Spanish cultures for the spring 2012.
6. Retention: The continuous process of creating, maintaining, and supporting ongoing strategies for meeting the personal, academic, social, and financial needs of students to ensure academic success and graduation (Castellanos & Jones, 2003).
7. Self Efficacy: An individual's personal belief about his/her ability and capacity to accomplish tasks or life events. Seeing the experiences of others similar oneself as a motive to be successful at accomplishing a task (Bandura, 1994).
8. Student: Full time undergrad student enrolled for spring 2012.

Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What do selected Latino(a) undergraduate students report about their language fluency and cultural affiliation?
2. What do selected Latino(a) undergraduate students report about their experiences regarding culture, self-efficacy, and classroom environment while attending Rowan University?
3. How do selected Latino(a) undergraduate students rate the services provided by Rowan University?
4. What do selected Latino(a) undergraduate students report about their barriers and opportunities while at Rowan University and their future goals?
5. What do selected Latino(a) students say about their identity, family influences, and self-efficacy?
6. What is it like attending Rowan University as a Latino(a) student?

Overview of the Study

Chapter II discusses Latino(a) identity, self efficacy, the retention barriers Latino(a) students' experience that can become hurdles in their college education or that can influence them to drop out of college, and what guidelines, programs/ mentors provided within the university encouraged retention until graduation.

Chapter III describes the study methodology and procedures. The following details are included in this description: the context of the study, the population, sample

selection, demographics, the data collection instruments, the data collection process, and an analysis of the data.

Chapter IV presents the findings of the study. The focus of this chapter addresses the research questions posed in the introduction of the study. A mixed method is used to summarize the data in this section.

Chapter V summarizes and discusses the major findings of the study, with conclusions and recommendations for practice and further study.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Hispanic or Latinos are defined as descendants of Central American, Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South American, or other Spanish cultures. In most areas Hispanics are referred to as Latinos (Hobson-Horton & Owens, 2004). The 2010 U.S. Census reported that, Latinos comprised 16% of the total U.S. population of 308.7 million people. With a population increase of 43% from 35.3 million in 2000 to 50.5 million in 2010 Hispanics have become the largest and youngest minority group in the United States. One- in-five schoolchildren is Hispanic, one-in-four newborns is Hispanic (Pew Research Center, 2009). Hispanics have become the majority in the minority and it is projected that by 2015 Hispanic students in the 18 to 24 year old undergraduate population will be underrepresented by more than 500,000 students (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). With the growing Hispanic population these young Latinos will one day become the young adults that will help shape the kind of society America becomes in the 21st century (Pew Research Center, 2009).

Latinos at Rowan University

As of the spring 2012, Rowan University has an enrollment rate of 11,503 students. Out of the 11, 503 students only 956 are Hispanic or Latino, with 583 female Latinas and 373 male Latinos. Out of the 11, 503 students 9,927 are undergraduates. Out of the 9,927 undergraduates, 8,125 are whites compared to 874 Latino/Hispanics, 953 blacks, and 446 Asians. From the 874 registered undergraduate Latino(a)s, 344 students

identified as Puerto Rican, 108 from Central or South America, 45 Mexican, 44 Cuban, and 307 as Hispanic –other. From the 874 undergraduate Latino(a)/Hispanics there is a total of 158 Latino/Hispanic Freshman with 81 males and 77 females, 200 Latino/Hispanic Sophomore with 77 males and 123 females, 254 Latino/Hispanic Junior with 100 males and 154 females, and 262 Latino/Hispanic Seniors with 97 males and 165 females. There are 336 Latino(a) / Hispanic students residing on campus, compared to 1,186 whites, 236 blacks, and 211 Asians (Rowan.edu, 2012).

Retention Barriers

As the number of Latino(a) students entering college increases so does the concern of graduation rates. Latino(a) students bring with them various situations that make the transition to being a college student difficult, such as the absence of college-educated role models, family ties, responsibility to family, parents lack of information, poverty, poor quality of elementary and secondary education, infrequent student/faculty interaction in higher education, and lack of commitment to educational goals (Garcia, 2010). Other important barriers that have a great impact on Hispanic students, who are first generation college students that are first in their family to attend college is a lack of knowledge about deadlines in filing a federal application for federal student aid (FASFA) and/or scholarships and the lack of mentors (2010). Because many Latino(a) students come from low income families and the availability of financial aid is limited due to the mismatch of aid levels and the decrease in the rate of state funding for higher education, it places a higher strain on Latino participation in higher education (Santiago & Brown, 2004).

Conflict between home and school responsibilities are a source of maladjustment as Hispanics value family closeness, loyalty, and commitments. The Hispanic culture requires all individual family members to put the needs of the family first, even if it means making personal sacrifices (Sy & Romero, 2008). Family influences do not fade away among second and even third generation Latino families as the influences of placing family needs over personal needs are strongly emphasized through obligations such as translating for parents and/or other family members, spending time with family, helping around the house, taking care of siblings, and making financial contributions to the family. Latinos' strong family connections may provide a sense of emotional well being while the requirement to fulfill family obligations can take away from the amount of time these students are able to devote to their college education (Sy & Romero, 2008).

Latinos in Higher Education

Approximately 1.3 million Latino(a) students are enrolled in higher education but about only 40% were enrolled in four-year institutions (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). Most of these Latinos, just over 50% are enrolled in colleges in California and Texas (Santiago & Brown, 2004). Almost 75% of Latinos are enrolled in five states: California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois. About 45% of undergraduate Latinos are concentrated in about 230 institutions of higher learning known as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), these institutions represent about 7% of all postsecondary institutions (Santiago & Brown, 2004). The majorities of Latino(a) students in higher education are enrolled in two- year institutions and are non-traditional students. According to the Pew Research Center:

Almost half of Latino(a) students in higher education begin at a nearby community college but do not transfer to a baccalaureate –granting institution. According to analysis conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center, many Latinos who do enroll for the first time at a baccalaureate institution do not graduate. For Latinos in the U.S. 25 and older, about 11 percent have a bachelor’s degree, in comparison to 29% of whites and 25% of other non-Hispanics had a bachelor’s degree. (p. 2)

Pursuing higher education is important to ensure a better future in the economy. Hispanics currently represent 15% or 4.1 million of the total traditional college age population. It is speculated that by the year 2020, Latinos will constitute almost 25% of that population (Santiago & Brown, 2004).

Retention and Supportive Conditions

According to Tinto (2010), colleges and universities do not take student retention seriously, and it is treated as one more item to add to the list of issues. In most cases a course is added or a mentoring program is established but the outcome does not increase student retention, particularly those of diverse students. Tinto states:

The result is that student experiences are increasingly segmented into smaller and smaller pieces; their relationships with faculty, staff, and each other becoming more narrow and specialized; their learning further partitioned into smaller disconnected segments. While it is true that retention programs abound on our campuses, most institutions have not taken student retention seriously. Little has been done to change the essential character of college, little to alter the prevailing character of student educational experience, and therefore little to address the

deeper roots of student attrition. As a result, most efforts to enhance student retention, though successful to some degree, have had more limited impact than they should or could. (p.2)

Tinto understood that “effective retention programs are committed to the students they serve. They put student welfare ahead of other institutional goals” (Tinto, 1993, p. 146). As a result of the struggles of retention faced by many colleges and universities, Tinto recommended five conditions for student retention. The first is high expectations for students, implanting high demands on student success. The second is providing clear and consistent information about the institutional requirements and effective advising about the choices students have to make regarding their programs of study and future career goals. Third is providing students with academic, social, and personal support. Fourth is involving the students as valued members of the institution, and fifth, promoting learning (Tinto, 2010). Because of declining retention rates among students in higher education, colleges and universities need to focus on the student and implement strategies that support the learning of all students, including minorities.

Tinto (1993) believed that students’ “social integration” with the institution is an important factor in their ability to persist. The atmosphere and climate of the university is reflected by how the institution treats and supports students and by the positive nature of peer relations on campus, is important to the self-esteem and confidence a student generates. It is important for the campus to develop an atmosphere that is supportive, safe and pluralistic (Swail, Redd, & Perna, 2003).

Recruiting and Retaining Latino Students

Tinto (1993) also considers that “effective retention programs are first and foremost committed to the education of all not just some, of their students” (p. 146). Programs and services cannot be developed around the majority group but needs to be adjusted for the minorities as well, specifically with Latinos, family manipulates student’s decisions.

Family ties influence Latino(a) student drop out along with family economic status, quality of the neighborhood where the family lives, and the amount of quality contact between parents and school (Behnke, Gonzalez, & Cox, 2010). Studies suggest that two factors essential to improving academic success and dropout prevention are parental involvement and parental academic motivation. Parent involvement is the single strongest predictor of Latino academic success, by means of parents’ high academic standards and expressed commitment to the benefits of education (Santiago & Brown, 2004). School-family-community collaborations can be effective in improving graduation rates among Latinos, especially when school counselors are able to maintain an effective joint venture between the parents and the student’s educational goals (2004). According to Gilroy (2010), institutions need to think differently about recruiting Hispanics, it is important to make an emotional connection between the college and prospective students as well as their parents. Hispanics and non-Hispanics approach the higher education experience differently; it starts with the role of the family.

Gilroy (2010) stresses that “we need to understand that in Hispanic households, the family makes the decision, and so I advise people to recruit the family” (p.1). Colon (2009) expressed the need to incorporate an admissions program for Latino(a) parents to

understand and become a part of their child's educational process. The idea is to educate and inform students and parents about college, assist parents and students to understand the educational system, financial aid process, and provide contacts that are Latino(a). Families of Latino(a) students can be an effective tool in retention if parents are involved and informed with the college environment and are provided the opportunity to develop relationships with faculty and administrators (Castellanos & Jones, 2003).

Latino(a) Studies and Research

Programs that encourage student/faculty relationships are encouraged as well as programs that involve parents in the education of Latino(a) students. In the study of Colon (2009), an orientation program and a liaison with ASPIRA was developed to create the Latino(a) student/parent orientation program and its purpose was to inform/involve the Latino parents in their student's education and understand the college process. In understanding Latino retention, the family is a key concept in helping Latino(a) students graduate college. The Latino(a) student/parent orientation program covered financial aid, the college application process, and college success. The findings of the study found a high percentage of positive responses regarding the information distributed in the workshops with mostly parents attending the simultaneous Spanish/English orientation sessions.

The study of Mateo (2010), discussed the Latina –Hispanic Network which was developed to encourage/motivate Latina students to become aware of their identity as a Latina and to build a force among Latinas on campus. The network encourages/supports Latinas in higher education by providing/encouraging a pipeline for students that connects them with Latina professionals and engage them in conversations about higher

education to provide opportunities for collaboration and professional development. The idea was to increase awareness and representation of Latinas as professionals in higher education (Mateo, 2010). Latino(a) faculty and administrators serve as role models, showing Latino(a) students that they too can graduate and become academically successful. Latino(a) role models also serve as mentors to those students seeking advice. The presence of Latino(a) faculty and administrators has been found to have a positive effect on Latino(a) student retention as well as helping to keep Latino(a) students academically motivated (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). The study took the attitudes of Latina students, faculty, and administrators and demonstrated that their identity as Latinas became a factor to understanding the roots of their identity and of the family, to identify with other Latinas on campus, and the most influential people in their life. As a result of this study participants understood that higher education came with more responsibilities but it also offered freedom to explore more knowledge, express ideas, socialize with other Latina students and professionals, and an opportunity for professional development that allowed for learning and serving their community (Mateo, 2010).

Understanding Latino Identity

In order to recruit and retain Hispanic students one must first consider understanding and researching Latino identity. Latino identity can be complicated as Hispanic students often feel that their identity differences against the majority group can bring fear and misunderstanding due to lack of knowledge of the Latino culture. Latinos make up a very large diverse group from various countries and each group brings with them different Spanish language dialects, cultures and traditions often being mistaken as one. According to the 2010 census, Mexicans accounted for about three-quarters of the

15.2 million increase in the Hispanic population from 2000 to 2010. Puerto Ricans grew by 36%, increasing from 3.4 million to 4.6 million. The Cuban population increased by 44%, growing from 1.2 million in 2000 to 1.8 million in 2010. Hispanics that reported as other were Dominicans at 1.4 million, Central American origin (other than Mexican at 4.0 million, South American at 2.8 million, 635,000 were Spaniard and 3.5 million reported as Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census, 2010).

The differences in the language dialect, cultures, and traditions influence how each Latino student makes meaning of his/her own race and ethnicity, as first and second generation Latino students identifies with the culture and traditions that surround their environment. These differences are the reason for much disagreement among Latino students and the majority group, making it important for colleges and universities to understand how individual Latino identities develop. How an individual identifies depends largely in his/her environment and home life. A second generation Latino may identify more closely with the majority group depending where he/she lives and how much of the Latino culture that is actually practiced, such as actually speaking the language. Personal identity depends on actual ethnic behaviors that the individuals practice, along with their attitudes towards their ethnic group (Phinney, 1993). According to the Pew Research Center (2011), more than half (52%) of Latinos ages 16 to 25 identify themselves first by their family's country of origin. An additional 20% generally use the term "Hispanic" or "Latino" first when describing themselves and about one in four (24%) use the term "American" first. Generally in the third and higher generations do a majority of Hispanic youths (50%) use the "American" term as their first self description (Pew Research Center, 2009).

Mateo's (2010) study is an example of how the Latina-Hispanic Network recognized mentoring Latinas. The network achieves these goals by helping members identify their own racial and ethnic identity as they also identified with other Latinas as themselves, while offering educational aspirations to their members.

Ethnic Identity: Three Stage Model

Phinney's model of ethnic identity development, demonstrated to be an important aspect to the development of a positive self concept specifically in minority students. Ethnic identity focuses on what Latinos learn about their culture from family and community; it is developed from the shared culture, religion, and language (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Individuals come to understand the implications of their ethnicity and make decisions about its role in their lives, regardless of the extent of their ethnic involvement. Once identity is identified it is easier to understand the feelings and attitudes regarding their own ethnicity, as well as becoming aware of their racism, heritage, and coming to accept their own identity and developing a bicultural identity (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998).

The three stage model of ethnic identity formation shares the views of Marcia's ego identity. It is the idea that an achieved identity is the product of a crisis or awakening, that prompts experimentation and exploration to find and incorporate one's own ethnicity (Phinney, 1993). The first stage of the model is the unexamined ethnic identity, the lack of exploration of one's ethnicity. Phinney explained that an individual may express preference for the majority culture, identify with the majority culture, view their ethnicity based upon the opinions of others, and/or show lack of interest in their own ethnicity. It is the desire of the individual to want the privileges of the dominant group. In

the second stage, the ethnic identity search, the individual encounters a situation that begins or sparks an interest in searching their ethnic identity, exploring to understand meaning of oneself. It is a realization that maybe the dominant group does not fit their identity. An interest sparks to learn more of their own culture, in a search for understanding. At times an individual may become confused regarding their ethnic culture and the American culture. The final stage, the ethnic identity achievement, is an achieved identity. It is the acceptance of one's ethnicity, feeling good and proud (Phinney, 1993). Many minority youths experience exploration and questioning about their ethnicity. This process allows for exploring their culture and learning their strengths that allows for acceptance of their culture and their ethnicity (1993). Finding one's identity is an important aspect of life, it is a journey that comes with many doubts and confusion of who we are as individuals, finding one's ethnicity is important for acceptance of the self.

Bicultural Orientation Model (BOM)

Vasti Torres (2003) used Phinney's model as a foundation for the Bicultural Orientation Model (BOM). Torres (1999), believed that models of Hispanic college student have been lacking from the field of student affairs and such models were needed to help assist with the decisions about interventions of programs, policies, and recruitment. The BOM is centered on identifying the choices that Latino students make between their culture and the majority culture. The model would place individuals based upon acculturation, choices about majority group, and ethnic identity, maintenance of culture of origin. Acculturation and self-identification of their ethnic identity make up the crucial construct of understanding Latino/Hispanic students in college. The model

also helped to understand the choices individual students made about their host culture as well as their culture of origin (1999).

The three aspects of this model are acculturation, ethnic identity, and biculturalism. Biculturalism combines acculturation and ethnic identity to create a different view that suggests that a person can function completely in two cultures. The model is made up of four quadrants, based upon acculturation and ethnic identity. The first is Bicultural Orientation; in this level the individual has a high level of acculturation and a high level of ethnic identity. This level indicates that the Latino student is comfortable with both cultures and can function in both the Hispanic and Anglo cultures. The second is a Latino/Hispanic Orientation; in this level the student has a low level of acculturation and a high level of ethnic identity and is more comfortable with their culture of origin. The third is the Anglo Orientation; in this level the student has a high level of acculturation and a low level of ethnic identity and is more comfortable with the majority culture. The final level is the Marginal Orientation; in this level the student has a low level of acculturation and a low level of ethnic identity bringing discomfort with both the culture of origin and the majority culture, and conflict within the self (Torres, 1999 & 2003). Ultimately self identification is defined by the individual's cultural orientation, family influence and their environment.

Latino(a) Role Models

In the process of identifying with their identity, mentors provide specifically Latino(a) roles models, a sense of belonging and aspiration. Albert Bandura (1995) believed that self efficacy beliefs influence an individual's thoughts, feelings, motivations, and actions. Bandura also believed that there are sources that influence self

efficacy, such as modeling, and seeing the experiences of others (role models) similar to oneself that can raise one's beliefs that the individual can also be successful. The study of Paoloni (2005), discusses the role that mentors play in enhancing Latino educational aspirations. Watching other Latinos in professional roles may help Latino(a) students become encouraged to overcome barriers to achievement, it is a feeling of closeness (Paoloni, 2005). Latinos come from a family oriented background and being able to have a Latino(a) mentor is more of a warm feeling and allows for that family feeling knowing that a role model just like them has overcome barriers to succeed in college. "One benefit to Latino mentors is that they tend to mentor in a way that is more personal, behaving in a way that is similar to the Latino family" (p. 68). The study found that mentoring offers a pathway to educational achievement for Latino(a) students by enhancing the aspirations of Latino(a) students (Paoloni, 2005)

Principles of Latino Retention

A study conducted by Longerbeam, Sedlacek, and Alatorre (2004), suggested that an orientation program, mentoring program, and a basic study skills training could be helpful for some Latino (a) students. Other suggestions from the study included: an increase in Latino advisors, increase in Latino students, more Latino faculty and staff mentors, proactive outreach by administrators to Latino students, more need based scholarships, and better collection and distribution of data about Latino students. As suggested by Tinto (1993), "effective retention programs are committed to the development of supportive social and educational communities in which all students are integrated as competent members" (p. 147). According to Castellanos & Jones (2003), there are seven principles suggested for Latino (a) Retention.

Principle I: “Increase participation rates to create a Latino(a) presence on campus” (Castellanos & Jones, 2003 p. 140). Research has asserted that Latino(a) students should see other Hispanics in positions as faculty, administrators, and staff because it builds student faculty relationships important for Latino(a) students’ cultural affirmation and success while also providing opportunities for mentorship and networking. Having visible successful Latinos in academia to serve as role models to other Latinos is critical (Mateo, 2010). Significant Latino(a) presence on campus can help diminish stereotyping and provide more opportunities for students to begin to feel the sense of belonging to the institution, the feeling of family ties that they can relate to from their home environment (Hurtado, 1994). Research has found that in order to balance the cultural differences and institutional values inherent in academia, the role of mentors for racial and ethnic underrepresented groups is crucial. For educational achievement mentors are necessary for students, mentors provide a network of information and support (Mateo, 2010).

Principle II: “Assist students in navigating the institution” (Castellanos & Jones, 2003, p. 140). The size of an institution can be intimidating to any student especially when the student does not know where to go or whom to approach for help. Many colleges adopt general student orientation programs that are geared towards all students during the week prior to the start of classes or the first week of college. While these programs may be helpful to the general student body, they may not be sufficient to meet the needs of Latino(a) students, especially those that are first to attend college in their family (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). Some colleges have implemented student of color orientation programs or programs for low income (EOF and MAP) and first generation

college students that may go hand-in-hand with the general orientation program. These programs can be foundational for blacks and Latina/o students to meet advisors, become acquainted with other minority students who can help with mentoring, and become involved in cultural organizations that will help engage the student in their educational journey (2003).

Principle III: “Monitor adjustment for retention” (Castellanos & Jones, 2003, p. 142). Tinto provided that “Institutions should commit themselves to a long term process of program development” (Tinto, 1993, p. 149). Early intervention is an important factor to retention. Lynch and Engle (2010) suggests that a committed strong leadership is necessary to drive student success efforts and create a campus culture in which all faculty and staff take responsibility for helping students achieve success and monitoring data and identifying struggling students for early intervention. Castellanos and Jones (2003) recommend three components that will increase retention: (a) Recognize academic problems early, (b) Help students manage their time and resources, and (c) Encourage study groups and use of academic support services. Most of the higher educational research has established that the more the student is engaged in their college experience, the more likely they are to graduate (Tinto, 1993).

Principle IV: Build support from peers. “It takes one to retain one” (Castellanos & Jones, 2003, p.144). The Latino culture relies on a familial support system, finding and establishing new support systems is essential to building problem solving skills and solutions to issues that may arise throughout their college career (Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996).

While the personal-emotional support is necessary, many family members do not understand many of the issues students face in college. If the majority of Latino (a) students come from communities and families where they are first-generation college student, then the necessary support needed to deal with challenges they face may not exist because of the lack of “college knowledge.” Latino (a) students who found support from their peers, especially from experienced upper classmen rather than fellow first-year students, tended to score higher on measures of academic and social adjustment in college. (Castellano & Jones, 2003, p. 144)

Support systems/groups provide the strength that many Latino and other minority students need in order to build problem solving skills and solutions to issues that may arise throughout their academic career.

Principle V: “Increase communication between racial groups” (Castellanos & Jones, 2003, p. 145). To help students adjust to the college environment; they must also learn to interact with a wide range of different cultures and peers from different racial and ethnical groups. Castellanos and Jones (2003) recommend three different methods of increasing communication between students of various backgrounds.

1. Encourage and implement programs that seek to change intergroup dynamics;
2. Implement formal educational activities around race and cultural understanding; and
3. Implement activities that will increase the campus knowledge of the Latino culture as well as other diverse cultures.

Programs that facilitate intergroup dialogue can positively impact intergroup dynamics by allowing students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds to discuss their perceptions and misconceptions of each other in an effort to better understand their different experiences (Zuniga & Nagda, 1993).

Principle VI: “Employ faculty and administrators as a form of structural support” (Castellanos & Jones, 2003, p. 146). Tinto also provided that “Institutions should act to insure that faculty and staff possess the skills needed to assist and educate their students” (Tinto, 1993, p. 151). At public and private four year universities, administrators of color represent 15% of all professional positions, while Latinos only represent about 2.9% for faculty of color they represent 14.5% of all research and instructional positions with Latinos holding about 2.5% of these positions (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). To many Latino students these individuals represent role models who have successfully overcome the challenge of being “one of the few” in postsecondary education (2003). Latino(a) faculty and administrators provide a sense of encouragement that if they can do it, so can I. The presence of Latino administrators and faculty provide positive affects to the experience of Latino (a) students in many ways such as mentors, roles models, and cultural agents that help alleviate feelings of alienation, cultural incongruity, and marginalization (2003).

Principle VII: “Understand retention on campus through research” (Castellanos & Jones, 2003, p. 148). Tinto considered that “Institutional actions should be coordinated in a collaborative fashion to insure a systematic, campus wide approach to student retention” (Tinto, 1993, p. 151). To better understand the issues surrounding attrition and retention of Latino(a) students, institutions as well as educators need to take on the

task of researching the climate for diversity, which include the physiological climate and behavioral dimensions of Latino(a) students to better understand their experiences and issues that might impact their retention (Castellanos & Jones, 2003).

Summary of the Literature Review

Research suggests that retention has been a growing issue within all colleges and universities. It is not just with Latino students but with all students but because Latinos are the majority in the minority, it has become a growing issue. Latino students bring with them many retention barriers, such as the absence of college-educated role models, family ties, responsibility to family, parents lack of information, poverty, poor quality of elementary and secondary education, infrequent student/faculty interaction in higher education, and lack of commitment to educational goals (Garcia, 2010). College campuses have much to learn about creating inclusive and multicultural learning environments. If colleges and universities wish to make a real difference in student retention and help encourage / motivate Latino(a) students graduate, then it is important to find ways to adapt their programming to accommodate changing student populations with implementing programs that seek to change intergroup dynamics, implementing formal educational activities around race and cultural understanding, and implementing activities that will increase the campus knowledge of the Latino culture as well as other diverse cultures (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). Meeting the educational needs of the growing Latino population is challenging but by improving the extent and quality of higher education for Latinos, their economic prospects, civic engagement, and ability to contribute to the long term economic and civic health of the nation indisputably increases (Santiago & Brown, 2004). The studies of Colon (2009), Mateo (2010), and Paoloni

(2005) suggest that retention of Latino(a) students can only be understood on campus through research, understanding Latino identity, and the attitudes of Latino(a) students. Therefore, it is important to conduct more research on the attitudes of Latino(a) students towards their identity. Their experiences in higher education and the outlook of the programming/services that can encourage and motivate Latin (a) students, as well as increasing Latino(a) roles models that can serve as mentors that will help inspire Latino(a) students to complete their college journey through graduation. Serving Latino students is about intentionally knowing and identifying what will help the performance of Latino(a)s in higher education and adapt curriculum and support services to increase retention.

Chapter III

Methodology

Context of the Study

This study was conducted at Rowan University, located in Glassboro, NJ. The university is located in Southern New Jersey between Philadelphia, PA and Atlantic City, NJ. It is a medium sized public institution comprised of undergraduate and graduate students with a current population of 11, 503 as of spring 2012. Rowan is comprised of six academic colleges including the Rohrer College of Business, College of Communication, College of Education, College of Engineering, College of Fine and Performing Arts, and the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Rowan University also has a Graduate School, which has merged with the College of Professional and Continuing Education, now known as The College of Graduate and Continuing Education (CGCE). Rowan University has also collaborated with Cooper Hospital in Camden, N.J. to develop the Cooper Medical School of Rowan University, and recently a merger between Rowan University and Rutgers Camden University has been proposed.

The study looks at the identity of Latino(a) students, the programming and services offered at Rowan that can help Latino(a)s graduate and the importance of Latino(a) role models. There are approximately 956 Hispanic/Latino students enrolled at Rowan University with 874 Hispanic/Latino as undergraduate students with 583 Latina females and 373 Latino males (Rowan.edu, 2012).

Population and Sample Selection

The target population for this study was the approximate 874 undergraduate Hispanic/Latino students enrolled as of spring 2012, with an estimated 583 females and 373 males. A survey (Appendix B) was administered in the beginning of February 2012 by e-mail with a link for survey monkey to 437 (50% of the 874) students who had identified as Latino/Hispanic. E-mail addresses were obtained through a report from the Registrar's office and student e-mails were randomly selected by choosing every other e-mail address. In addition to the survey, six Hispanic/Latino students from the United Latino Association (ULA) at Rowan University were interviewed on a volunteer basis, one Freshman, one Sophomore, two Juniors, and two seniors, one female and one male for each junior and senior were interviewed (Appendix D) for this study once a consent form (Appendix C) was signed during the month of February 2012. All interviews were conducted face-to-face at Rowan University, in the break room of Savitz Hall. I wanted to accommodate the students and conduct the interviews around the student's schedule. Each interview took approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation for this study consisted of two parts, a survey (Appendix B), and an interview guide (Appendix D). The survey consisted of six sections with a total of 33 items. The first section consisted of 12 items and collected background information on gender, year in college, funding of education, ethnic affiliation, race affiliation, first or second generation student, father's highest educational level, mother's highest educational level, if identify with culture, if speak Spanish fluently, if write Spanish fluently, and if read Spanish fluently. The second section consisted of four statements

pertaining to cultural aspects on family influence, cultural influence, identity influence, and role models/ mentors important in higher education. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement to the statements by selecting which level of agreement pertained to them such as, strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, or strongly disagree. The method of selection carried throughout the remaining of the four sections. The third section pertained to self efficacy which consisted of two items with statements on self-efficacy beliefs and if the student felt in touch with the Rowan University community. The fourth section pertained to classroom environment which consisted of three items with statements on if professors cared about student success, if student struggled getting ideas understood in the classroom, and if the way the student spoke was chastised in the classroom. The fifth section pertained to services provided and consisted of eight items with statements on student satisfaction with services at Rowan University, if Rowan University offers academic, social, cultural, and professional development student services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students. The final section pertained to future goals and consisted of four items with statements on if encountered barriers or opportunities at Rowan University because of being Latino/Hispanic, if the university cares about Latino/Hispanic student success, and reasons for continuing their education. The survey instrument was not modeled after previous research and had to be created by the researcher because most studies on Latino(a) retention and identity used a qualitative research design.

The interview guide questions were taken from the dissertation of Lesley Mateo (2010); the interview questions were adjusted for my study. The interview consisted of 11 questions regarding Latino identity, services and programming at Rowan University, and

the importance of Latino role models. Both instruments were tested by a few known Latino students and mentors for its validity and reliability.

Data Collection

The purpose of this study was to assess the attitudes of the Latino(a)/Hispanic students at Rowan University regarding on how they identify as Latino students, the importance of Latino(a)/Hispanic role models/mentors, and the services and programming offered at Rowan to help Latino(a)/Hispanic students graduate college.

Data collection took place over a two month period. During the months of February and March of 2012, I administered a survey to 437 Latino/Hispanic undergraduate students, out of 874, from Rowan University through e-mail using survey monkey in February 2012. Two follow up reminder e-mails were sent out to the survey sample one week after the survey was administered then again the following week. The goal was to obtain a 50% minimum return rate of 219 responses, a total of 275 responses were collected.

During the month of February of 2012, face-to-face individual interviews with six students from the United Latino Association (ULA) were also conducted. All participants were provided with the interview question guide via e-mail prior to the interview. All interviews were conducted at Rowan University in the break room of Savitz Hall, in order to accommodate the students and create a comfortable atmosphere. With the permission of the participants, all interviews were recorded with a digital recorder and then transcribed for further analysis. Each session lasted about 30 to 45 minutes. The interviews allowed the researcher to obtain more detailed and personal

experiences with regard to Latino(a) identity, self-efficacy, services and programming at Rowan University, and the importance of Latino(a) role models.

Data Analysis

The survey results were explored by using the Predictive Analytic Software (PASW) Version 19.0. Data were analyzed using frequency tables. Correlations (Pearson product-moment calculation) and descriptive statistics (frequency distribution, percentages, and measures of central tendency and dispersion) were used to examine the data in regards to the research questions. Interviews were transcribed and interpreted using content analysis (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Sisco, 1981). Key words and phrases were coded and arranged into themes in order to reveal patterns of the students' perceptions and personal experiences, as well as their satisfaction with Rowan programming and services.

Chapter IV

Findings

The study's findings were formed through a mixed method. A survey was administered to undergraduate Latino(a) students via e-mail and face-to-face interviews were administered to six undergraduate students that are members of the United Latino Association (ULA) from Rowan University in spring of 2012. The survey was made available to students via an e-mail containing a link to survey monkey. The survey consisted of 33 items and was used to capture undergraduate Latino(a) thoughts regarding background information, cultural aspects, self-efficacy, classroom environment, services provided, and future goals. The interviews complimented the survey by allowing further perceptions and reflections regarding Latino(a) identity, self-efficacy, programming and services, and the importance of role models/mentors.

Profile of the Survey Sample

The study's target audience was the 874 undergraduate Latino(a) students enrolled in the spring of 2012 at Rowan University. Out of the 874 Latino(a) students, 437 students were randomly selected to receive the survey. A total of 275 students responded to the survey for a response rate of 63%. All participants for the survey were 18 years of age or older.

Table 4.1 demonstrates the demographics of the 275 undergraduate Latino(a) students that took the survey 183 (66.5%) reported that they were female and 90 (32.7%) reported that they were male. There were 57 (20.7%) freshman, 72 (26.2%) sophomores,

68 (24.7%) juniors, and 77 (28.0%) seniors that took the survey. A total of 265 (96.4%) students identified themselves as Latino/Hispanic. The four largest groups that affiliated with a race were Puerto Ricans with 130 (47.3%), Dominicans with 44 (16.0%), Mexican with 19 (6.9%), and Colombians with 15 (5.5%); a total of 45 (16.3%) of students reported being of another Latino/Hispanic race. A total of 128 students reported that they were first generation Latino(a) s, 89 were second generation, and 57 were not sure. When asked to provide mother and father’s highest educational level, high school came in at the highest with 120 (43.6%) for fathers and 115 (42.0%) for mothers.

Table 4.1

Demographics of Survey Sample (N= 275)

Category	<i>f</i>	%
Male	90	32.7
Female	183	66.5
<i>(n = 273)</i> <i>missing=2</i>		
Year in college:		
Freshman	57	20.7
Sophomore	72	26.2
Junior	68	24.7
Senior	77	28.0
<i>(n = 274)</i> <i>missing=1</i>		
Ethnic Affiliation:		
Hispanic/Latino	265	96.4
Black	4	1.5
White/not Hispanic	4	1.5
<i>(n = 273)</i> <i>missing = 2</i>		
Race Affiliation:		
Puerto Rican	130	47.3
Other	45	16.3
Dominican	44	16.0
Mexican	19	6.9
Colombian	15	5.5
Ecuadorian	7	2.5
Honduran	6	2.2

Peruvian	6	2.2
Guatemalan	3	1.1
(<i>N</i> = 275)		
First or Second generation Latino student:		
First	128	46.5
Second	89	32.4
Not sure	57	20.7
(<i>n</i> = 274)		
<i>missing</i> =1		
Father's Highest Educational Level:		
Less than High school	47	17.1
High school	120	43.6
Some college	51	18.5
Associate	16	5.8
Bachelor	34	12.4
Master	4	1.5
Doctorate	3	1.1
(<i>N</i> = 275)		
Mother's Highest Educational Level:		
Less than High school	35	12.8
High school	115	42.0
Some college	48	17.5
Associate	34	12.4
Bachelor	29	10.6
Master	11	4.0
Doctorate	2	.7
(<i>n</i> = 274)		
<i>missing</i> = 1		

Table 4.2 demonstrates student responses to the different educational funding services used; students were able to report more than one. A total of 194 (70.5%) of students use student loans to fund their education, with educational grants as the second highest at 128 (46.5%), personal/family income at 94 (34.2%), EOF at 90 (32.7%), and scholarship at 72 (26.2%). Other students reported using family savings, social security benefits, and veteran's benefits.

Table 4.2

Educational Funding Services (N=275)

Category	<i>f</i>	%
Student loans	194	70.5
Educational grants	128	46.5
Personal/Family income	94	34.2
EOF	90	32.7
Scholarships	72	26.2
Personal/Family savings	46	16.7
Social Security benefits	3	1.1
Veteran's benefits	2	.7
Other relatives and friends	2	.7

Analysis of the Quantitative Data

Research Question 1: What do selected Latino(a) undergraduate students report about their language fluency and cultural affiliation?

Table 4.3 demonstrates what students reported regarding their fluency in writing, reading, and speaking in Spanish and if they identified with the Latino/Hispanic culture. A total of 102 (37.1%) of the students reported that they were fluent writers of the Spanish language, while 128 (46.5%) of the students reported that they read Spanish fluently, and 133 (48.4%) reported to speak Spanish fluently. Out of 273 students, 190 (69.1%) students reported that they identified with their culture.

Table 4.3

Language Fluency and Cultural Identity (N = 275)

Item	Yes		Somewhat		No	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Do you write Spanish fluently? <i>n=272, M=1.90, SD=.838,missing=3</i>	102	37.1	81	29.5	89	32.4
Do you read Spanish fluently? <i>n=274, M=1.81, SD=.858,missing=1</i>	128	46.5	79	28.7	67	24.4
Do you speak Spanish fluently? <i>n=273, M=1.77, SD=.852,missing=2</i>	133	48.4	73	26.5	67	24.4
Do you identify with culture? <i>n=273, M=1.54, SD.872,missing=2</i>	190	69.1	68	24.7	15	5.5

Research Question 2: What do selected Latino(a) undergraduate students report about their experiences regarding culture, self-efficacy, and class room environment while attending Rowan University?

Table 4.4 demonstrates what students reported regarding culture, self –efficacy, and classroom environment. A total of 48 (18.1%) students either agreed or strongly agreed that they struggled getting their ideas understood in the classroom compared to a total of 187 (68%) students that either disagreed or strongly disagreed. When students were asked if they were chastised by the way they spoke by their professors in the classroom 46 (17.4%) students either agreed or strongly agreed compared to 167 (63%) students who disagreed or strongly disagreed. A total of 144 (53.9%) students agreed or strongly agreed that they felt in touch with the Rowan Community compared to 50

(23.7%) students who either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Professors caring about their student success was agreed or strongly agreed by 180 (67.9%) students compared to 17 (6.4%) students that disagreed or strongly disagreed.

When students were asked if culture played a role in influencing them as students 180 (65.4%) reported that they either agreed or strongly agreed compared to 36 (13.1%) who reported that they disagreed or strongly disagreed. A total of 223 (86%) students agreed or strongly agreed that Latino(a) role models/mentors are important compared to 11(4.1%) that disagreed or strongly disagreed. When students were asked if self –efficacy played an important role in affecting their beliefs, thoughts and motivation 238 (89.2%) students agreed or strongly agreed compared to 3 (1.1%) students who disagreed. A total of 245 (89.1%) students reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that their family influenced them as students compared to 15 (5.4%) students who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 4.4

Experiences Regarding Culture; Self- efficacy; Classroom Environment (N=275)

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I struggle getting my ideas understood in the classroom. <i>n=265, M=3.77, SD=1.121, missing=10</i>	10	3.8	38	14.3	30	11.3	113	41.1	74	26.9
The way I speak in class is chastised by some professors. <i>n=264, M=3.67, SD=1.098, missing=11</i>	6	2.3	40	15.1	51	19.2	101	38.1	66	24.9

I feel in touch with Rowan University community. <i>n=267, M=2.55, SD=1.004, missing=8</i>	35	13.1	109	40.8	73	27.3	42	15.7	8	3.0
Professors care about my success. <i>n=264, M=2.24, SD=.835, missing=11</i>	40	15.1	140	52.8	67	25.3	13	4.9	4	1.5
My culture has influenced me as a student. <i>n=271, M=2.12, SD1.149, missing=4</i>	96	34.9	84	30.5	55	20.0	25	9.1	11	4.0
My identity has influenced me as a student. <i>n=270, M=1.65, SD.856, missing=5</i>	141	52.0	99	36.5	16	5.9	11	4.1	3	1.1
Latino roles models/mentors are important in higher education. <i>n=271, M=1.59, SD=.869, missing=4</i>	164	60.5	69	25.5	27	10.0	8	3.0	3	1.1
I believe self efficacy beliefs affect thoughts, feelings, and motivation. <i>n=267, M=1.57, SD=.714, missing=8</i>	147	55.1	91	34.1	26	9.7	3	1.1	0	0
My family has influenced me in my current situation as a student. <i>n=271, M=1.56 SD=.891, missing 4</i>	159	57.8	86	31.3	11	4.0	10	3.6	5	1.8

Research Question 3: How do selected Latino(a) undergraduate students rate the services provided by Rowan University?

Table 4.5 demonstrates what undergraduate Latino(a) students reported regarding the services provided by Rowan University. I noticed the slightly high numbers of students that reported being uncertain about many of the programming and services provided by the University. When students were asked if Rowan University offers adequate cultural student services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students, a total of 98 (39.1%) students reported to either agree or strongly agree compared to 56 (22.3%) students who reported that they disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 96 (38.2%) students were uncertain. A total of 97 (38.7%) students reported that they either agreed or strongly agreed that Rowan University offers adequate social student services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students compared to 57 (22.7%) students that reported that they either disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 95 (37.8%) students were uncertain. When students were asked about the academic students services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students, 104 (41.5%) provided that they agreed or strongly agreed compared to 52 (20.7%) that reported that they disagreed or strongly disagreed and 95(37.8%) students reported that they were uncertain. A total of 117 (46.9%) students reported that Rowan University's programming encouraged/motivated them as a Latino/Hispanic students to graduate compared to 53 (21.3%) students that reported that they disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 79 (31.7%) students were uncertain. Students were also asked if the University offers adequate professional development services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students, a total of 106 (42.3%) students reported that they agreed or strongly agreed compared to 43 (16.9%) students who disagreed or strongly

disagreed, and 102 (40.6%) students were uncertain. A total of 121 (48.3%) students reported that they agreed or strongly agreed about the University supporting them as a Latino/Hispanic student compared to 55 (21.9%) students that disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 73 (29.1%) students were uncertain. A total of 158 (62.9%) students reported that they were satisfied with the services at Rowan University compared to 29 (11.6%) students who either disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 64 (25.5%) students reported that they were uncertain.

Table 4.5

Services Provided (N=275)

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Rowan University offers adequate cultural student services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students. <i>n=250, M=2.77, SD=.948, missing=25</i>	19	7.6	79	31.5	96	38.2	50	19.9	6	2.4
Rowan University offers adequate social student services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students. <i>n=249, M=2.75, SD=1.027, missing=26</i>	27	10.8	70	27.9	95	37.8	48	19.1	9	3.6

Rowan University offers adequate academic student services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students. <i>n=251, M=2.72, SD=.989, missing=24</i>	27	10.8	77	30.7	95	37.8	43	17.1	9	3.6
Rowan University's programming encouraged/motivate me as a Latino/Hispanic student to graduate college. <i>n=249, M=2.66, SD=.967, missing=26</i>	25	10.0	92	36.9	79	31.7	48	19.3	5	2.0
Rowan University offers adequate professional development student services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students. <i>n=251, M=2.66, SD=.913, missing=24</i>	28	11.2	78	31.1	102	40.6	37	14.7	6	2.2
Rowan University has supported me as a Latino/Hispanic student. <i>n=249, M=2.64, SD=1.039, missing=26</i>	27	10.8	94	37.5	73	29.1	46	18.3	9	3.6
I am satisfied with the services at Rowan University. <i>n=251, M=2.35, SD=.923, missing=24</i>	39	15.5	119	47.4	64	25.5	24	9.6	5	2.0

Table 4.6 demonstrates what students reported that they would like to see implemented at Rowan University to help Latino/Hispanic students while attending the

university. Activities on Hispanic culture came in as the first choice with 61.5% (169) and Networking as their second choice with 53.8% (148) votes.

Table 4.6

Activities and Programming (N=275)

Category	<i>f</i>	%
Activities on Hispanic culture	169	61.5
Networking	148	53.8
Clubs/organizations	136	49.5
Instruction and activities on Latino Identity	115	41.8

Research Question 4: What do selected Latino(a) undergraduate students report about their barriers, opportunities, and future goals while attending Rowan University?

Table 4.7 demonstrates what undergraduate Latino(a) students at Rowan University reported on whether they have encountered barriers and/or opportunities while attending the university. A total of 59 (24%) students reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that they have encountered barriers compared to 154 (62.6%) students that either disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 33 (13.4%) students were uncertain. When students were asked if they have been afforded opportunities while at the University, 61(24.8%) students agreed or strongly agreed compared to 117 (47.5%) students that either disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 67 (27.2%) students were uncertain. When students were asked if Rowan University cared about the success of Latino/Hispanic students, a total of 119 (48.4%) students agreed or strongly agreed compared to 30 (12.2%) students that reported that they disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 97 (39.4%) students were uncertain.

Table 4.7

Barriers; Opportunities; Future Goals (N=275)

Statement	Strongly Agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
I have encountered barriers at Rowan University because of being Latino/Hispanic. <i>n=246, M=3.57, SD=1.206, missing=29</i>	15	6.1	44	17.9	33	13.4	95	38.6	59	24.0
I have been afforded opportunities at Rowan University because of being Latino/Hispanic. <i>n=245, M=3.34, SD=1.079, missing=30</i>	6	2.4	55	22.4	67	27.2	81	32.9	36	14.6
I feel that Rowan cares about the success of Latino/Hispanic students. <i>n=246, M=2.59, SD=.847, missing=29</i>	18	7.3	101	41.1	97	39.4	25	10.2	5	2.0

Table 4.8 demonstrates the various reasons students reported for continuing their education which influenced the direction of their future goals. In the top three 84.4% (232) of the students reported that the main reason for their education is to earn a degree, a total of 70.2 (193) of the students reported that their education would give them personal satisfaction/fulfillment, while 66.9% (184) of the students wanted their education for self –improvement.

Table 4.8

Reasons Students Reported for Continuing their Education. (N=275)

Category	<i>f</i>	%
To earn a degree	232	84.4
For personal satisfaction/fulfillment	193	70.2
Self-improvement	184	66.9
To improve job skills	170	61.8
To learn or improve my occupational job skills	152	55.3

Profile of the Interview Sample

The target audience for the interview sample was six students from the United Latino Association (ULA). Each of the six undergraduate Latino(a) participants were enrolled in the spring semester of 2012 at Rowan University and were members of ULA and were chosen to participate in the study on a volunteer basis. All participants for the interviews were 18 years of age or older.

Participant A is a female freshman who identified as Dominican. She grew up in Perth Amboy, N.J. and is majoring in psychology with a minor in Spanish. Both of her parents are Dominican with Spaniard. Her mother has a bachelor in accounting and her father has a bachelor in pre-med. Both parents obtained their degrees in the Dominican Republic. Her parents have instilled in her the desire to earn a college degree. She is a member of the Dr. Harley E. Flack mentoring program and United Latino Association.

Participant B is a male sophomore who identified as Latino. He grew up in Jersey City, N.J. and is majoring in planning/ architecture and water resource management. His mother is from Honduras and his father from Nicaragua. He was not sure about his parent's educational background but provided that his parents influenced him to choose

college. Participant B is very involved with his fraternity and the United Latino Association and is grateful for the EOF/MAP program.

Participant C is a female junior. She identifies as Dominican and grew up in Perth Amboy, NJ. She is majoring in sociology/ women and gender studies. Her parents are both from the Dominican Republic and provided that her mother never attended school but that her father earned his GED. Participant C is self motivated and attributes her motivation for her desire to earn a college degree. She is an active member of the Latina-Hispanic Network and the United Latino Association.

Participant D is a male junior. He identifies as Puerto Rican and grew up in Pennsauken, NJ. He is majoring in criminal justice. Both of his parents came from Puerto Rico and provided that both mom and dad have high school diplomas. His desire to attend college came from self motivation because his parents were indifferent about him attending college. He is a member of the United Latino Association.

Participant E is a female senior that identifies as Puerto Rican and grew up in Bridgeton, NJ. She is majoring in art with a minor in dance. Both of her parents are Puerto Rican but born in the United States. Her mother's highest education level is high school and her father's highest education level is middle school. She is the first in her family to attend college. She is actively involved with her sorority, the Latina-Hispanic Network and the United Latino Association.

Participant F is a male senior that identifies as Puerto Rican and grew up in Camden, NJ. He is a sociology major. Both parents came from Puerto Rico. His mother's highest educational level is the 11th grade and his father's highest educational level is the

6th grade. His parent’s only educational requirement was for him to graduate high school but a counselor from a summer program motivated him to earn a college degree. He contributes his motivation to finish college to his EOF counselor that stays on top of him. He is a member of the United Latino Association.

Analysis of the Qualitative Data

Research Question 5: What do selected Latino(a) students say about their identity, family influences, self-efficacy, and the importance of role models/mentors?

Most of the participants identified as Latino(a) with their language, ethnicity, culture, and upbringing. One interviewee reported “I identify pretty much in the way I cook, listen to a lot of Spanish music, the way I speak and carry myself, my culture.” Another student said “I see myself by the language that I speak. I speak Spanish and I am Latino.”

Table 4.9

Identity (N=6)

Theme	Frequency	Rank
Ethnicity	4	1
Language	3	2
Hispanic	2	3
Culture	2	3
Upbringing	2	3
Food	2	3
Music	1	4

All of the participants reported that family influence was a factor in their educational decision as many saw the struggles of their parents working many hours to make ends meet. “I always look at my mom and see how hard she had to work for

everything.” Parental influence was the second biggest factor. One interviewee reported “My parents went to college in the Dominican Republic so it was always instilled in me to make something better of myself. I had to go to college and get an education there was no way out of it. It was the way I was brought up.” Another student found his motivational influence in the family financial struggle because his parents were indifferent about him attending college. “My parents really didn’t care if I wanted to go to college or not. I knew that if I did I would have to find the way to cover my tuition myself because my parents would not be able to afford it.”

Table 4.10

Influence of Family and Cultural Identity (N=6)

Theme	Frequency	Rank
Family	6	1
Parent influence	3	2
Parent indifferent	2	3
Financial family struggle	2	3
Financial own struggle	1	4
Education an option	1	4
Identity (skin color & hair texture)	1	4

All of the participants agreed that self efficacy applied to them and role models/mentors are important. One participant reported “Mentors are important because it shows me that others like myself have done it before me.” Another interviewee was surprised to know that the university had more Latino(a) professionals on campus than what he imagined. “I was excited to see that many Latino professionals on campus during the Latino panel. I am a senior and before that I have never seen that many people. It is interesting to see that they are around but it is sad that you don’t see them.” While one

student was surprised to see many Latino(a) mentors at a Latino panel program on campus another student felt that there are not enough Latino(a) professionals on campus. “I feel that there are not enough here but I know that they are some here, they are just not known.” Two of the students provided that their parents did not give them a choice but was instilled in them that they had to attend college. “My mom always told me you have to go to college.”

Table 4.11

Self- efficacy, Personal Beliefs, Role Models/mentors (N=6)

Theme	Frequency	Rank
Yes, self efficacy applies	6	1
Yes, roles models are important	6	1
Similar background	6	1
Self motivation	3	2
Family foundation	3	2
Culture	1	3
Religion	1	3

Three out of six participants believed that self motivation was the reason they chose to attend college. “I chose to attend college because I realized that without a college degree I was not going to get a good job.” Another participant provided that a counselor at a youth summer program encouraged him to apply to college. “I went through a youth program in Camden called Aquatic Youth Academy for aquatic sciences. My counselor was pushing me to fill out my college applications. She would ask me if my applications were filled out and she made sure they were done before I left.”

Table 4.12

College Choices (N=6)

Theme	Frequency	Rank
Self motivation	3	1
Parental influence	2	2
Youth program counselors	1	3

Research Question 6: What is it like attending Rowan University as a Latino(a) student?

Half of the interviewees felt a cultural shock while others struggled and felt secluded. “I was definitely shocked when I came to Rowan, all my friends were Hispanic and like coming over here I was around so many white and black people. I have never been around so many white and black people like this.” Another student who came through EOF was shocked because during the summer program she was unable to identify with other students like herself until the first day of her semester. “I listened that I was going to be a minority but until you are actually there that is when it hits you. Like wow, then when you are walking the campus you are like wow. I was like a speck in the population.” Another interviewee provided that he felt secluded from others in the classroom. “My experience one semester in the classroom made me change majors, I felt secluded from the others.”

Table 4.13

Experience as Latino(a) (N=6)

Theme	Frequency	Rank
Cultural shock	3	1
Struggle	2	2
Felt secluded	1	3

When participants were asked about possible improvements to help other Latino(a) students to ease their transition into college, most seemed to have a specific improvement in mind. One interviewee was very out spoken about how the university presents itself. “They need to not try to sell the school and be as accurate as possible.” Some of the interviewees provided that knowing where to find other Latinos as themselves would be helpful.”I would like to see something where students can see and meet other Latinos when they come to campus.” Another student elaborated, “Maybe have more Latino support groups. More mentors to help you along the way while in college. If there are Latino professionals on campus, I am not aware of them.” One interviewee expressed that all programs do help and that a mentor does not have to be someone professional. She expressed the idea of self motivation and wanting for something to work. “No one is going to want it for you unless you want it.”

Table 4.14

Possible Improvements (N=6)

Theme	Frequency	Rank
Latino(a) support groups	2	1
Mentors	2	1
Events	1	2
Programs	1	2
Clubs	1	2
Cultural awareness	1	2
Accurate presentation	1	2

Five out of the six interviewees described an opportunity that was afforded to them at the university. None of the descriptions were similar. One participant felt that he had no opportunities. “None. I mean I feel like I have to struggle through this on my own.” All the other participants stated EOF/MAP, networking, mentors, their sorority, and certain classes. One interviewee expressed the desire to start a blog but never came around to doing it. So she decided to take a journalism class and took advantage of the course as her window of opportunity to start her blog.”Opportunities are the advantages that you have taken from these opportunities. To me anything is an opportunity if you use it. Take what is offered to you and take it as an opportunity.”

Table 4.15

Opportunities Afforded (N=6)

Theme	Frequency	Rank
None	1	1
EOF/MAP	1	1
Networking	1	1
Mentors	1	1
Sorority	1	1
Certain classes	1	1

When participants were asked what barriers they had encountered while at the university, most participants provided that language was a barrier. One interviewee spoke of being tongue tied because of knowing two languages has been a barrier for him. “The only thing I could say is that I talk fast and I think that being that I speak Spanish and then I translate to English that I get tongue tied but that may be the only barrier I have. I just find myself having an issue explaining myself and using the right words.” Another participant elaborated that she is looked upon for her accent “I have a thick accent. In the classroom when I say something, you have these people that give you that look and always have these little comments that you know that they are talking about you. I feel that once someone has a negative attitude about you, you start feeling that way. You put yourself down.” One particular interviewee felt that she is not understood in the classroom and she argues that she knows English well. “It is not that I don’t know English. I know English, but if English is all you know then you have no problem. It is dealing with two languages that can be difficult to express what you mean to say. Why does the minority always have to conform to the white? Why can’t the white try to conform to the minority student?” Language was not a barrier to one of the participants. She expressed her frustration that within her school environment the advisors were her barrier. “It took me three years to have an advisor to advise me the correct way and that actually showed that he cared and put as much effort as I have done.” Another student spoke about institutions using minorities just to fill their quotas as a barrier to these students because some may feel that they were not accepted for who they are but what they can provide for the university.

I feel that one barrier is that institutions have to keep quotas in the minority. So they say we are going to take you but it's because you are a minority. So it's like a slap in the face almost as if it's not because we want to but because we have to. To me that is a barrier in itself because students feel that. So when an institution is telling students we are lacking minorities join us you are telling them we need you to help us so that feels like you are not trying to help us you just need us for your numbers. As a minority I am going to do it because it is an opportunity to advance but how much am I really advancing. It's like a double edge sword barrier.

Table 4.16

Barriers Encountered (N=6)

Theme	Frequency	Rank
Language	4	1
Environment	1	2
Status Quo	1	2

When participants were asked for advice on how they believed the institution can help Latino(a) students graduate, many responded with multiple answers but with programming and scholarships as the two most mentioned themes. As part of the programming one interviewee mentioned a program for Latino support groups and another student mentioned a cultural awareness program to ease cultural shock. Others mentioned that more scholarships specifically geared towards Latinos would be very helpful in helping Latinos stay in school. One participant stated “They always say there is help, there are scholarships. Yes, there is help there are scholarships but if you are not an engineering, math or science major the scholarships are limited.” Another student

elaborated by saying “I could use more money. I think it is more than the money, it is also finding the right support.” Another interviewee was concerned with the university providing the courses they needed for their major in the semester that are graduating. “I would like that they provide the classes that are needed during the semester the students need them and not have to wait an entire semester to take a class that they didn’t offer the semester we needed to take it. That also pushes back the other classes that we need as a prerequisite.”

Table 4.17

Latino(a) Support (N=6)

Theme	Frequency	Rank
Programming	2	1
Scholarships	2	1
Support groups	1	2
Advising	1	2
Cultural clubs	1	2
School spirited	1	2

All the participants were quick to answer the multiple groups, clubs and mentors that have encouraged them while on their college journey. Among them were the Latino(a) clubs and organizations that they participate in such as the United Latino Association, the Latina-Hispanic Network, and their fraternities and sororities. One participant commented that seeing her family’s struggles served as her influence/motivation to continue in her college journey. “I always look at my mom and see how hard she has had to work for everything and how she always had to be working in factories. Sometimes there was days when I could not even see her or I would have to be at a babysitter the whole time and it was always hard to see that and I don’t want my

kids to see that. I feel that if I have an opportunity to come to school and do something better for myself that I should take advantage of it.” Another student stated that a Latina EOF counselor is always on top of him. “I want to say EOF. Being that I have a Latina counselor she is always e-mailing me and forcing me to attend these events that I think I am going to hate but end up loving them and then I want to go back again.” Three of the six participants spoke about the United Latino Association as being one of their influences. One interviewee provided “ULA is a great club. You get to share with others just like yourself. We all have different struggles but in the end we are familia (family).”

Table 4.18

Latino(a) Influences (N=6)

Theme	Frequency	Rank
United Latino Association (ULA)	3	1
EOF	2	2
Fraternity/Sorority	2	2
Latina-Hispanic Network	1	3
Harley Flack/Ujima	1	3
Teachers/Mentors	1	3

The survey provided great insight on the attitudes of Latino(a) students at Rowan and the interviews complimented the results of the survey. Overall, 158 (62.9%) of the 275 students that completed the survey were satisfied with the services at the university while 64 (25.5%) were uncertain about the services provided. One student reported “you see that they have a lot of activities the first year for freshman then after that you can see where it all dies out and there is not much more for you to do. I feel they need to change that a little.” Family ties and family influence also played a large role in the Latino(a) student. One of the interviewees provided

The lack of understanding us. Most Latinos that are in college are the ones that help the family, read the mail, translate, make the doctor appointments, etc. If my mother asked me to take her to the doctor and I miss your class, it's not because I wanted to miss your class it's because my family comes first. Maybe they don't realize that we are family oriented.

Most interviewees provided that if the services/programming and Latino(a) mentors/roles models are available on campus then they should be made more aware of it.

Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

This study explored the attitudes of the undergraduate Latino /Hispanic students at Rowan University. The two-part study focused on how they identified as Latino(a), their experiences at Rowan as Latinos, their views on Latino(a) role models, the influences that encouraged/motivated them to continue their college journey, and their views of the services and programming that could help them graduate while attending Rowan University. The participants in the quantitative part were undergraduate Latino/Hispanic students enrolled in the spring of 2012. A total of 275 students completed the 33 item survey via e-mail. A disclaimer was included at the top of the survey to inform subjects that all responses collected were strictly anonymous and no identifiable information would be asked of them. The survey consisted of six sections consisting of background information, cultural aspects, self-efficacy, classroom environment, services provides, and future goals. The survey results were explored using Predictive Analytic Software (PASW) Version 19.0.

The six participants for the qualitative part were also current students enrolled in the spring of 2012 and are members of the United Latino Association (ULA). They were all selected on a volunteer basis. Students were asked to answer eleven questions regarding Latino identity, services and programming at Rowan University, and the importance of Latino(a) role models. Interviews were conducted in the break room of

Savitz Hall and were digitally recorded with the permission of all the participants. Interviews were transcribed and interpreted using the content analysis. Key words and phrases were coded and rearranged with similar themes to reveal patterns of the selected students' thoughts and reflections (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Sisco, 1981). The interviews were completed to compliment the survey and all participants for both parts of the study were 18 years of age and older.

Discussion of the Findings

This study found that 69.1% of the students that took the survey identified with their culture. A total of 48.4% of the students speak the Spanish language fluently, while 46.5% of the students can read Spanish fluently, and 37.1% of the students can write the Spanish language fluently. A total of 88.5% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that their identity influenced them as a student and a total of 65.4% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that their culture influenced them as a student. These findings show a relationship with the Bicultural Orientation Model (BOM), modeled after Phinney's model by Torres (2003), which is centered on identifying the choices that Latino students make between their culture and the majority culture. The model places individuals based upon acculturation, choices about majority group, and ethnic identity, maintenance of culture of origin. Acculturation and self-identification of their ethnic identity make up the crucial construct of understanding the Latino/Hispanic students in college. In the qualitative part of the study when students were asked about their identity, four of the six participants reported their ethnicity as their way of identifying with their culture, while three of the six respondents also believed that

their language was an indicator of personal identity. One respondent said “I see myself by the language that I speak. I speak Spanish and I am Latino.”

This study has also found that family influence is an integral part of the Latino/Hispanic student. A total of 89.1% of the respondents reported to agree or strongly agree that their family has influenced them as a student. All six participants in the qualitative part of the study agreed that family does influence their daily lives. Three of the six participants also responded that their parents were the main influence in their college decision. Other studies have suggested that two factors essential to improving academic success and dropout prevention are parental involvement and parental academic motivation. Parent involvement is the single strongest predictor of Latino academic success, by means of parents’ high academic standards and expressed commitment to the benefits of education (Santiago & Brown, 2004). The study of Colon (2009) concluded the importance of parent involvement and recommended a student/parent orientation program and its purpose was to inform/involve the Latino/Hispanic parents in their student’s education and to understand the college process. As Gilroy (2010) added “we need to understand that in Hispanic households, the family makes the decision, and so I advise people to recruit the family.”

Participants in this study also believed that self-efficacy and Latino(a) role models/mentors play a vital role in their college education. A total of 89.2% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that self- efficacy beliefs affected their thoughts, feelings, and motivation and a total of 86% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Latino(a) role models/mentors are important in higher education. The study of Paoloni (2005) discussed the roles that mentors play in enhancing Latino

educational aspirations and her study found that mentoring offers a pathway to educational achievement for Latino(a) students by enhancing the aspirations of Latino(a) students. Paoloni commented that Latinos come from a family oriented background and being able to have a Latino(a) mentor is more of a warm feeling and allows for that family feeling knowing that a role model just like them has overcome barriers to succeed in college. “One benefit to Latino mentors is that they tend to mentor in a way that is more personal, behaving in a way that is similar to the Latino family” (2005, p. 40).

The study of Mateo (2010), discussed the Latina –Hispanic Network which was developed to encourage/motivate Latina students to become aware of their identity as a Latina and to build a force among Latinas on campus. The presence of Latino(a) faculty and administrators has been found to have a positive effect on Latino(a) student retention as well as helping to keep Latino(a) students academically motivated (Castellanos & Jones, 2003). Mateo studied the attitudes of Latina students, faculty, and administrators and demonstrated that their identity as Latinas became a factor to understanding the roots of their identity and of the family, to identify with other Latinas on campus, and the most influential people in their life. As a result of this study participants understood that higher education came with more responsibilities but it also offered freedom to explore more knowledge, express ideas, socialize with other Latina students and professionals, and an opportunity for professional development that allowed for learning and serving their community (Mateo, 2010).

This study also provided that a total of 62.9% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the services at Rowan University. As stated by Tinto (1993), “Institutions should commit themselves to a long process of program

development” (p. 149). This study provided that less than half of the participants agreed or strongly agreed about the programming / services at Rowan University being supportive / helpful to Latino/Hispanic students with a comparable percentage that were uncertain. A total of 39.1% of the participants reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that Rowan University offers adequate cultural students services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students while a comparable percentage of 38.2% of the participants were uncertain. A total of 38.7% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that Rowan University offers adequate social students services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students while a comparable percentage of 37.8% of the participants were uncertain. A total of 41.5% of the participants provided that Rowan University offers adequate academic students services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students with a comparable percentage of 37.8% uncertain. A total of 46.9% of the participants provided that Rowan University’s programming encouraged/motivated them as a Latino/Hispanic student with a comparable percentage of 31.7% of the participants uncertain. A total of 42.3% of the participants reported that Rowan University offers adequate professional development student services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students with a comparable percentage of 40.6% of the participants uncertain. A total of 48.3% of the participants reported that Rowan University has supported them as a Latino/Hispanic student. A lower percentage of 29.1% of the participants were uncertain.

Conclusions

The results of this study confirm that Latino/Hispanic students identify with their culture and believe that their culture and identity as a Latino/Hispanic does influence them as a student. More importantly, Latino/Hispanic undergraduate students at Rowan

University believe that Latino/Hispanic role models/mentors are important in higher education. The study of Mateo (2010) found that the presence of Latino faculty and administrators have a positive effect on Latino/Hispanic student retention as well as helping keep Latino/Hispanic students academically motivated. Mateo implemented the Latina-Hispanic Network and the goals of the network is to connect and bridge relationships between Latina students with Latina professionals on campus, provide Latina students access to role models, engage Latina students and professionals in a conversation about higher education, increase awareness about the workforce, the value of internships, and the field of higher education, and facilitate collaboration and professional development opportunities in order to gain or further enhance leadership, organizational understanding, communication, and social skills (2010).

This study also confirmed that family and parental influence play a major role in the Latino/Hispanic student. Santiago and Brown (2004) suggested that school-family-community collaborations can be effective in improving graduation rates among Latinos. The study of Colon (2009) implemented a student-parent orientation program to involve the parent in their student's education. Furthermore, the student-parent orientation program explained to the parents the college process that many Latino/Hispanic parents just do not know about. Finally, this study also confirmed that less than half of the Latino/Hispanic undergraduate participants are satisfied with the services/programming at Rowan University while a comparable percentage of students that were undecided. It can be concluded that the comparable undecided percentages could be attributed to lack of information and/or communication. One student noted "This school may have so much to offer but students and even faculty and staff don't know where to go find it."

Participants in the qualitative part of the study did find that programs such as EOF/MAP, the Latina Hispanic Network, and United Latino Association are very helpful in their college career.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following suggestions are presented:

1. Increase more Latino/Hispanic role models/mentors at Rowan University by employing more professional faculty and staff as a form of structural support.
2. Implement more educational activities that will increase the campus knowledge of the Latino/Hispanic culture.
3. Implement a bilingual student –parent orientation program for Latino/Hispanic students to allow the parents and family become more involved in the student’s college experience. Provide the resources to Latino/Hispanic parents about how to support their children while in college.
4. Increase a more clear communication with Latino/Hispanic regarding the services/programming available for Latino/Hispanic students.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are presented:

Further research should be conducted in:

1. Becoming a more diverse University to include the needs of the minority student.

2. Understanding the root of the Latino/Hispanic student's identity for retention, such as how they identify, Latino/Hispanic role models in higher education, and the family.
3. Becoming a more student focused campus, in which the student voice is heard, while providing clear communication to students regarding programming and services offered by the institution.

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APPENDIX A

Institutional Review Board Approval Letter



December 14, 2011

Nelcy Jimenez
78 Holly Hill Terrace
Vineland, NJ 08360

Dear Nelcy Jimenez:

In accordance with the University's IRB policies and 45 CFR 46, the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to inform you that the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your project:

IRB application number: 2012-137

Project Title: Higher Education: Understanding the Identity and Retention of Latino(a) Students

In accordance with federal law, this approval is effective for **one calendar year** from the date of this letter. If your research project extends beyond that date or if you need to make significant modifications to your study, you must notify the IRB immediately. Please reference the above-cited IRB application number in any future communications with our office regarding this research.

Please retain copies of consent forms for this research for three years after completion of the research.

If, during your research, you encounter any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects, you must report this immediately to Dr. Harriet Hartman (hartman@rowan.edu or call 856-256-4500, ext. 3787) or contact Dr. Shreekanth Mandayam, Associate Provost for Research (shreek@rowan.edu or call 856-256-5150).

If you have any administrative questions, please contact Karen Heiser (heiser@rowan.edu or 856-256-5150).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Harriet Hartman".

Harriet Hartman, Ph.D.
Chair, Rowan University IRB

c: Burton Sisco, Educational Services, Administration and Higher Education, Education Hall

Office of Research
Bole Hall
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, NJ 08028-1701

856-256-5150
856-256-4425 fax

APPENDIX B

Latino(a) / Hispanic Survey

Rowan University Latino/Hispanic Student Survey

While your participation in this survey is voluntary and you are not required to answer any of the questions herein, your cooperation and participation are important to the success of the project and are greatly appreciated. If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly confidential and no personally identifiable information is being requested. Your completion of this survey constitutes informed consent and your willingness to participate. If you are younger than 18 years of age, please disregard this survey. Any questions please contact Nelcy Jimenez at 856-256-4158 or Jimenezn@rowan.edu or my advisor, Dr. Burton Sisco at 856-256-4500, ext. 3717 or sisco@rowan.edu

I. Background Information:

Gender?

- Male
- Female

Year in College?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate study

How are you funding your education?

Please check all that apply.

- Personal/Family income
- Personal/Family savings
- Other relatives or friends
- Social Security benefits
- Veteran's benefits
- Educational Grants (Pell, Private, etc.)
- Scholarships
- EOF
- Student loans
- Other loans

Ethnic Affiliation?

- White/not Hispanic
- Hispanic/Latino
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Native American
- Black
- Other _____
(please explain)

Race Affiliation?

- Puerto Rican
- Mexican
- Dominican
- Colombian
- Peruvian
- Guatemalan
- Honduran
- Ecuadorian
- Other _____
(Please explain)

Are you a first or second generation Latino Student?

- First
- Second
- Not Sure

Father's highest educational level

- High school
- Some college
- Associate
- Bachelor
- Master
- Doctorate
- Other _____

Mother's highest educational level

- High school
- Some college
- Associate
- Bachelor
- Master
- Doctorate
- Other _____

Rowan University Latino/Hispanic Student Survey

If you are Latino, do you identify with the culture?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

Do you speak Spanish fluently?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

Do you write Spanish fluently?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

Do you read Spanish fluently?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

II. Cultural Aspects:

My family has influenced me in my current situation as a student.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My culture has influenced me as a student.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

My identity has influenced me as a student.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I believe that Latino role models/ mentors are important in higher education.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Rowan University Latino/Hispanic Student Survey

III. Self Efficacy

Self efficacy is used to define a person's personal beliefs about his or her ability and capacity to accomplish tasks or life events.

I believe that self efficacy beliefs affect people's thoughts, feelings, and motivations.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

As a student, I feel in touch with the Rowan University community.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

IV. Classroom Environment:

Professors care about my success.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

The way I speak in class is chastised by some professors.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I struggle getting my ideas understood in the classroom.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

V. Services Provided:

As a Latino/Hispanic, I am satisfied with the services at Rowan University.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I feel that Rowan University offers adequate academic student services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Rowan University Latino/Hispanic Student Survey

I feel that Rowan University offers adequate social student services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I feel that Rowan University offers adequate cultural student services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I feel that Rowan University offers adequate professional development student services and activities for Latino/Hispanic students.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I feel that Rowan University has supported me as a Latino/Hispanic student.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Rowan University's programming encouraged /motivated me, as a Latino/Hispanic student, to graduate.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Which of the following do you believe Rowan University should implement to help Latino/Hispanic students?

Please check all that apply.

- Activities on Hispanic culture
- Instruction and activities on Latino Identity
- Networking
- Clubs/organizations
- Other _____
(please explain)

VI. Future Goals:

I have encountered barriers at Rowan University because of being Latino/Hispanic.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I have been afforded opportunities at Rowan University because of being Latino/Hispanic.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Rowan University Latino/Hispanic Student Survey

I feel that Rowan University cares about the success of Latino/Hispanic students?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Reasons for continuing your education.

Please check all that apply.

- To earn a degree
- For personal Satisfaction/Fulfillment
- To improve job skills
- To learn or improve my occupational job skills
- Self-improvement
- Other _____
(Please explain)

APPENDIX C

Consent Letter

Rowan University Latino/Hispanic Letter of Consent Form

I agree to participate in a study entitled: Higher Education: Understanding the Identity and Retention of Latino(a) Students,” which is being conducted by Nelcy Y. Jimenez, a M.A. Higher Education Administration student at Rowan University.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the attitudes of Latino/Hispanic students in reference to how they identify as Latino students, the importance of Latino/Hispanic role models/mentors, and the services and programming offered at Rowan to help Latino/Hispanic students graduate college. The data collected in this study will be compared to previous studies and will be submitted publication in my research study.

I understand that I will be required to attempt to solve a logic problem, and I will be assigned to work either individually or as a group. My participation in the study should not exceed one hour.

I understand that my responses will be anonymous and that all the data gathered will be confidential. I agree that any information obtained from this study may be used in any way thought best for publication or education provided that I am in no way identified and my name is not used.

I understand that there are no physical or psychological risks involved in this study, and that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without penalty.

I understand that my participation does not imply employment with the state of New Jersey, Rowan University, the principal investigator, or any other project facilitator.

If I have any questions or problems concerning my participation in this study, I may contact Nelcy Jimenez at (856) 256-4158 or her faculty advisor, Dr. Burton Sisco, sisco@rowan.edu.

(Signature of Participant)

Date

(Signature of Investigator)

Date

APPENDIX D

Latino(a) / Hispanic Interview Questions

Rowan University Current Latino/Hispanic Student Interview Questions

1. How do you identify as Latino?
2. How has your family and cultural identity influenced your current situation as a student?
3. Self efficacy is used to define a person's personal beliefs about his or her ability and capacity to accomplish tasks or life events. Albert Bandura (1994), a professor and psychologist believed that self efficacy beliefs affect people's thoughts, feelings, and motivations. Based on this explanation, in what ways does this apply or not apply to you?
4. Bandura also argued that there are sources that influence efficacy – one in particular, is modeling-seeing the experiences of others similar to oneself succeed can raise one's beliefs that he or she has the capacity to accomplish a task to be successful. With that said, do you believe Latina/o/Hispanic role models are important? Why or why not?
5. As a student what made you choose to attend college?
6. How would you describe your experience as a Latino (a) at the institution?
7. What would be possible improvements for future Latino(a)/Hispanic students to ease their transition to college and enrich their goals?
8. What opportunities have you been afforded while at the institution?
9. What barriers have you encountered?
10. How can this institution help you graduate college?
11. What influences/mentors/groups/clubs have encouraged or motivated you to continue on your college journey?