The Mentoring of Latino/a Students

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Outline

- Review of research
- UConn enrollment statistics
- Origins of METAS & structure
- The numbers
- Sample activities
- Findings
- Lessons learned and future directions
- Discussion
Latinos in HED

- In the educational pipeline Latinos do not perform as well as most other students (Pew Center, 2002 & 2005).
- Only 12.4% of Latinos compared to 28% of the U.S. population hold Bachelor’s degrees or more (U.S. Census Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2006).
- 6-year graduation rates for Latinos is 41%, compared to 56% for Whites (Solorzano et al, 2005).
Mentoring and HED

• Mentoring positively influences students’ career choices, perseverance, and achievement (Brown, David, & McClendon, 1999; Ferrari, 2004; Packard, 2003).
• McLean (2004) found that peer mentoring advances interpersonal skills.
• Good & Halpin (2000) found measurable academic and interpersonal growth on African American peer mentors.
• Research among Latinos has found that having a mentor was related to a more positive outlook of the university environment (Bordes & Arredondo, 2005) and higher rates of degree attainment (Nora, 2003).
UConn Undergrad Stats - Storrs

• Total Enrollment
  - 16,036

• Retention Rates
  - 1 yr
    • 93%
  - 6 yr
    • 74%

• Latino enrollment
  - 775, 4.8%

• Latino retention Rates
  - 1 year
    • 91%
  - 6 year
    • 66%

What’s happening on your campus?
Origins of METAS
(Mentoring, Educating, & Training for Academic Success)

- Preliminary research (national & institutional)
- Assemble a planning team/advisory board
- Identify an anchor/host
- Determine the scope, mission & goals
- Delivery options & design
- Evaluation procedures
Program Structure

**Mentor Requirements**
- 1 year commitment
- Leadership development
  - Training sessions
  - 3-credit course (Latinos & Leadership)
  - Conferences
  - Meetings & workshops
- Social and cultural events
- Trips
- Evaluation

**Mentee Requirements**
- 1 year commitment
- Meet with mentor as scheduled or needed
- Evaluation
- Educational workshops

**Mentee Optional**
- Social & cultural events
- Trips
The Numbers

• 2005-2006 cohort
  – 49 students
    • 15 mentors
    • 34 mentees

• 2006-2007 cohort
  – 68 students
    • 19 mentors
    • 49 mentees

• 2007-08 cohort
  – 93 students
    • 34 mentors
    • 59 mentees
The Numbers - cont.

• Nationalities represented:
• Majority of majors are in science, engineering, business & undecided
• 1st year retention
  - 2005-2006 mentees
    • 97%
  - 2006-2007 mentees
    • 98%
Leadership Activities

Recognition Banquet

Conferences
Educational Activities

Guest Lectures & Student Workshops/Presentations

1-0n-1 Meetings
Cultural Activities

House on Mango Street
Theater Trip

Día de los Muertos
Social Activities

Welcome Event & BBQ

Homecoming “Lip sync”
Data Collection

- 34 mentors, 24 females & 10 males
- Undergrad, Latino, sophomore-seniors
- Data
  - Journal entries (class)
  - Focus groups (volunteer)
  - Individual interviews (volunteer)
  - Class discussions (class)
Sample questions asked...

• Why did you join METAS?
• What does the Program mean to you?
• What have you learned, if anything?
• What are the strengths and weaknesses?
• What would you change about the program?
What we found...
Academic Growth

- Learning about Latinos
  - “Although we are Latinos, we are all different... [This class] has taught me a lot, by opening my eyes to a world that exist outside of my own and making me aware of the broader issues that Latinos face [in the US].”

- Leadership concepts/theories
  - “I’m learning to be a good leader. For instance, I always thought that you had to have certain innate characteristics... like be well off and White... but now I know that I just have to work at it.” (Relational Leadership Model).
Academic Growth

- Problem solving & critical thinking
  • “It [METAS] enhanced my ability to solve problems... I’m not so quick to reach a solution. I’ve realized to step back and look at the problem critically and look at the pros and cons... because things aren’t always easy and clear.”

- Technological skills
  • “I definitely learn a lot from my mentees. Like my first year of being a mentor. I didn’t know what Facebook was... and all my mentees were on... so through them I learned how to use it... and how to pretty much search it and find other people in my class, numbers, emails...”

- Grades/GPA
  - 3.03 Fall 2006, 3.17 Fall 2007
Interpersonal Skills

• Increased responsibility
  - “I think being a mentor has helped me be more responsible. Having an obligation to my mentees makes me want to help them and make sure that I am there for them when they need me.”

• Time management
  - “Before midterms we had a meeting scheduled every week. And then after that it started getting harder and harder for us to do certain things together... cause he started getting involved in a lot more things... so I think the hardest thing is time management. Uh [you learn time management] through experience really. You have to make priority for what you want to do.”
Interpersonal Skills

• Inter-ethnic relationships
  - “It’s great to work with students from a different background. At my high school we were mostly Puerto Rican. I’ve learned a lot about other groups and their customs…”

• Communication/speaking skills
  - “While I hated the idea of having to design workshops, I think it’s a great strength of the program... I’m working on my speaking skills.”
Interpersonal Skills

- Networking/social interactions
  - “I really enjoy the connections with university administrators and teachers. This can help me with the future... Because I know that if I need a reference I can go and ask for one.”
  - “I wanted to help out... with all the different activities we have on campus and also with networking. I think its very important... I have lined up two of our mentees for job interviews. I think like that type of opportunity to really help out incoming freshman is important to me.”
Community Building

• Giving back to the community
  - “I wanted to provide a helping hand... I know what it’s like to enter a new environment not knowing many people or how things work. METAS provided me an opportunity to give back to my community by assisting those in need.”

• Feeling like a family
  - “I’ve made so many friends that I wouldn’t have met if I wasn’t part of it... We are like a family.”
  - “It feels like a family, the METAS family.”
Future of METAS

• Increase leadership training/development for mentors
• Increase community service component
• Introduce FYE course for mentees and mentee accountability
• Program expansion to other campuses
Open discussion...
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