

AN APPLIED RESEARCH STUDY
ON LATINOS' LOW COLLEGE GRADUATION RATES:
THEORIES AND FINDINGS

BY

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An Applied Research Study
Presented to the
Faculty of the Department of Public Policy and Administration

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, BAKERSFIELD
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

June 2014

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2014

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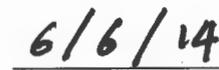
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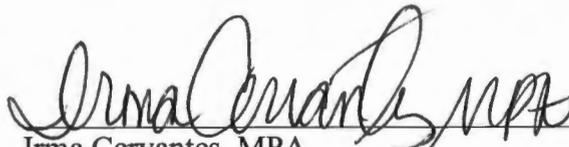
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family for helping me through this time in my life, for teaching me the value of hard work, dedication, and inspiring me to follow my dreams. Without their support, guidance, and encouragement, I would have never been able to achieve this accomplishment. I would also like to thank my mentor, Irma Cervantes Lancaster, for offering me her guidance and words of encouragement throughout the process.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. Jinping Sun, Dr. Tomás Martínez, Dr. R. Steven Daniels, and Dr. Chandra Commuri for all their hard work, dedication, and guidance over the last two years. Without their support, thoughtful encouragement, and feedback, this project would have never been possible!

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Abstract

The purpose of this research study is to examine the factors behind the low rates among Latinos in postsecondary education in California in comparison to other ethnic groups. Some of the findings indicate that this gap exists because of problems with higher education institutions in the state and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), lack of support systems for Latino college students in postsecondary education, and Latinos' unique educational barriers. In addition, the findings imply that Latino students in California come from a modest socioeconomic background; their parents tend to be less educated in comparison to non-Latinos; and they fall behind their counterparts on tests and college preparedness. The following recommendations were developed to improve Latino students' college graduation rates: a top ten percent plan, socioeconomic status or class based admissions, early academic outreach programs, and improving K-12 and postsecondary coordination.

All of us in the academy and in the culture as a whole are called to renew our minds if we are to transform educational institutions—and society—so that the way we live, teach, and work can reflect our joy in cultural diversity, our passion for justice, and our love of freedom.

- Bell Hooks (U.S. educator and writer, 1952-)

Chapter 1

Introduction: Purpose and Significance of Study

Background of the Problem

On April 26, 1960, Governor Edmund G. (Pat) Brown signed the Donahue Act into law, which in essence became the California Master Plan for Higher Education. It was the first of its type in the United States and the world. It represents a commitment from the state to offer its high school graduates or any person who wished to follow a higher education a place to continue their education, if they were qualified.

- The Master Plan formed a system that combined quality with broad access for students
- It reformed a group of competing colleges and universities into a coherent system
- It established a broad framework for higher education, which encouraged each segment to concentrate on creating excellence within its own particular sets of responsibilities.
- It recognized the role of independent colleges and other universities, transforming the future of higher education in California making it a single continuum of educational opportunity (California Master Plan, 1960).

Admission Pools and Access

- University of California was originally set to only accept the top one-eighth or about 12.5% of the high school graduating class.
- California State University was to select from the top one third or 33.3% of the graduating class.

- California Community Colleges were set to accept any student capable of benefiting from their curriculum.

Since the adoption of the original Master Plan, subsequent policy has been introduced, allowing all California residents in the top one-eighth or top one-third of the statewide high school graduating class who apply to be offered a place in either the UC or CSU system.

The State code affirms this commitment:

The University of California and the California State University are expected to plan that adequate spaces are available to accommodate all California resident students who are eligible and likely to apply to attend an appropriate place within the system. The State of California likewise reaffirms its historic commitment to ensure that resources are provided to make this expansion possible, and shall commit resources to ensure that [eligible] students ... are accommodated in a place within the system. (University of California, 2009)

The 1960 California Master Plan for Higher Education promised a model for the rest of the nation. It enables every student who wishes to follow his or her dreams of higher education to pursue such dreams at a public college or university. By 2005, California delivered its last and most modern campus UC Merced located in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. Located near Yosemite National Park, UC Merced expands the access to the UC system for underserved students located in the Central Valley.

For the last 54 years, the Master Plan has shaped higher education at every level in the Golden State. This same Master Plan has been credited with the state's success in higher education. However, many doubt this vision could work for California's higher education system in the future without addressing its weakness first. For instance, the Plan's main focus is the

division between the higher education systems, but not in educational needs of Californians. The higher educational needs of Californian over the last five decades have changed drastically and the Plan has not changed with the 21st century. Instead of focusing on specific approaches to increase educational levels, policy over the last decades has been consumed with other issues:

- The unraveling of affirmative action at the University of California System in the late 1990's.
- A series of fee increases beginning in 2003.
- University of California and California State University controversies related to executive pay.
- Budget crisis at both the University of California and California State University system (Burdman, 2009).

Nancy Shullock, Director of the Sacramento State University Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy, stated the following about the Master Plan:

“In 1960, our public colleges and universities served a small and homogeneous portion of the young adult population. Today’s public colleges and universities must serve a large and diverse population of students whose demographic characteristics and attendance patterns are profoundly different than in 1960” (Burdman, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

According to Census Bureau, Latinos have made the biggest gains in college enrollment to both two and four year colleges. From the beginning of 1996 to 2012, the number of Latinos enrolling in college tripled or increased by 240%. In 2012 alone, for the first time Latino college enrollment among 18 to 24 year-old high school graduates surpassed that of non-Latinos, 49% to 47 respectively (Krogstad & Fry, 2014).

Table I: The Higher Education Pipeline By Race				
High School Graduates, 2011-2012 School year				
Whites	Latinos	Blacks	Asian	Other
59%	18%	16%	6%	1%
Enrolled in College, 2012 (18 to 24 yr-olds)				
58%	19%	14%	7%	2%
With Bachelor Degrees or Higher, 2012 (25 to 29 yr-olds)				
69%	9%	9%	11%	2%

(Krogstad & Fry, 2014).

While Table I demonstrates the share of Latinos graduating from high schools has increased and their immediate enrollment in college is on the rise, the number of Latino students earning a college degree is still low. In 2012, Latinos accounted for only 9% of young adults (ages 25 to 29) with a bachelor’s degree in California (Krogstad & Fry, 2014). In their analysis of Latinos in higher education, Cuddington and Lopez (2013) found that nationwide, only 13% of Latino adults have a bachelor’s degree at the time of the study. In California, which has over 27% of the U.S Latino population, only one in ten or about 10.7% of Latinos actually complete college. Even for Texas, which has the second largest Latino population, the percentage of Latinos graduating from college is just over 12%.

This research intends to examine the factors behind the low rates among Latinos in postsecondary education in California in comparison to other ethnic groups. Once the research arrives to a significant conclusion, then recommendations will be provided.

Methodology

This study will gather information from Internet research, online newspapers, several textbooks, and other scholarly articles and academic sources to analyze the main factors behind the low college graduation rates among Latinos in higher education. For the purpose of this research project California State University, Bakersfield Library's electronic databases will be used. I will then use some of the research databases available to the researcher such as, *Academic Search Premier*, *LexisNexis Academic Search*, and *ProQuest Databases*. The *keywords* that the researcher will use on those databases and for this project will be the following:

“Latino/Hispanic low graduation rates”, “Latino/Hispanic academic achievement,” and “Hispanic-Americans Academic achievement.” In addition, an extensive review of the available literature will be necessary until the information becomes repetitive.

Importance of the Study

In March 2014, Latinos became the majority demographic in California. The Golden State is the second state to undergo such a shift after New Mexico. However, in higher education they are well underrepresented. Latinos might be the largest and fastest growing segment of the U.S population, but they also have the lowest rates of college completion (Gutierrez, 2014).

As some critics have suggested, the educational attainment for Latinos in California raises questions about equity and fairness in American society. However, on an economic level, it raises concerns about the future and the strength of the state's economy and workforce. For a more prosperous State, California needs more Latino students in higher education completing their academic goals and achieving college degrees and credentials.

The success of Latinos in higher education will not only make their lives better, it will ensure a strong workforce and prosperous economy for the Golden State. Comparable to any

other segment of college graduates, when Latinos attend higher education and complete a degree, its home state wins. For instance, for every one dollar California invests in students who completes college, the state receives \$4.80 back. The investment alone promises great gains for the state's economy. The return is combinations of taxes on increase earnings and a decrease in state expenditure on social services and incarceration (Community College League of California, 2014).

The Role of the Government in Higher Education

The role of higher education as an institution began with the settlement of American colonies during the 17th Century. From earlier on higher education played an important role in defining and responding to great challenges. Institutions of higher education have been responsible for preparing religious and civic leaders to more challenging tasks like advancing science, medicine, and technology in the previous century. Today, the United States faces different challenges: immigration, economic transformation, continued disparities in health, education inequality, and environmental sustainability. In order to reduce costs, higher education institutions today confront pressures to privatize their operations and to restrict access. However, American higher education institutions were created on the promise that a higher education is a widespread opportunity.

This study is important for institutions of higher education because an institution's main purpose is to serve students and part of their commitment is to provide them with an education, prepare them to be trained and educated to join California's workforce. If our institutions of higher learning aren't training skilled workers to fulfill the demand of the 21st century and California as a state, then they are failing. Every institution, regardless of public or private status, is accountable for elevating the educational level of its area.

According to the UNESCO, the responsibilities of Universities and institutions of higher education are:

1. Postsecondary education is a public good and should be the responsibility of the stakeholders, especially governments.
2. These institutions have the social responsible to advance the understanding of different issues, the public understanding of multifaceted issues, which involve social, economic, scientific and cultural dimensions and the ability to respond to them. It should guide society in creating knowledge to address current challenges.
3. Higher education institutions, through their core functions (research, teaching, and community services) should increase their interdisciplinary focus and promote critical thinking and active citizenship.
4. It should provide its graduates with skills for the present and the future and the education of ethical citizens.
5. Institutions should encourage minorities and women participation and access at all levels of higher education.
6. Institutions should expand access; higher education must pursue the goals of equity relevance and quality simultaneously. Not simple access but successful participation and completion while assuring student welfare. This includes financial assistance and educational support for disadvantage students (UNESCO, 2009).

The government plays the most important role supporting and financing American institutions of higher education. It is the reason for success or failure; its role remains substantial and it's clearly what shapes American higher education. Higher education for the federal government is an investment. The federal government directs two types of activities within

higher education where it believes there is a primary federal responsibility: First, it ensures access to postsecondary education and sustains basic and applied research that is in the nation's interest. Second, the federal government provides support to areas where there is clear federal interest. The federal government gets involved in three ways: it funds, regulates federal funded activities, and mandates to the states and institutions to pursue areas of federal interests (Longanecker, 2013).

When the government invests in higher education it's investing in social responsibility, it's ensuring a future for the citizen and the nation, and it's also ensuring there will be a trained workforce of innovators. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that jobs requiring some type of postsecondary education will keep increasing in demand in the next decade. With the highest growth (or about 22%) in demand for jobs requiring a master's degree, followed by 20% for a doctoral or professional degree. Without the skilled workforce to fill these positions, the U.S will fall behind other nations, specifically in the fast-growing fields of technology and engineering. The National Academy of Science reports that in order to stay competitive, the U.S must educate more people in these critical areas and tap the talents of communities, such as women and minority students, who are historically at a disadvantage or less likely to enter these fields. The government must invest today in order to create a culture of future innovators and taxpayers; our nation's economy depends on it (Chang, 2012).

Benefits of Attending College

Recent studies show many health benefits from attending college. For instance, college educated Americans have a much better sense of personal control, self-rated health, disability, chronic conditions and mortality (Schafer, Wilkinson, & Ferraro, 2013). However, the main arguments in favor of earning a college degree in general are based on college graduates' larger

earnings over their lifetime, lower unemployment rates, better health, higher marriage, and overall greater civic involvement. These advantages are significant, even when evaluating two-year college graduates' earnings and other benefits are substantial compared to just high school graduates (Rose, 2013).

Most college students, regardless of ethnic background, pursue a baccalaureate degree because of the earnings associated with the degree. According to a recent study, a college degree can provide a graduate with earnings up to \$1 million more than just having a high school diploma (Carnevale & Rose, 2011). Employers demand for college graduates has increased in the last decades. This demonstrates that employers are valuing the skills and experience that college graduates obtain in college. In fact, Carnevale and Rose (2011) argue that if we were to increase the college students by 20 million, this would increase the nation's yearly GDP by \$500 billion and actually reduce the level of wage inequality by 40 percent.

It's not surprising that college graduates generally will cost the government less in public assistance. For example, a bachelor's degree reduces lifetime receipts of food stamps by almost \$7,100, children school lunches by more than \$2,400, public cash assistance by almost \$1,500, energy assistance by almost \$400, housing subsidies by almost \$400, housing subsidies by almost \$300, and Medicaid by more than \$23,000. The data suggests that as an individual's level of education increases, the participation in these welfare programs decreases dramatically. In 2005, a high school graduate, compared to a college graduate, is 21% more likely to receive WIC, 45% more likely to receive childcare assistance, 24% more likely to receive transportation assistance, and 30% more likely to participate in a work program in order to receive cash assistance (Trostel, 2010).

Summary

The growth in supply of college-educated workers will not keep pace with the demand for such skilled trained college graduates. Public policy clearly has a role to play in filling this gap by improving access and success of Latinos attending California's colleges and private and public universities. The Latino population in the Golden State will keep growing rapidly, but because of this groups' low level of educational attainment, they won't be able to keep up with the state's demand for high-skilled college graduates. The data suggest the importance of a higher education and the many benefits that come with such attainment. Effective reforms and investments today will improve opportunities for California's future workforce and create a brighter future for Latinos. A workforce of skilled and educated Latino population will not only help this group, but also fuel a future economic growth of the Golden State.

Chapter 2

Policies, Programs, and Theories

This chapter will first examine the impact that federal and state policies have on higher education, which are directly and/or indirectly affecting Latinos graduation rates in postsecondary education. This review will center on the following: the affirmative action, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), the DREAM Act, state percentage plans, and federal and state programs. The section part of this chapter will provide a review of the theories about students' success in college, focusing on such factors as students' characteristics, family support and their motivation to succeed academically.

Federal Policies and Programs

Affirmative Action

History of Affirmative Action

In the United States, affirmative action was adopted to overcome the effects of social discrimination. Their main goal was to allocate jobs and resources to members of specific groups, such as minorities and women (Affirmative Action, 2013). The policy was implemented by federal agencies enforcing the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and two additional executive orders, which charge the government contractors and educational institutions receiving federal funds to create such programs (Affirmative Action, 2013).

In 1980, the federal government played a much smaller role in implementing affirmative action and its programs. For example, in three cases at the end of the 1980's, the Supreme Court challenged previously approved affirmative action plans by providing greater standing to claims of reverse discrimination (Affirmative Action, 2013). In the early 1990's, California and other states banned the use of race-and-sex-based preference in state and local programs. A 2003

Supreme Court decision regarding affirmative action being implemented in university admissions allowed race to be used as a factor in admitting students as long as “it was not used in a mechanical, formulaic manner” (Affirmative action, 2013).

In a recent study that evaluated the effects of affirmative action bans in California, Florida, Texas, and Washington found that the ban *appeared* to have no effect on the enrollment of underrepresented minority students at four-year institutions. However, the ban did considerably decrease the enrollment at selective and only selective public colleges by nearly 4.3 percentage points (Garces, 2012). When studying graduate programs, Garces (2012) found that affirmative action ban has also reduced the enrollment of students of color by about 12.2% across graduate programs. In California the percentage of Latino students admitted to, and enrolling at, the University of California (UC) system and the California State University system has been extreme. It’s estimated that the percentage of Latino students admitted to UC Berkeley and UCLA has decreased from an all time high of 15 percent to 8.6 percent by 1998 (Gándara, 2005).

The ban of affirmative action in California affects the enrollment of minorities, but students across all races and ethnicities may feel deprived of the benefits of a racial and ethnically diverse learning environment (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002). Institutions of higher education in states with affirmative action bans need to reevaluate admission practices, outreach approaches, and recruitment strategies if they want to mitigate the current declines in enrollments by minorities (Garces, 2012).

Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs)

The HSIs were created in the 1980s when federal and state leaders recognized that a small set of institutions enrolled a large percentage of Latino students but had very low levels of resources to educate these students. A HSI is any institution of higher education has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent that is at least 25 percent Hispanic at the end of each award year (Vasquez, 2013). The HSI's status classifies them as institutions of capacity-building and other support (U.S Department of Education, 2011). In the school year 2011-2012, there were 356 HSI's in 16 states and Puerto Rico, representing about 11 percent of all institutions of higher education. 75 percent of all HSIs are concentrated in 3 states and Puerto Rico, with California having the most HSIs (112), followed by Texas (66), and Puerto Rico (61) (U.S Department of Education, 2011).

About half of Latino students attending higher education today enroll in a HSI In 2013, the concentration of Latino students enrolling in community colleges statewide rose to 46 percent, as compared to 27 percent of whites, 23 percent of African-Americans, and 19 percent of Asians (Malcom-Piqueux, 2013). Because only about 10 percent of Latino high school graduates attend one of the CSU's, it makes them more likely to attend one of the CSU's than non-Latino high school graduates, while less than 4 percent of Latinos attend a University of California campus in comparison to 25 percent of Asian high school graduates who are enrolled in the selective UC system (Malcom-Piqueux, 2013).

Recent research has found very specific characteristics regarding HSIs. Mulnix, Bowden, and Lopez (2002) brought attention to the “documenter disparities in institutional advancement activities that exist between HSIs and other universities around the country.” According to the U.S Department of Education (2011), the total revenues of HSIs are 42 percent less per full-time equivalent (FTE) student compared to other institutions. HSIs report spending 43 percent less on

instruction, 51 percent less on academic support functions, and 27 percent less on student services per FTE than other non-HSIs.

Studying the unique challenges facing HSIs, chancellors, chief executives, and presidents of HSIs were surveyed to discuss the most important concerns facing HSIs in the next decade. The most common responses included the lack of funds and technology, absence of diversity among faculty, student growth and diversity, the academic preparation of students entering their institutions, and high attrition rates corresponding to low graduation rates. Some of the issues exposed are common to higher education; however, the responders indicated a correlation between the unique issues they are facing and their HSI status (De Los Santos & De Los Santos, 2003).

The DREAM Act (In-state Tuition for Undocumented Students)

Demographers from the PEW Research Center estimates the number of unauthorized immigrants peaked at 12.2 million in 2007 and dropped to 11.3 million by 2009. By March 2012, 11.7 million unauthorized immigrants were living in the United States, a number that stayed constant from the end of 2009 (Pew Research Center, 2013). With the increase in immigrant population and the number of Latinos wanting to advance their education, both federal and state policymakers are currently taking a second look at old policies related to granting in-state tuition to undocumented students (Crisp & Nora, 2010). According to the National Conference of State Legislature, 12 states already offered in-state tuition to undocumented immigrant students while six states had passed laws preventing undocumented immigrant students from receiving in-state tuition at public colleges and universities (Crisp & Nora, 2010).

Section 1623 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996 prohibits states from “providing postsecondary education benefit to an alien

not lawfully present unless any citizen or national of the United States is eligible for such a benefit (in no less an amount, duration, and scope) without regard to whether the citizen or national is such a resident eligible for such a benefit” (Olivas, 2004).

A piece of legislation that has changed the amount of funds available to undocumented college students is the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act was created to provide undocumented students with equal educational rights as well as protecting their human rights by providing a legal pathway to citizenship (Kim, 2013). Under the DREAM Act, undocumented students would obtain *legal* status via a two-stage process. The first step is to obtain legal permanent resident (LPR) status by meeting the following two requirements: the applicant must have entered the U.S at or before age 16 and have been in the U.S for at least 5 consecutive years, and the applicant has a high school diploma or a GED or has been admitted to an higher education institution in the U.S.

The conditional LPR status is granted for 6 years, if the student doesn't commit a crime and it's not believed to be a security risk. The student may work, attend school, and engage in normal activities like any other legal U.S resident (Kim, 2013). The goal of the undocumented student is to obtain the full-fledged LPR status by maintaining good moral character and meeting at least one of the three requirements. The requirements for this specific LPR status are attainment of a degree from a 2-year college or vocational school; or a completion of at least two years in a bachelor's or higher degree program; or joined the U.S armed forces for at least two years. If the eligible undocumented student fails to complete educational or military requirements during this two-stage process, they would lose status under the DREAM Act (Kim, 2013).

The potential benefits that the DREAM Act could provide to every state include increase in tax revenues, reduction in social costs related to school dropouts, provision of humanitarian relief, recruitment of military personnel, and enrichment of cultural diversity. The opponents of the DREAM Act argue that these are undocumented immigrants that entered the U.S illegally, therefore they and their families should be deported because they are still breaking the laws (Sessions, 2010). In addition, they argue that is unjust to spend taxpayers' money to subsidize the college tuition of undocumented students by granting them in-state tuition rates (Kim, 2013).

On June 25, 2011, Governor Jerry Brown signed California's Dream ACT AB130. The California Dreams Act, which is an amnesty program for undocumented students, allows the students to take advantage of private financial aid. AB130 allows students to apply for grants and scholarships funded from private sources such as gifts to the university system their attending or endowments (California Dream Act of 2011, 2011). Jerry Brown, a long supporter of the DREAM Act, signed the second part of the bill on October 8th 2011. He stated, "Signing Dream Act, is another piece of investment in people, because people are what drives the culture, the economy the state and our country" (Stepman, 2011). Nine other states have joining California's Dream Act decision and have enacted their own legislation permitting undocumented students to pay in-state rates. A few of them have passed their own Dream Acts, offering state aid to undocumented immigrants (Wood, 2011).

State Percentage Plans

To lessen the impact of the states' policy that used race as criteria in admissions, certain states have implemented percent plans when admitting college students to their universities. Percent plans guarantee admissions to state universities or the state university system for the top

percentage of high school graduates (Sandham, 1999). For example, House Bill 1678 in Texas mandates that the top 10 percent of high school graduates be admitted to the public university of the student's selection. In the state of California, there is only a guaranteed admission to the top 4 percent. Such guaranteed admission is only to a university in the University of California system, not any university of the student's choosing (Crisp & Nora, 2010).

A group of U.S. House members argue that percentage plans “impermissibly rely on segregated schools to produce racial diversity in colleges” and “that percentage plans, by relying on a single criteria – class rank – operate much like quotas because they are concerned primarily with amassing a group of students without regard to each student as an individual” (Mary Beth, n.d). The Center for Equal Opportunity, a conservative non-profit group, opposes to percentage plans and argues that racial diversity should be irrelevant in college admissions. The Center also claims that percentage plans may be unconstitutional because the percentage plan has the same previous objective that affirmative action had: to admit more minority students (Mary Beth, n.d).

Recent reports indicate that percent plans or race-neutral policies are not being as effective as suggested. Percent plans are actually less effective than race-conscious policies in promoting student diversity (Crisp & Nora, 2010). Other research has proved that the goal of state percent plans is failing or has very little effect on increasing the ethnic diversity of the student body (Horn & Flores, 2003). In California the impact on students is minimal, because admission is only guaranteed into the state system (Crisp & Nora, 2010).

Federal and State Programs

Federal Initiatives

The main federal programs in effect today to support postsecondary education in the United States are sponsored by the Higher Education Act (HEA). From the federal programs authorized by the act, the one that serves Latinos directly is the Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) Program. HSIs were created in the early 1980's and provide grants to institutions that serve high percentage of Latino students (U.S Department of Education, 2011). It's an excellent program to target Latino students, since about half of all Latino students are enrolled in HSIs (Crisp & Nora, 2010).

Another federal program authorized by HEA is the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP) and TRIO that includes Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services. Another program that HEA sponsors is Pell Grants, special programs for migrant families, federal supplemental educational opportunity grants (SEOG), Federal Family Educational Loan Programs (PLUS), loan forgiveness for teachers, and child-care providers, unsubsidized loans, direct loans, College Work Study, and Perkins loans (Crisp & Nora, 2010).

State Initiatives

There are a number of very successful programs at the state level that provide access to minorities to a postsecondary education in California. GEAR-UP was modeled after a group of successful programs around the country. GEAR-UP at the state level is sponsored by the California Education Round Table at the Governor's request, and is administered by the University of California System (California Gear Up, 2014). The main goal of the California GEAR UP program is *“Develop and sustain the organizational capacity of middle schools to prepare ALL students for high school and higher education through a statewide network of*

support for adults -- counselors, faculty, school leaders and families -- who influence middle school students” (California Gear Up, 2014).

In response to low transfer rates among Latinos, the PUENTE Project was adopted in 1981 in California. The purpose of the PUENTE Project is to provide services to all community college students in the following areas: teaching, counseling, and mentoring (Crisp & Nora, 2010). The program’s success is in part because it partners with local community colleges and the University of California system. The program has successfully partner with 56 community colleges in California and 36 high schools throughout the state. The Project affirms Latino student’s ethnic identities and validates their unique cultural experiences through course offerings (Crisp & Nora, 2010).

Summary of Federal and State Policies and Programs

The above review presents a few policies and programs influencing Latinos’ access to high education. Some of the programs that are having a positive effect on Latinos in California are the HSIs, which provide greater access to degree-granting institutions of higher education. In 2011-2012, 62 percent of the HSIs had an open admission policy, compared to 38 percent of all degree-granting institutions (U.S Department of Education, 2011). The second policy that is having an impact on Latino graduation rates is the DREAM Act, which has the potential of helping 1.5 and 2 million of undocumented students, attend college and eventually provide them with a pathway to citizenship (Kim, 2013). Another policy that is affecting the Latinos graduation rates is the ban of affirmative action. In California, the ban of affirmative action is channeling underrepresented students into community colleges as alternative pathways to 4-year postsecondary public education (Núñez, Johnelle Sparks, & Hernández, 2011). To lower the

impact of affirmative action, California adopted the percentage plans, but these plans have had the least impact on minority admission to California's postsecondary institutions (Crisp & Nora, 2010). At the state level, programs (such as GEAR-UP) designed to increase minority access and persistence have been implemented. A federal program that is specially designed to target Latinos in higher education is the HSIs and is successfully influencing over 50 percent of Latinos attending higher education today (Crisp & Nora, 2010).

Theories on Student Success in Post-Secondary Education

In addition to a variety of institutional policies and programs that have a positive impact on a student's success and college graduation, another aspect to consider is the student's characteristics, family support and their motivation to succeed academically.

Educational expectation is an important part of how well a student will transition to college and affect his social mobility in the future (Wells, Lynch, & Seifert, 2011). According to attainment researchers, a student's educational expectation serves as an effective predictor of occupational and overall status attainment in the future (Duncan & Heller, 1968). Student expectation has been established as the strongest predictor of a student's future educational attainment (Mortimer, 1996). Hossler (1999) also calls expectation a *predisposition* to higher education, a component and the first step to a successful transition from high school to postsecondary education.

Expectancy-Value Theory of Achievement Motivation

Eccles and colleagues developed a theory to clarify psychological and social factors that contribute to gender differences in education and professional decisions. Within this model, the choices to engage in tasks are based on the students' beliefs of individual competence regarding to the task and the importance he or she places on successful achievement of that specific task

(Vernadakis, Kouli, Tsitskari, Gioftsidou, & Antoniou, 2014). For example, if a college student who believes he or she is competent in calculus and/or believes sequences are interesting or potentially useful in the future, then that student is more likely to enroll in calculus.

Expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation has been used in different settings, as well as in sports. It has been applied to investigate the relationship among self-beliefs and task beliefs with activity choices and participation behaviors, and to even explore the social and psychological determinants of ability perception and task value (Vernadakis et al., 2014). According to the model, there are two major determinants that directly influence achievement in students' choice and behavior, expectancies of success and subjective task value. For instance, the sense of how well the student will do an upcoming task shows the students' beliefs about his/her ability and the possibility of success or failure (Vernadakis et al., 2014).

Eccles' theory outlines four elements of subjective task value that can encourage achievement motivation: attainment value of importance, intrinsic value or interest, utility value or usefulness of that task, and cost (Eccles, Adler, Futterman, Goff, Kaczala, Meece, et al., 1983). Attainment value is the need to do well in a specific task. Intrinsic value is the enjoyment the student gains from doing the task. Utility value or usefulness describes how a task fits into the student's future plans. Cost refers to how the choice to engage in the task (homework, class, etc.) limits access to other activities (social sites, sports etc.), assessments of how much effort will be needed to perform such activity, and its emotional cost to the student (Eccles et al., 1983).

Using Eccles' model, educational psychology researchers have define standards on how elementary and secondary school children develop competence and value beliefs and how these change over time (Vernadakis et al., 2014). When using Eccle's model with college students,

researchers have been able to predict outcomes, such as class selection and even career choices (Vernadakis et al., 2014). Other researchers have examined Eccles' model by using it within the physical activity setting. It has lead researchers to use the expectancy-value model as a framework to investigate the effectiveness of different approaches to increasing children's and young adults' physical activity levels (Vernadakis et al., 2014).

Tinto's Theory

Tinto's (1993) theory recognizes the need for minority college students to remain connected to supportive members of their home communities. The theory also identifies the positive effect of family on a pre-college student and its commitment to higher education. Previous studies tend to agree with Tinto's theory, concluding that minority students can greatly benefit from the support of families, friends, and other member of home communities (Guiffrida, 2006). Tinto's theory can be advanced by putting additional attention to the relationship between the success in college and maintaining connections to cultural heritages and traditions. Even though Tinto (1993) recognizes the need for minority students to connect with students with shared cultures (language, dress, religion, values, etc.), he also emphasizes that these cultural connections functioned primarily to integrate the student socially into college. Tinto (1993) also claims that cultural connections between students tend to occur mostly within small ethnic minority groups of college students.

Qualitative studies researching the experiences of Latinos, Navajo, and African-American college student found a correlation between students and the relationship with their home communities (Guiffrida, 2006). These results have found that college students perceived their families and members of their home communities as an essential cultural connection and nourishment that helped them deal with racism, cultural isolation and other adversities at college.

Tinto's theory suggests that there is a much larger role that cultural connections play in minority college students' persistence than just assisting them with social integration into the university (Guiffrida, 2006).

Holland's Theory

According to Holland's theory, an individual's personality guides his or her choice of career. He assumes that the individual's vocation is nothing but an expression of his or her personality. Holland's theory recognizes six personality types: the realistic individual, the investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional (Smart, Feldman, & Ethington, 2006). According to the theory, the investigative type is critical, intellectual and reserved; possess strong mathematical and scientific competencies and values academics and scientific achievements. Enterprising types tend to be confident, pleasure-seeking, and sociable. They possess strong public speaking and leadership skills and value political and economic achievements (Smart, Feldman, & Ethington, 2006).

There are three basic assumptions for Holland's theory. Each premise is related in one way or another to the three main components of the theory – individuals, environments, and congruence. The self-selection proposition assumes that the college student selects a vocation or major field of study because of the compatibility with its personality type. The socialization assumption is that the model environments need, reinforce and reward individuals for their attitudes, values, interest, and abilities according to the personality type. The congruence assumption suggests that vocational and academic stability, satisfaction, and achievement are a result of the congruence between the student and its environment (Smart, Feldman, & Ethington, 2006).

According to Smart, Feldman, and Ethington (2006), the likelihood of students increasing their initial characteristics over a 4-year period is mainly a function of whether or not they decide on an academic environment that is congruent with their dominant personality type at the time they begin their college careers. In addition, evidence supports the socialization assumption of Holland's theory on the bases that college students, regardless of their dominant personality types as freshmen, are similarly affected by the prevailing norms and values of the academic environment they choose (Smart, Feldman, & Ethington, 2006). The study also found "that educational environments were equally successful in socializing students to their distinctive set of preferred abilities and interests for students with both congruent and incongruent dominant personality types" (Smart, Feldman, & Ethington, 2006).

Summary of Theories on Student Success in Post-Secondary Education

This section has focused on the main federal and state policies affecting Latino graduation rates in California's higher education system. For instance, affirmative action policies statewide have influenced the rates of Latinos to California's Universities. Forcing unrepresented students into community colleges as an alternative pathway towards a 4-year postsecondary education (Núñez et al., 2011). Also, Eccles' Expectancy-value theory was defined and a brief explanation of how it can be applied to elementary and secondary school children.

In addition, according to Tinto's (1993) theory, which acknowledges the importance of Latino college students to remain connected to supportive members of their home communities. The theory identifies an essential relationship between Latino college student's success and the connection to their cultural heritages and traditions. Furthermore, Holland's theory goes beyond Tinto's by recognizing six personality types and how each personality type guides an individual's choice of career (Smart, Feldman, & Ethington, 2006). Additionally, these theories

can be applied to identify different patterns of student success in postsecondary education and to improve Latinos' college graduation rates in California.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the research methods used to gather data for this research project. The intention of this study is to examine the factors behind the low rates amongst Latinos in postsecondary education in California in comparison to other ethnic groups.

Method

The main objective of this study is to analyze previous research to determine the main reasons behind the low postsecondary graduation rates among Latinos in California. An extensive review of the literature allowed the researcher to identify some of the main factors affecting Latino graduation rates in the Golden State.

Data Sources

Data was collected through Internet research, newspapers, several textbooks, and other scholarly articles. For the purpose of this research project, California State University, Bakersfield Library's electronic databases were used. Some of the research databases used were *Academic Search Premier*, *LexisNexis Academic Search*, and *ProQuest Databases*. The *keywords* used at the previous databases and for this project were the following: "Latino/Hispanic low graduation rates", "Latino/Hispanic academic achievement," and "Hispanic-Americans Academic achievement."

In addition to the databases, this research utilized data from the California Department of Education, California School Boards Association, Community College League of California, Hispanic Pew Research Center, National Center for Education Studies, California Postsecondary Commission, Public Policy Institute of California, and several scholarly journals but specifically from the *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education* and the *Journal of Latinos & Education*.

Ethical Considerations

Before the commencement of this research project, an approval was requested from the Institutional Research Board (IRB) at California State University, Bakersfield. The researcher passed the IRB certification test on Blackboard and was authorized by the IRB to conduct research. This research does not involve human subjects. The IRB authorization letter can be found in the Appendix section.

Limitations of the Study

This research presents theories and valuable findings of some of the main factors affecting Latino graduation rates in California. There were specific limitations to this research study. The research was focused on Latinos in California's education system, but the available data on Latino students in California was limited because the term Latino was not adopted until 1997. According to the U.S. Census (2000), the use of the term Hispanic was very limited and somewhat inaccurate prior to 1997 and used interchangeably with Latino. Furthermore, the term was not officially adopted by every state until 1997; therefore some university data and state statistics on Hispanics or Latinos before 1989 are very limited or inaccurate. Because of California's unique demographic changes and the Latino population rapid growth, some of the research reports do not reflect the accurate demographics.

There is subsequent research needed in the different areas that affect Latino graduation and attainment in postsecondary education. Further research is needed in developing models to help understand the factors that contribute to Latino's achievement gap in California. The research was limited because to date there is little exploratory research that has experimented with these variables or tested other samples and populations. In addition, research that considers

the relationship between expectations and aspirations and the actual level of education attained is also necessary.

Despite the limitations, this study attempts to show relevant factors that affect Latino students in California's universities and colleges. It explores how all-social actors surrounding Latino college students that have a direct effect on their educational success. While the research presented in this study is about California's postsecondary institutions, many of the challenges and difficulties facing Latinos in postsecondary education around the U.S are very similar to what is faced by Latinos in California. Additional research in this area of study should take a more comprehensive approach, taking into consideration the unique challenges that Latinos in other states are facing today.

Chapter 4

Findings

Even though there has been great progress among Latinos in higher education over the last few decades, Latinos are still at a disadvantage when compared with the population at large. Latinos as an ethnic group in California are less educated than Non-Latinos (Mendoza, 2013). A recent report by the Campaign for College Opportunity (2013) found that between 2006 and 2008, the percentage of Latinos obtaining college degrees grew by 13 percent, but still behind non-Latinos. For example, the completion rate of 100 full-time Latino students in college was only 13 percent, below the 14.5 percent of non-Latinos (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2013). To meet the future demand for highly educated college graduates in the state, the rate of college completion for Latinos must increase in the next few years.

A review of the literature shows a few factors have impact on Latino's college graduation rates in comparison to non-Latino students in the Golden State. The following review suggests contributors to the persistent gap between Latinos and non-Latinos in postsecondary graduation rates, focusing on problems with higher education institutions in California and Hispanic-Serving Institutions, lack of support systems for Latino students in postsecondary education, and Latinos' unique educational barriers. By identifying the causes for low college graduation rates amongst Latinos, this research attempts to analyze the problem, propose some policy changes and make recommendations.

Higher Education Institutions in California

Today, the state of California has 112 community college campuses, 23 California State Universities and 10 University of California Campuses. Clark Kerr, one of the architects of California's 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education, coined Tidal Wave II in the early 1990's, a

metaphor referring to the state's unprepared higher education system. According to this critic, community colleges, private and public universities were not prepared for the imminent arrival of baby-boomers' children, the Latinos, and other minorities (Burdman, 2009). In an article to the *San Francisco Chronicle* a staffer with the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) accused higher education leaders of inflating the costs for their own benefit. The LAO arrived at the conclusion that enrollment would in fact increase but college participation rates, as a percentage of the population would drop. This same analysis stated that the Latino population would continue to grow at a fast pace in the Golden State, but this segment of the population would continue to attend college at lower rates (Burdman, 2009).

Equity Issues

Since the adoption of the Master Plan in 1960, the eligibility for high school graduates for UC and CSU has not changed. The top 12.5% of the public high school graduates are eligible to attend the University of California System and the top 33.3% for the CSU system. For those who attend private high schools or out of state students are subject to more rigorous standards (Johnson, 2009).

The 1989 review of the Master Plan focused on the equity issues, emphasizing on how economic and social disadvantages are linked to improvements in educational attainment. Despite the elimination of affirmative action in 1995, the CSU system has experienced an increase in the share of Latino students. In the 2006-2007 school year Latinos made up 27 percent of undergraduates at the CSU, an increase from 20 percent in early 1995. However, this increase at the CSU system doesn't reflect the increase of diversity in the state's high school graduates. In addition, in the most selective system - the UC system, Latinos are still

underrepresented (Johnson, 2009). The following table shows the difference in college attendance between Whites, Asians, and emphasizes the underrepresentation of Latinos and African Americans in both the UC and CSU systems.

Table VI: UC Eligibility rates (%)				
	2007	2003	2001	1996
All	13.4	14.4	14.2	11.1
Male	11.2	12.6	12.5	9.7
Female	15.3	16.2	15.8	12.6
White	14.6	16.2	16.9	12.7
Asian	29.4	31.4	32.7	30.0
Latino	6.9	6.5	5.5	3.8
African American	6.3	6.2	4.3	2.8
Table V: CSU Eligibility rates (%)				
All	32.7	28.8	34.1	29.6
Male	27.3	24.0	28.4	26.3
Female	37.6	33.3	39.4	32.9
White	37.1	34.3	40.0	36.3
Asian	50.9	47.5	52.4	54.4
Latino	22.5	16.0	21.6	13.4
African American	24.0	18.6	20.2	13.2

(Community College League of California, 2014).

Increases in Tuitions and Fees

As state support for education has declined over the last decade, CSU as well as UC systems have responded by raising fees and making severe budget cuts (Johnson, 2009). Budget

cuts have led to an increase in class sizes, reductions in courses being offered, some faculty furloughs, reducing services, and a significant decline in hiring new faculty. The UC system has planned to reduce the number of new freshmen admitted and enrolled by almost 5,000 over the next two years, and the CSU system is planning to reduce its enrollment by 40,000 over the same time frame (Newell, 2009).

A report released by UCLA's Civil Right Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles in 2011 surveyed students from CSU Northridge. CSU Northridge is one of California's largest and most diverse campuses (Krogstad & Fry, 2014). The students were asked how the economy and budget cuts have affected them in pursuing their college education. The following are some of the findings:

- Latino and other minority students at CSUN are struggling as tuition keeps rising.
- Class offerings shrink
- The majority of families were devastated by the economic turndown.
- The levels of unemployment and joblessness are higher in the Latino community.
- Over 53% of the students surveyed were Latinos, the most affected group by the budget cuts in the CSU system.
- The group surveyed also stated that the reduction in access to resources at their CSU would most likely affect their chances of graduating.

Some of the most shocking findings were that almost 59% of the Latino students surveyed stated that their families rely on them more for financial support than Non-Latinos. Also, 26% of both Latino and African American students' families surveyed were behind in one

or more bills. Almost 26% of the Latinos surveyed had one or more parents laid off. One third of the Latino students surveyed stated that they were unable to get the classes they needed to progress towards degree attainment (Krogstad & Fry, 2014).

The California State University (2014) reports that for undergraduates, full-time fee per academic year remains the same for the third consecutive year. However, before this, tuition and fees had increased from \$1,428 in 2001/2002 to \$5,472 in the fall of 2011. Also from 2007/2008 to 2011/2012, the CSU system increased tuition fees at an annual average of 17%, with the biggest hike in 2009 of 32%. The tuition fees had to be increased drastically since the CSU system has received declining funding from the state General fund (2014).

The following table shows a series of changes in CSU tuition and fees and reasons for the tuition increases since the beginning of the 2007 school year. For instance, a freshman attending any CSU campus paid \$2,772 in 2007, which increased to \$5,472 in 2014. The tuition increases range from 9 to 10 percent every school year and are mainly affected by the state's General Fund reductions.

Table VI: Full-time Student Tuition Fee Rates (6.1 units or more)				
Fiscal Year	Undergraduate	Teacher Credential	Grad and Post Graduate	Explanation of Rate Increase
2007/2008	\$2,772	\$3,316	\$3,414	CSU Compact funding agreement in place; 10% increase in undergraduate and graduate fees
2008/2009	\$3,048	\$3,540	\$3,756	10% increase in undergraduate and graduate fees to offset General Fund reductions
2009/2010	\$4,026	\$4,674	\$4,962	10% increase in undergraduate and graduate fees in May 2009 and 20% increase in undergraduate and graduate fees in July 2009 to offset General Fund reductions
2010/2011	\$4,440	\$5,154	\$5,472	Annualized Spring 2011 Rates - 5% increase in undergraduate and graduate fees in June 2010 and 5% increase in undergraduate and graduate fees in November 2010
2011/2012	\$5,472	\$6,348	\$6,738	10% increase in undergraduate and graduate fees enacted in November 2010 plus additional 12% increase in rates based on 2011 Final Budget General Fund reductions
2012/2013	\$5,473	\$6,348	\$6,738	9.16% increase in undergraduate and graduate fees enacted in November 2011 to offset General Fund reductions. With Proposition 30 passage in November 2012, fee rates were reset to the 2011/12 levels.
2013/2014	\$5,472	\$6,348	\$6,738	No change in fee rates.

(The California State University, 2014).

California’s Community Colleges

In California, a high percentage of students start at community colleges due to their location, affordability, and limited options. California as a state has 20 percent more part-time students than the nation as a whole in community colleges. Part-time students complete their 2-year AA degree at a much slower pace than the rest of their full-time peers (Burdman, 2009). “Latinos over-representation in community colleges has not decreased in the last ten years” O’Connor (2009). This same study shows that of those who start in a community college, only 26% Non-Latino, 15% Latinos, and 9% Blacks completed a Bachelor’s degree in 2000. In comparison to their peers who started at a four-year institution, with 73% of Non-Latino, 52% Latino, and 56% of Blacks completing their Bachelor’s (O’Connor, 2009).

The following table shows the difference in tuition fees for the 2012-2013 school years. The tuition fees jump 48% from community college to CSU and about 50% from CSU to UC.

Table VII: Undergraduate Fees for the 2012-2013 School Year		
	Resident	Nonresident
Community College	\$1,380	\$9,030
California State University	\$6,738	\$16,632
University of California	\$13,200	\$36,078

**Includes Campus-Based fees
(Community College League of California, 2014)*

The following table shows the percentage of population in California in the year 2012-2013 and how community colleges becomes the only option for financially disadvantaged Latino students seeking a degree attainment. Furthermore, the decision of where to attend is also

influenced by the cost-of-attendance, and attending a 2-year institution also affects the retention rates (Montalvo, 2013).

Table VIII: Students by Ethnicity 2012-2013 School year		
Ethnicity	California Community Colleges	California Population*
African-American	7.3%	5.8%
Native American	0.5%	1%
Asian	10.8%	12.8%
Filipino	3.1%	**
Latino	38.9%	37.6%
Pacific Islander	0.5%	0%
White	31%	40.1%
Multi-Ethnicity	3.5%	1.3%
Unknown/Nonrespondent	4.4%	--

**California population is from 2010 data*

***Filipino are included with Asians in California population Data (Community College League of California, 2014).*

While California community colleges serve many functions, many Latinos students see 2-year institutions as a fairly economic path to a 4-year university. Among the general population, 90% of those students who enroll at a community college have intentions to transfer to a four-year institution (Crisp & Nora, 2010). The majority of Latino students in California are attending 2-year institutions, but their intended goal is to successfully transfer to a 4-year university in hopes of earning a bachelor’s degree. According to the National Center for Urban Partnerships

database, 80% of Latino students who attend community colleges view these institutions as an initial step to obtaining a bachelor's degree (Crisp & Nora, 2010). However, less than 25% of Latino students who begin their educational experiences at a 2-year institution actually transfer to a 4-year institution or even graduate with a bachelor's (Crisp & Nora, 2010).

Hispanic-Serving Institutions in California

As the Latin population increases in California, so does the number of 4-year institutions serving Latino students. The U.S Department of Education has a program called Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program. This program is part of the Higher Education Act. The program provides grants to assist Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) to expand educational opportunities for, and improve the attainment of, Hispanics students in the U.S. HSIs are defined by the 1998 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA), as accredited, degree-granting institutions that have a minimum of 25% full-time equivalent enrollment of undergraduate Latino students (Garcia, 2013). These grants also enable HSIs to expand and enhance their academic offerings, program quality, and institutional stability. Institutions are considered HSIs if the institution of higher education has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent that is at least 25 percent Hispanic at the end of the award year (Vasquez, 2013).

Latino students are enrolling in higher education at record numbers. In 2011, Latinos made up 25% of 18 to 24-year-olds enrolled in a 2-year institution in the U.S. (Murphy, 2013). Garcia (2013) looked at the extent to which the percentage of Latino personnel and Latino students enrolled has an effect on Latino graduation rates. He found that the representation of Latino personnel was not significant to influence graduation rates for Latino students in this study. Furthermore, the number of Latino students enrolled on campus was irrelevant in predicting their graduation rates. Other studies of HSIs suggest that they face too many

challenges. Some of the most common challenges HIS's confronts are admitting academically at risk students and operating with limited resources to serve them (Murphy, 2013).

A recent study that examined recruitment and retention of Latino undergraduate students in public universities discovered that many factors that affect public universities and the U.S outperform others in the recruitment and retention of Latino undergraduate students (Montalvo, 2013). For instance, the study found that financial aid impacts Latino enrollment and retention at 4-year institutions. Economic variables from financial aid to the cost-of-attendance influence the Latino student's enrollment and retention. In conclusion, the study found that the availability of economic resources, social and cultural capital have the greatest impact on influencing Latino undergraduate recruitment and retention (Montalvo, 2013).

Accountability of HSIs

HSIs are changing the way they operate in the United States. The demand for accountability, rapid shift in demographics, and the decreased public funding is affecting how HSIs function (Santiago, 2012). The challenge for these institutions exists because of the need they have to serve Latino students as well as the nontraditional masses. HSIs can serve as an exemplary model of how to successfully serve Latino students in outreach, support, retention and finally completion, and improve their success by adapting and incorporating the institutional practices of other already successful HIS's around the nation.

Santiago (2012) also mentions that HSIs must incorporate appropriate and useful metrics to track their success (enrollment, retention, and completion). Furthermore, research is needed to understand institutional efforts that effectively serve Latino students beyond enrollment to degree attainment. Such research should also reassess the current definition of what a HSI is and expand the criteria necessary to demonstrate institutional intentionality in serving Latino students

beyond enrollment. The author of this study also suggests that if the institution is enrolling a high concentration of Hispanic students, it must also receive financial support as well as accountability (Santiago, 2012).

Support Systems for Latino Students in Postsecondary Education

College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP)

A 7-year study examined the impact of the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) on Latino students in the California State University system. This study included Latinos enrolled in the CSU system from 2002-2009, and was intended to examine the statistical differences in persistence, the 1st-year and cumulative grade point averages, and degree attainment (Ramirez, 2012). The study indicates that CAMP students were able to perform at a higher academic level than the other students within the CSU system. CAMP students that obtained the Pell Grant had higher graduation rates (49.1%) in comparison to other groups. This suggests that CAMP students were able to perform much better than the other groups when they had financial assistance to support them and help them achieve their academic goals (Ramirez, 2012).

Overall, CAMP creates a positive support system and learning environment for Latino students where they feel a strong sense of community. In addition, CAMP students chose to continue with their education and enroll in extra units to achieve a minor, certificate, or second bachelor's degree. Even though Latino students might enter college with disadvantaged backgrounds, they can still perform at the same overall level as any other student in the CSU system. The finding also suggests that Latino students from impoverished backgrounds tend to achieve better with financial assistance (Ramirez, 2012).

The U.S Department of Education's TRIO program

The United States Department of Education's TRIO Program is a national acclaimed Student Support Services program (SSS). The TRIO Programs are educational opportunity outreach programs with the objective of motivating and supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO is composed of six outreach and support programs targeted to serve and assist low-income, first-generation college students, and students with disabilities to successfully transition from high school to college (Olive, 2008).

Mahoney (1998) addressed the success of a TRIO Program at a California University utilized successfully for 29 years. He stated that the necessary academic advising, counseling, relationship building, and other educational components have positively impacted Latino student retention, performance, and graduation rates. Mahoney also suggests that some groups need additional attention in counseling, advising, mentoring or some form of assistance to achieve academic success (Mahoney, 1998).

On-Campus Support

A study focuses on the importance of personal support for underrepresented college students and highlights the importance of support from the campus community (Baker, 2013). The study emphasizes that although these Latino and African-American students are attending Americans top universities, it depends on these universities to retain them.

The findings of this study indicate that the most important influence and support for academic success of Latinos and African-Americans is the support they receive from Latino and African-American faculty. The academic performance and retention of Latino college students is most influenced by the positive contact they have with college faculty (Baker, 2013). The study also suggests that Latino faculty play a very important role in providing a supportive environment for Latino students. The support students obtain from the college faculty may

increase the students' connection to the college and increase their ability to navigate the college experience. Latino students' sense of belonging is experienced when the student takes a course from a Latino faculty member, because this is when the student feels the sense of belonging to the college (Baker, 2013).

Baker's (2013) study also found that there is no correlation between peer supports and how well these two groups performed academically. Latino and African-American students appear to perform the same way regardless of peer support. However, university-organized study groups can improve the chances of academic success for students that prefer to study in groups. Latino and African-American students who received tutoring from college centers were more likely to perform well and felt the support they received was valuable. For both groups in the study, peer support was not as significant as the support they received from faculty. In general this study shows a positive relationship between faculty members and how much academic influence they have on Latino and African American college students' performance. So it is important to recruit Latino and African-American faculty who affect the success of minority students (Baker, 2013).

Latinos' Unique Educational Barriers

The most recent report by the American Council on Education (ACE) found that the post-baby boom generations are less educated than their parents and grandparents, with young Hispanics falling behind the already low educational attainment level of older Hispanics. (American Council on Education, 2011). The study also states that Hispanics are unlikely to be served by the traditional educational programs and existing services because of their unique educational barrier highlighted below:

- The language barrier affects students of Hispanic descent. Seven out of ten Hispanics speak Spanish to their children at home and have less than a high school education.
- Employment concentrated in low-skill, low-wage jobs makes it difficult to bear the high cost associated with pursuing a postsecondary education.
- The legal immigration status of the parents and/or Latino students can make it a barrier for pursuing a college degree (American Council on Education, 2011).

Latinos' Language Barrier

According to a recent PEW Research center analysis, approximately 40 million people speak, think, conduct business, dream and play in Spanish. The demographic shift is especially notable in the southwestern region of the United States. In the U.S Spanish is the preferred language only next to English. The U.S is also the second country with the highest number of Spanish-speakers with Mexico being number one (Gonzalez-Barrera & Lopez, 2013).

It is not surprising that language assimilation among Latinos has such a powerful impact on both education, occupation, and in terms of social mobility. Spence, Rojas, and Straubhaar (2013) addressed whether language or ethnicity had more impact on Latinos' mobility in terms of educational achievement and occupational prestige. The researchers found that the language had much more negative impact on educational attainment and occupational achievement reflected in occupational prestige than Hispanic ethnicity. This suggests that for Latinos to achieve greater mobility in postsecondary education and in the labor force, they must acquire English relatively quicker. This research also confirms what previous studies have suggested, that is, how important speaking English is for social mobility in terms of education and occupation in the U.S (Spence, Rojas & Straubhaar, 2013).

Latinos' Socio-Economic Status

Latino college students tend to come from a low socio-economic status (SES) according to the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (2012). Latino, African-American, and Native American college students were significantly poorer than their white peers. The report shows that the expected family contribution to higher education was relatively low for Latino students (King, 1999).

Access to American higher education is increasingly becoming more of a privilege for upper-class youth, but Latinos are other minorities that are unable to compete in the college choice game (Smith, 2008). Lower income levels in Latino families affect their chances of pursuing a college education. A study that evaluated several different cultural groups with different levels of SES from 1959 to 1980 found that SES is a much better predictor of academic motivation (Young, Johnson, Hawthorne, & Pugh, 2011). Students in high socioeconomic categories felt a greater sense of internal control over success, intellectual ability, and memory in comparison to students in low SES groups (Faria, 2004).

Immigration Status

The majority of the undocumented students in the U.S were brought to the states by their parents at an early age. Sometimes they are unaware of their legal status until they apply for a driver's license or attend a college or a university. Because of their undocumented status, these students face restrictions in America. Some of these undocumented students work hard, excel academically, and are highly involved in their communities. However, under current immigration policies, these students' academic careers are over once they graduate from high school (Kim, 2013).

Even when an undocumented student wishes to pursue a college education and is admitted to a college or university, he or she might be prevented from actually pursuing his or her educational dreams. One of the reasons is because undocumented students are not able to receive federal financial aid under the Higher Education Act of 1965 and ineligible to obtain state financial aid or in-state tuition (Kim, 2012).

Once an undocumented student graduates high school, the student is limited in further educational opportunities, military service, college admission, federal and state financial aid, and employment. In addition to limited opportunities, the undocumented students' education is affected because he or she suffers from constant fear of deportation, anxiety, loneliness, depression, limited travel options, and economic difficulties. As a result of the student's legal status, he or she might suffer from psychological and educational difficulties associated with the lack of hope and uncertainty regarding his or her future. In addition, this uncertainty in undocumented students further intensifies their struggle in school (Kim, 2013).

Parent Involvement

Most research agrees that parents who are involved in their children's education increase the likelihood of their children being socially and academically successful in school (Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Van'ce, Ryalls, & Nero, C., 2010). Parents who are more involved in their children's education also increase their chances of learning. Parents can learn from other parents, teachers, and administrators about their children's education and what they can do to improve it at home. Even before attending college, parents and other family members are the most importance source for Latino college students and many times encourage academic achievement (Baker, 2013).

For example, some research suggests that when teachers initiate contact with parents, their involvement with schools increased and so did the students' academic performance (Snow, Barnes, Chandler, Goodman, & Hemphill, 1991). Specifically relevant to this study were ethnic minorities, lower income groups, and parents who were less educated tend to be less involved with their children education (Englund, Luckner, Whaley, & Egeland, 2004).

The reasons for low-involvement in their children's education tend to vary within the Latino community. Some studies propose that Latino parents tend to be less involved in their children's education because of lack of time and flexibility with their schedules (Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, Ryalls, & Nero, 2010). Other studies demonstrate that minority parents' involvement in their children's education is lower than White parents because minorities value education less (Fuligni, 2007).

There is plenty of disagreement about this topic. For instance, the belief that Latino parents do not value their children's education is prominent among researchers. Some research indicates that minorities and low-income parents are less involved in their children's education (Fuligni, 2007). Other studies propose that when the teachers are culturally different from the parents, the teachers are more likely to believe that the parents are disinterested in their children's education (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). When examining Latino parents directly, research indicates that Latino parents in the U.S value education and have high expectations for their children's academic future (Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, Ryalls, & Nero, 2010).

Motivation for Higher Education in First-Generation Latinos

The influence of family in first-generation Latino students shows that their parents who have not attended college tend to have less direct knowledge of the economic and social benefits of a postsecondary education. These parents also would prefer their children to join the labor

force immediately after graduating from high school instead of pursuing a postsecondary education (Olive, 2008). Some parents were afraid of their children attending college synonymous with their children abandoning them. This causes anxiety and may influence the first-generation student to abandon its plans to pursue a postsecondary education (Olive, 2008). Therefore, first-generation Latino students face the choice of pursuing a college degree or fulfilling their family expectations, and the decision might influence their motivation immensely. Those attending college were perceived as breaking family tradition and not following the expected path.

Olive (2008) also found that the transition from high school to college among Latino students is a complex phenomenon involving family, interpersonal, academic, and organizational factors. The process will vary from family to family, depending on their educational level, social background, and their occupational and education orientation.

Educational Expectation

Expectation plays an important role in a student's future educational attainment (Mortimer, 1996). O'Connor (2009) shows the direct effect between attending a 2 or a 4 year institution. For example, higher expectation results in a higher likelihood of attending a 4-year institution. Students with lower expectations or whose parents have lower educational expectations for them are more likely to attend community college. The study found that 69.5% of non-Latinos, 61.4% of Latinos, and 67.1 of Blacks expected to finish their Bachelor's degree, indicating Latino students and parents show lower expectations than non-Latino and Black students and parents. When such it was broken down to 4-year vs. 2-year expectations, Latino parents who expect postsecondary education for their children are more likely (42.6%) than non-Latino (25.8%) or Black (20.8%) parents to be undecided about the type of postsecondary

institution their children will attend. O'Connor (2009) also mentions that from the sample of 6th to 12th graders, Latino students were 10% below their Non-Latino or Black peers in their plans to attend a 4-year institutions (35.7% Latino, Non-Latino vs. 45.7% and 45.8%).

Latino Students' Readiness for Higher Education

As Crisp and Nora (2010) found, there is a high number of Latinos who enter higher education are academically unprepared or underprepared to engage in college level coursework. Their examination of postsecondary transcripts of students who were in postsecondary education between 1992 and 2000 indicated that 61% of students who first enrolled in a public 2-year institution completed at least one developmental course. In comparison to Non-Latinos, 21% Latino students entering community college required remedial education in two or more subjects, while 11% were required to enroll in developmental work in three or more subject areas (Crisp & Nora, 2010).

As measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, achievement for Latino students is substantially below the average (Rivera-Batiz, 2008). The achievement declines even more as the grade of the Latino student increases. Only about 10% of all Latinos that are eligible to take advanced placement high school courses actually take them. Garcia (2013) found that educators today still face the challenge of increasing graduation rates of Latino students because they continue to score lower than their peers. As the following table shows, scores among Latinos are relatively lower than most of the population.

Table IX: SAT mean scores for college-bound seniors, by race/ethnicity									
RACE	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
SAT-Critical reading									
ALL STUDENTS	508	508	503	502	502	501	501	497	496
White	528	527	527	527	528	528	528	528	527
Black	430	434	434	433	430	429	429	428	428
Latino	451	454	454	455	454	453	454	451	448

(U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. 2013).

High school education is a key for Latinos wanting to pursue a postsecondary education, but education is also a key determinant of labor market status. Latinos in the labor force tend to have higher unemployment rates as well as lower earnings than Non-Latinos. According to the 2000 Census of population, the average annual earnings of employed Latinos were about half the average earnings of the average White workers and significantly lower than the average for Black workers. The lower socioeconomic status of the Latino parents impacts their children's availability of a home (Rivera-Batiz, 2008). In addition, if the parent in a higher poverty level is less likely to enroll his/her child in a pre-school. Pre-schooling in Latino children is the lowest among any other ethnic group. Also, many Latino children have Spanish as their first language and the majority of the immigrant Latino children grew up in another country with Spanish as their mother tongue.

As a consequence of the low-income and high poverty levels among Latino families, the quality of the schooling received by their children tends to be lower than the average American student. The low income/high poverty level of the parents dictates where they reside and which

school districts their child will attend. The result is that Latino children suffer from the highest rate of segregation of all racial and ethnic groups. For instance, in a 2005 study, a total of 76% of all Latino children were enrolled in schools with 50 to 100 percent minority children, in comparison to 10% among Non-Latino and 71% among Blacks (Rivera-Batiz, 2008). Latino student's aspiration for postsecondary education comes from their parents, family, and close role models. However, they face several challenges in accessing the necessary information and obtaining support necessary to realize their college goals (Carolan-Silva & Reyes, 2013).

Summary

Latinos have surpassed the number of non-Hispanic whites residing in California and have become the state's largest ethnic population. This makes California the second state behind the state of New Mexico, where Latinos are the largest percentage of any ethnic group. Latinos in California are not just growing rapidly in *numbers*, but they're also increasing their high school graduation rates, attendance to colleges and universities. Latinos in higher education have made great progress over the last few decades.

Although the numbers of Latinos attending college has increased drastically from the early 1990's, their graduation rates compared to non-Latinos remain low.

This section of this research project suggests just a few factors that contribute to the existing gap between Latinos and non-Latinos in postsecondary graduation rates, concentrating on issues with higher education institutions in California and Hispanic-Serving Institutions, lack of support systems for Latino students in postsecondary education, and Latinos' unique educational barriers. By recognizing the culprits behind the low college graduation rates amongst Latinos, this research will propose some policy changes and make recommendations in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Based on the previous literature review, the researcher was able to determine several factors impacting Latinos' low college graduation rates in California. Some of the findings indicate that this gap exists because of problems with higher education institutions in the state and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), lack of support systems for Latino college students in postsecondary education, and Latinos' unique educational barriers.

Conclusions

The findings imply that Latino college students in California come from a modest socioeconomic background, their parents are less educated, and fall behind their counterparts on tests and college preparedness. In addition, federal programs such as HSIs are closing the gap in enrollment by serving large numbers of underrepresented Latino students in their institutions. At the state-level, programs like PUENTE are providing services to all community college students in areas such as teaching, counseling, and mentoring (Crisp & Nora, 2010). The overall trend, however, is that Latinos tend to lag behind other non-Latino groups in terms of education. In 2000, only 10 percent of Latinos aged 25 to 29 had earned a bachelor's degree or higher compared to 34 percent of non-Latinos and 18 percent of African-Americans (Nora & Crisp, 2010). Research shows that lower income levels in Latino families affect their chances of pursuing a college education (Smith, 2008).

Furthermore, the researcher found a trend among the Latinos attending postsecondary education in California. The majority Latino students attending some type of postsecondary institutions are predominately attending community colleges. In 2013, the concentration of Latino students enrolling in community colleges statewide rose to 46 percent, as compared to 27 percent of whites, 23 percent of African-Americans, and 19 percent of Asians (Malcom-Piqueux,

2013). Some of the reasons are their location, affordability, and limited options. According to O'Connor (2009) "Latinos over-representation in community colleges has not decreased in the last ten years." This same study shows that of those Latinos who start in a community college, only 15% completed a Bachelor's degree in comparison to Latino students (73%) attending a 4-year institution in 2000 (O'Connor, 2009).

Moreover, affirmative action is also affecting the number of Latinos attending California's postsecondary institutions. For example, in the University of California system - the most selective system, Latinos are still underrepresented (Johnson, 2009). The ban of affirmative action in California affects the enrollment of Latinos, but mainly it impacts students across all races and ethnicities. It deprives the universities and its students of the luxury of an ethnically diverse learning environment (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002). The current decline in enrollments by minorities to the top universities in the state is a direct result of the ban of affirmative action in California (Garces, 2012).

Smith argues that in order to shift the current paradigm, parents of Latino students must be acknowledged for what they are already doing today. In addition, admission and outreach offices at colleges and universities must approach and recruit these demographics as a public good (Smith, 2008). Institutions of postsecondary education can manage academic motivation and attend to the needs of Latino students through academic support programs. Academic programs' main objectives are to increase student enrollment, retention, and ultimately graduation rates among Latino college students (Olive, 2008).

What academic leaders and policymakers must understand is that success is not simply a matter of gender, sex, or socioeconomic background. As Smart et al., (2006) suggest, faculty members and academic leaders must understand that student performance, and ultimate success,

should be judged in relation to the students' interests, abilities, and values that the respective academic environments seek to reinforce and reward at the time they enter the programs. For example, student success is a matter of learning, growth, and value added rather than simple performance in terms of test scores or even grades.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are developed based on the researcher's findings.

Recommendation #1: Top Ten Percent Plan

Under this plan, any student enrolled in a public or private California high school would be eligible for automatic admission to the University of California and California State University Systems, if the student is in the top 10 percent of his or her senior class. This means that the top 10 percent of each individual high school will be accepted. If it's a diverse high school, or if it's mostly black, Latino, or white high school, only 10 percent of the students will be admitted based on this program (Holley & Spencer, 1999).

Recommendation #2: Socioeconomic status or class based admission

This will allow low-income students a higher likelihood of being admitted to any public or private university. The premise being that there is a correlation between being low income and being an underrepresented minority or Latino. By admitting more low-income students, more Latinos and other underrepresented minorities will be admitted to the top universities in the state.

Recommendation #3: Early academic outreach programs

This program will provide low-income students individualized college counseling, help filling out applications, and financial aid forms, free PSAT and SAT prep, campus visits, and enrichment classes on weekends and during the summer. As Loza (2003) suggests, university

and college outreach programs exist to enable poor and minority students to add to their personal, social and cultural capital, and to cease the replication of social reproduction. Research suggests the importance of social supports such as counseling, academic enrichment, personal and cultural support, scholarship-based aid, family involvement, and mentoring be adapted and available to all students, including those from non-Hispanic as well as Hispanic backgrounds (Núñez et al., 2011). The programs will vary by institution's mission, resources available and size. It could be a challenge in the current public higher education budget, but critical to advance and improve Latinos' college completion.

Recommendation #4: Improve K-12 and postsecondary coordination

Collaboration across secondary education and facilitating the preparation of Latinos for higher education is imperative to improve their graduation rates. Forming essential partnerships between K-12, community colleges, CSU's and UC's will help provide Latino students the essential access to the academic, financial, cultural, and social capital that is necessary to making a successful transition to higher education (Núñez et al., 2011). Such partnerships can also support Latino students in finding the college that is the right fit for them. This collaboration would help Latino students transition from a community college to a 4-year university smoother.

Implications

According to the Department of Education, Latinos now make up a majority of California's public school students. Almost 50.4 percent of the state's students in the 2009-10 school year identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, up almost 2 percent from the 2008-2009 school year (Kane, 2013). Latino students will continue to enroll in postsecondary institutions, but the needs of this population require further investigation in order to improve the number of Latino students that graduate with a bachelor's degree. In addition to the previous

recommendations, research suggests that support services, family support, and faculty mentoring could help Latino students improve the chances of obtaining a postsecondary degree.

Future research should center on the type of academic support services that are helpful for Latino college students in California. Improving Latino students college graduation rates in California is a huge challenge, but with coordination between the K-12 and postsecondary education systems, and investment in support programs to ensure Latino college attendance and completion, the state can close the education gap. Eventually, improving the rates of degree attainment within Latinos will improve the state's economy. A report by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems estimates that if California closes its racial/ethnic educational attainment gap by 2020, California's personal income would increase by more than \$135 billion (Campaign for College Opportunity, 2013).

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Appendix



CSU Bakersfield

Academic Affairs

Office of the Grants, Research, and Sponsored Programs (GRaSP)

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Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research

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Scientific Concerns
- Roseanna McCleary, Ph.D.
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Teacher Education
Nonscientific/Humanistic Concerns
- Steve Suter, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology
Research Ethics Review Coordinator
and IRB/HSR Secretary

Date: 19 May 2014
To: Rafael J. Calderon, PPA Student
cc: Jinping Sun, Department of Public Policy & Administration
 Paul Newberry, IRB Chair
From: Steve Suter, Research Ethics Review Coordinator
Subject: Protocol 14-52: Not Human Subjects Research

Thank you for bringing your protocol, "Latino's Low College Graduation Rates: Theories and Findings", to the attention of the IRB/HSR. On the form, "Is My Project Human Subjects Research?", received on May 19th, 2014, you indicated the following:

I want to interview, survey, systematically observe, or collect other data from human subjects, for example, students in the educational setting. **NO**

I want to access data about specific persons that have already been collected by others [such as test scores or demographic information]. Those data can be linked to specific persons [regardless of whether I will link data and persons in my research or reveal anyone's identities]. **NO**

Given this, your proposed project will not constitute human subjects research. Therefore, it does not fall within the purview of the CSUB IRB/HSR. Good luck with your project.

If you have any questions, or there are any changes that might bring these activities within the purview of the IRB/HSR, please notify me immediately at 654-2373. Thank you.

Steve Suter, University Research Ethics Review Coordinator