

2023



COLLEGE CHANGES EVERYTHING®
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Expanding College Access and Success for Latinx Students and Their Families



The Illinois Latino College Landscape Study

July 13, 2023

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Latinos and ELs have equitable educational opportunities across the education spectrum leading to economic prosperity.



Landscape Study Questions

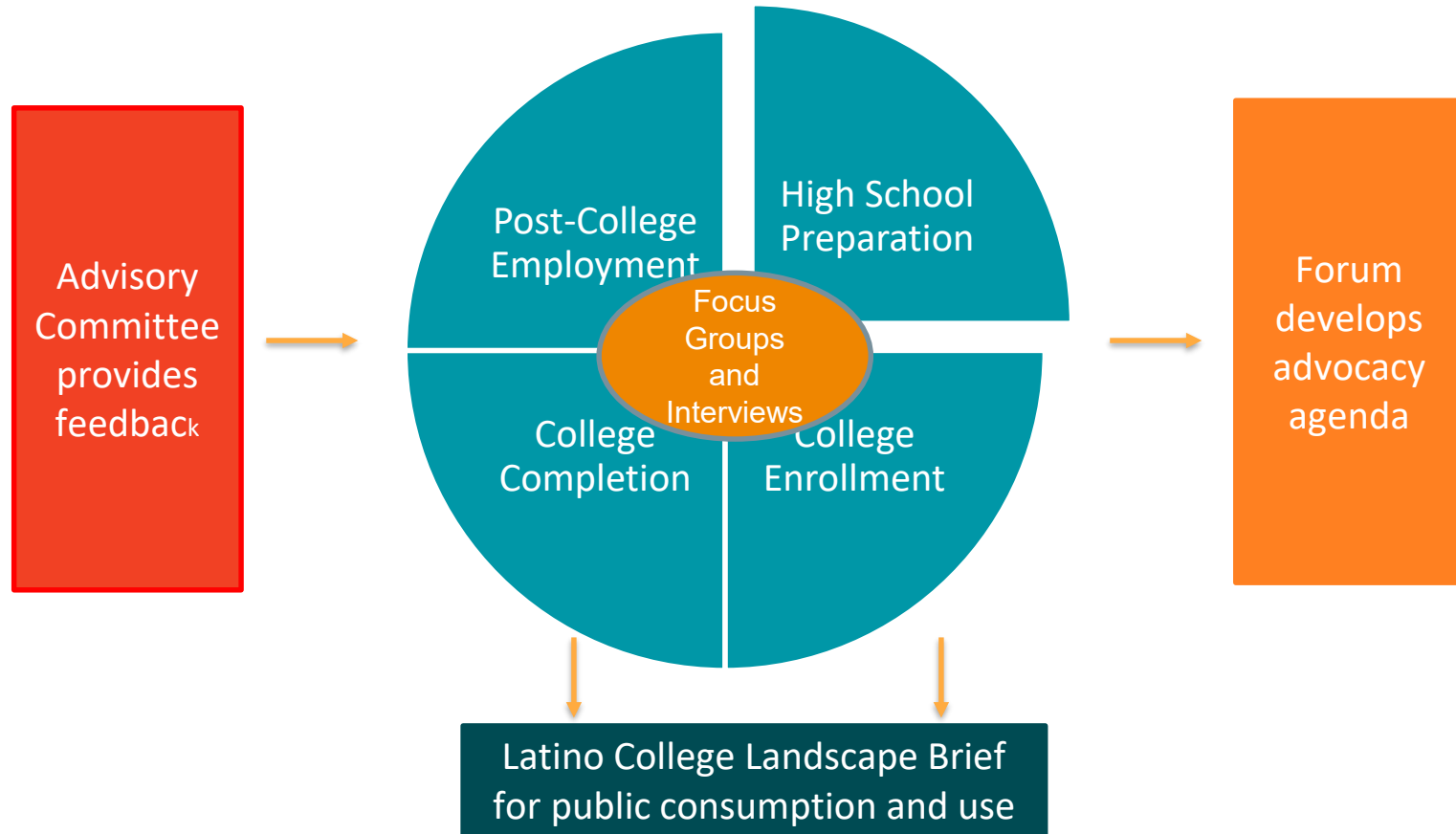
What is the status of Latinos in preparing for, enrolling in, and completing college in Illinois and nationally?

What are the barriers and opportunities for Latinos as they prepare for, access, and complete college?

What could our education system do to support Latinos' preparation for, access to, and completion of college?

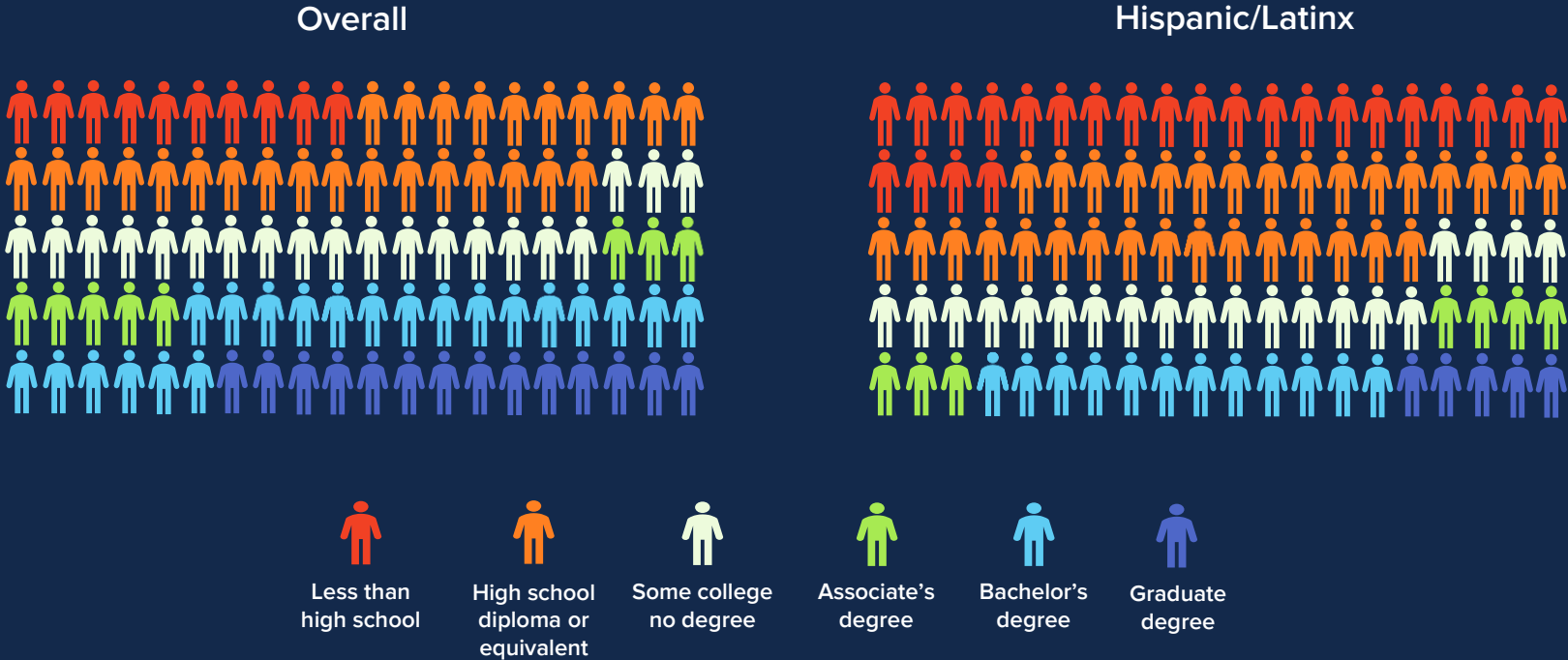
What organizations are involved in college advocacy in the state of Illinois and what are their focus areas and strategies?

Latino College Landscape Study



An Overview of the Landscape Study Findings

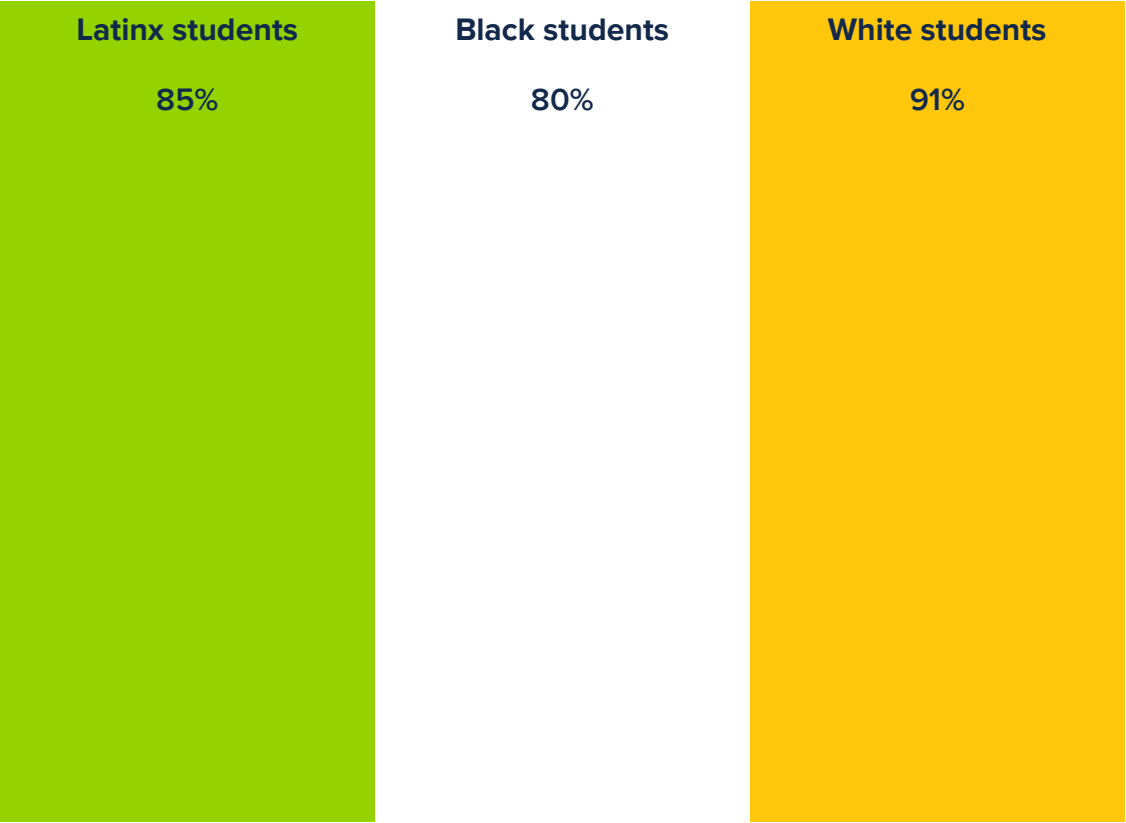
In Illinois, as nationwide, Latinx education attainment levels do not match those of the overall population.



Source: 2021, 1-yr estimates, ACS Public Use Microdata set, adjusted to exclude population <18 years old.

These attainment gaps are no accident; they are the result of disparities along the pathway to and through college at every step.

HS graduation rate (4-year)



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[illegible]

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	Latinx students	Black students	White students
HS graduation rate (4-year)	85%	80%	91%
College enrollment rate	50%	45%	66%
2-year rate	23%	12%	23%
4-year rate	26%	33%	43%

Note that Latinx students enroll in 2-year colleges at the same rate as White students...but enroll in college overall much less.

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Developmental education placement (IL public colleges)	12%	15%	5%
First-year retention rate (IL public colleges)	75%	62%	82%

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Developmental education placement (IL public colleges)	12%	15%	5%
First-year retention rate (IL public colleges)	75%	62%	82%
Community college graduation rate	25%	14%	38%
Public university graduation rate	51%	33%	68%
Private non-profit graduation rate	59%	38%	70%
For-profit college graduation rate	32%	19%	30%

There is nothing inherently better about any education level, and individual choices should always be respected and supported.

However:

Different education levels convey different economic and social benefits.

Vast differences in attainment suggest that there are systemic and structural disparities that should be addressed.

Our goal is to build a system in which all students have the same opportunity to make their individual choice.

Key Issue #1:
**Academic Preparation for
College**

Once I enrolled in college, I realized that I was ill equipped to tackle college level courses.

It felt like I was always playing catch-up.

-College graduate



In **Illinois**, there were gaps in rigorous course-taking for Hispanic students in SY2018. ISBE data show that Hispanic student participation in AP courses has risen dramatically from SY16 to SY21, with Hispanic students going from 20% to 26% of AP course-takers and from 16% to 22% of dual credit course-takers.

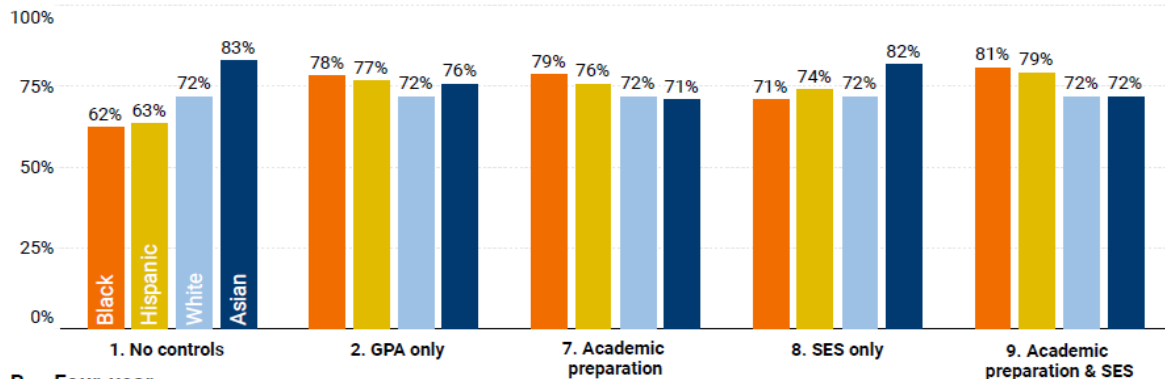
Racial/ethnic Group	% School Population	% AP course-takers	% DC course-takers
Hispanic	25.3%	23.5%	19.1%
Am Indian	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Asian	5.0%	10.6%	5.0%
Black	16.3%	9.7%	10.5%
Multiracial	3.0%	3.3%	2.8%
Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
White	50.0%	52.5%	62.4%

The Importance of preparation on college enrollment

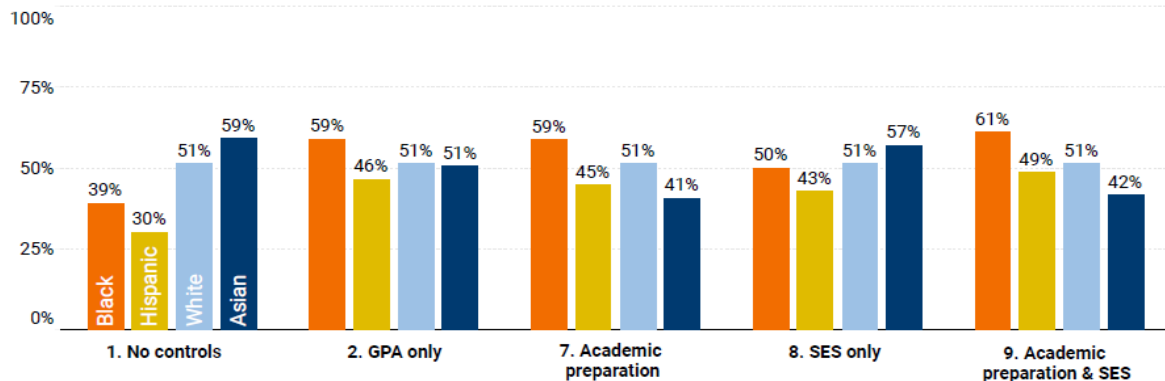
Postsecondary enrollment rate, by race/ethnicity

Percent of 2009 9th graders enrolled within 18 months of expected HS graduation

A. Any Enrollment



B. Four-year



Source: Authors' calculations based on the High School Longitudinal Survey of 2009 (HSL:09). See text and Table A4 for details.

BROOKINGS

Key Issue #2:
**High School Counseling
and Other Support for
College Enrollment**

[...] I think is crucial is the mentoring and having the conversation early. I don't think that necessarily happened early enough for me.



I had friends in high school that already knew where they were going to apply, what they needed to do, their parents already had college funds. And I just don't think that conversation particularly maybe happens early enough.

-College graduate

Teachers

Teachers of color matter for students' post-secondary enrollment:

- Having a teacher of the same racial background in high school increases likelihood of college enrollment for Black and Latinx students, especially in STEM

In Illinois:

- K-12 Hispanic enrollment has grown from 19% to 27% from 2007-2022, but the proportion of Hispanic teachers has only grown from 5% to 8%, leading to a teacher-student mismatch.
- Teachers are retained at a higher rate in HS with more Hispanic students, ranging from 89% in all schools to 91% in majority-Hispanic schools (on average).

Counselors.

For *all district types (PK-12)*, as the percentage of Hispanic or Black students in a school rises, the student-to-counselor ratio rises. It is the *opposite* for White students.

However, for only districts serving *high schools*, majority-serving Hispanic and Black schools have *lower* student-to-counselor ratios than majority-serving White schools.

Student-to-Counselor Ratio: All District Types			
	Hispanic	Black	White
All	608	608	608
25%+	653	663	588
50%+	772	788	559
75%+	1199	854	544

Student-to-Counselor Ratio: Districts Serving High Schools			
	Hispanic	Black	White
All	502	502	502
25%+	434	412	507
50%+	484	361	517
75%+	480	399	524

Key Issue #3:
Navigating College
Environments

The one thing is I had to be the person who connected with my academic advisor versus having that check in aspect.

I definitely understand that it's a college setting, you're becoming an adult, you're figuring out, you're navigating those things. But I do think that might be where some people could struggle in a class and then kind of drop off because they don't feel that support unless you actually do the reaching out yourself.

But I think it has to be on both ends in a way. And sometimes if you see your designated students struggling, you reach out because I think that's when it gets hard, and people just leave.

-College graduate



Support for college navigation

Latinx students report lack of readiness for understanding how colleges work

- E.g., transfer expectations, role of faculty and advisors/counselors, etc.
- Families often do not have this college-specific navigational capital.

Potential Solutions:

- High school-to-college collaboratives
- Orientation programs
 - *For students*
 - *For families*
- Intentional faculty, counselor, and peer connections
- More Latinx faculty and counselors

Transition Points

There are key transition points and choices that relate to college persistence:

- “Summer melt”
- Delayed enrollment after high school
- Late registration for a semester
- Financial holds (e.g.: UIC)
- Dropping out of a class
- Stopping out

Potential Solutions:

- High school-to-college partnerships
- *Monitor worries about college during summer, particularly financial concerns*
- *Encourage immediate enrollment*
- Develop college “early warning indicators” for these points
- Enlist college mentors/advisors to keep tabs on these points
- Inform students during high school counseling and college orientation programs about these critical points

Key Issue #4:
**Understanding College
Financing**

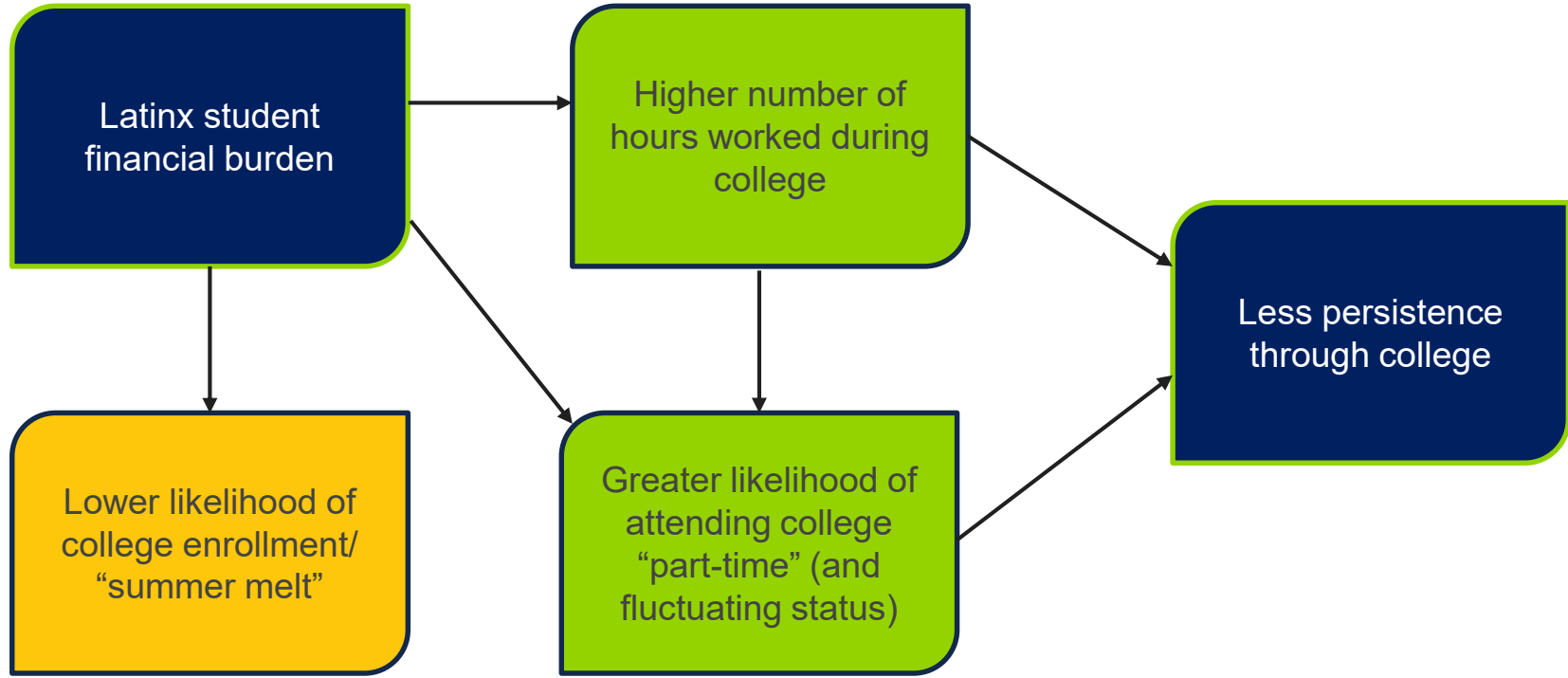
I worked almost full-time in college at a retail job to help my family financially at home.

This time could have been used to work on my own educational goals (internships, etc.)

-College graduate



Financial Issues



Based on findings from: Crisp et al. (2015); Crisp & Nora (2010); Genthe & Harrington (2022), Langenkamp & Hoyt (2019), Margarit & Kennedy (2019); Perez & Ceja (2010); Salinas Jr & Hidrowoh (2017)

**Key Issue #5:
Importance of Family
(and Community)**

As Latinos in higher education, the stakes are higher for us. It feels like we are not only doing this for ourselves, but for our families, our home countries, and our people.



Our need to succeed is great, because if we don't, it feels like we will be failing not just ourselves, but our culture.

-College graduate

Family responsibilities and expectations

- Family responsibilities/contributions (Gloria & Castellano, 2012)
 - Sibling care-taking, financial contributions, language/cultural brokering
 - Group needs prioritized over individual needs (*familismo*)
- Parent expectations about post-secondary experience (Vasquez et al., 2015)
- Whole family central to post-secondary decision making of Latinx students (Flores et al., 2021; Kiyama, 2011)

*"My mom has a hard time. She's like get As, go to school, do your BA, but she wants us to have like, like a miracle or something. 'Cause I'm like, 'Mom, it takes studying and reading and homework.' . . . I'm like it's not just gonna happen, I need to do it . . . **she wants me to get the As. She's so happy, right, but she wants me to do all this other stuff so she doesn't get it**" (Sy & Romero, 2008, p. 220).*

Family support

Latinx students report that their families provide social and emotional support.

Latino students (males) build off family expectations and support in the community college environment. At times, these students report difficulties balancing these expectations with the support.

Latinx students report that their parents often misunderstand the college workload/expectations, and college outreach to parents (particularly bilingual materials) is lacking.

Mothers are particularly significant in the college success of Latinos.

“My family is very proud of me. I mean, because I’m the first one to go off to university. Because I have other cousins. They all graduated from high school, but they just didn’t continue on. My dad’s pretty proud of me.”

-Student in Michel & Durdella (2019)

Contact Information



The Latino Policy Forum

Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro, PhD

rvnavarro@latinopolicyforum.org

Illinois Workforce and Education Research Collaborative

Meg Bates, PhD

megbates@illinois.edu

Mariana Barragán Torres, PhD

marianab@uillinois.edu

Lopez Strategic Solutions

Gudelia López, PhD

gudelia@lopezstrategicsolutions.com

2023



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Expanding College Access and Success for Latinx Students and Their Families

"Using Nuestras Experiencias to Expand College Access for Students and Their Familias"

Northeastern Illinois University

Nathalia Cardenas, Asst. Director Caminos al Éxito

Willie Correa, Asst. Director Caminos al Éxito

Ryan Trout, Director of Admissions



Metas para la Presentación

Share Caminos al Éxito (Developing HSI's grant)
and NEIU's Admission Team's "NEIU Crew",
an approach to engaging and supporting
students and their families during the
critical outreach and enrollment phases.

Agenda

- Introduction to Caminos al Éxito (developing HSI grant)
- Share Enrollment Landscape of NEIU and student supports
- NEIU Crew: Design
- NEIU Crew: Impact on NEIU
- NEIU Crew: Rebuilding Admissions



USDOE Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Cooperative Grant

Northeastern Illinois University



53% Latina/o/x and 23% Black

Wilbur Wright College



60.8% Latina/o/x and 7.5% Black

Chicago Public High Schools



58% Latina/o/x and 12% Black

Caminos al Éxito: Nuestro Compromiso

Misión

To close equity gaps connected to student success and retention during the critical phases of outreach, enrollment, transfer, and graduation.



Meta

Expand access to college by building structures that engage and support Latina/o/x students and their families through culturally responsive practices.



Éxito Staff Characteristics

Leadership

- The knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences of all team members is valued
- Bi-weekly team meeting with rotating facilitators
- Conversations for reflection and growth

Lived Experiences

- Bilingual- English/Spanish
- Represent and live in the communities we serve
- First-in-our familias



Eagle Fest, Fall 2021



Eagle Fest, Spring 2022

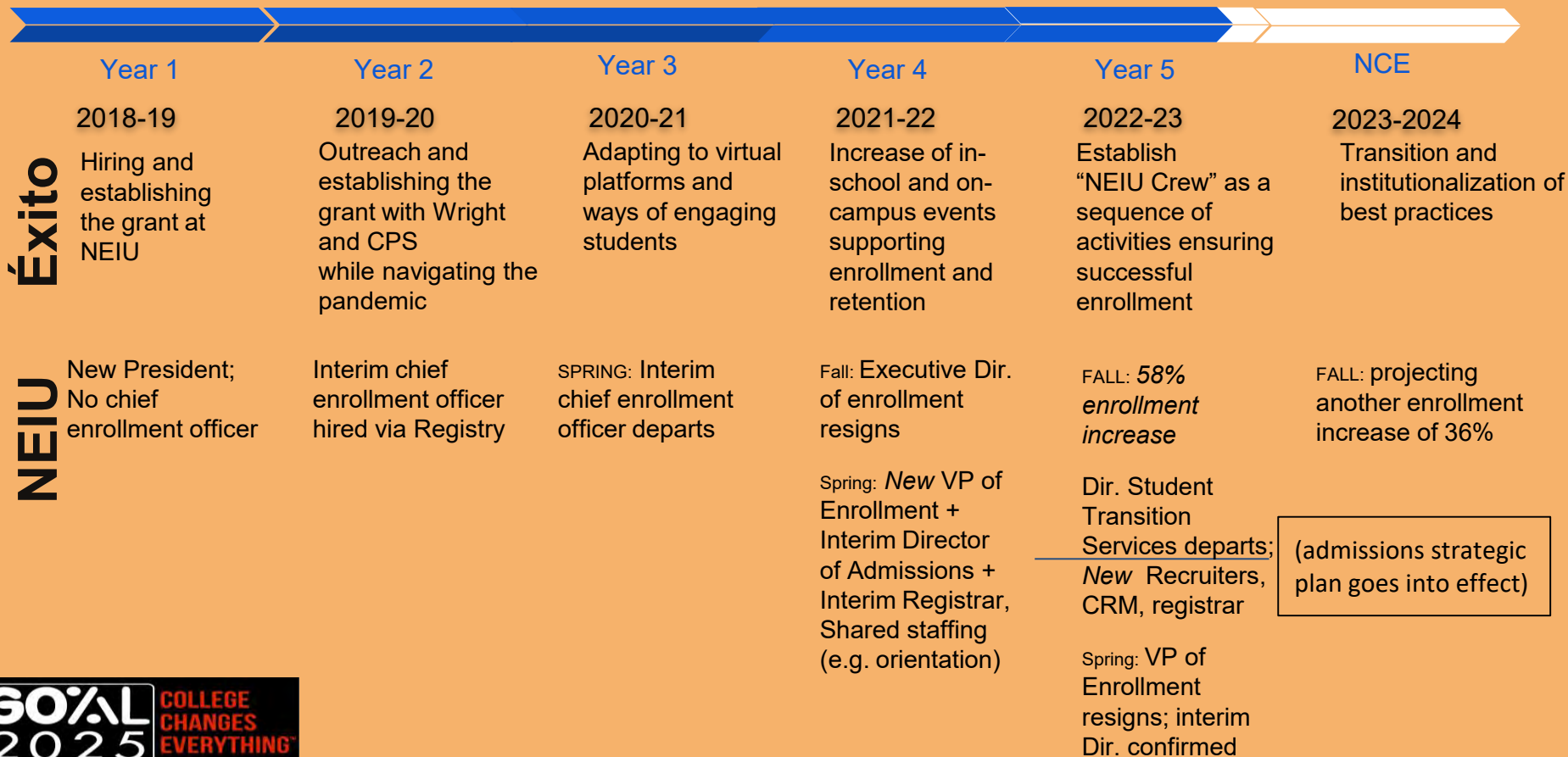


Eagle Fest, Summer 2022

Professional Experiences

- Relevant educational experiences
- Joint onboarding and capacity building for all staff
- Over 100 years of college access experience
- Awareness and familiarity with policies and practices affecting college enrollment & admissions
- All members participate in professional development
- Transfer Mentors who design, recruit, and lead activities as well as serve on panels
- Circulate scholarship focused on strengths
- Financial Wellness staff working with students and families
- Cross-team planning committees
- Paid internships

Enrollment Landscape at NEIU (2018-2023)



Éxito Enrollment Support

Beginnings

- Leveraged previous relationships to gain invitation to schools
- Staff whose lived and professional experiences represent the communities we serve
- “College -going” knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Very broad menu of services- everything from college going and FAFSA completion workshops to family meetings available in English, Spanish, and bilingual

Pandemic

- Connected to CPS specialists to offer virtual informational sessions for school staff and counselors
- Provided troubleshooting for enrollment “hiccups”
- Created videos and handouts to help navigate the process
- Co-sponsored virtual meetings with school staff for students and families

New Normal

- Bi-weekly participation in PLT at schools
- Workshop and events hosted by Bilingual staff in the language of preference
- College -going workshops in classrooms
- FAFSA support for students and families
- Summer Transition work to avoid summer melt
- Creating a welcoming campus where representation matters

Éxito Promesa

- Strengthen a culture and practice of trust and respect with each other and all our stakeholders
- Collectively embrace best practices for Latino students and their families including belonging and *confianza* (Garcia et al., 2019), validation (Rendon, 1994), and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005)
- Ensure our values and theory of practice are strengths-based and culturally responsive
- Practices are based in servingness and lead to the removal of systemic barriers in order to truly institutionalize our findings



Caminos al Éxito: NEIU Crew Mission

Misión

Establishing small groups of students can ensure a smoother and successful transition from high school to achieve their post-secondary goals at NEIU.

Meta

1. Support students with the application process to NEIU
2. Help students navigate the enrollment path to ensure there are no obstacles
3. Connecting students to strong support networks



Caminos al Éxito: NEIU Crew

- Create programs to engage and support the transition of students into college
- Create events to ensure successful enrollment that will be hosted at the school or on NEIU campuses
- The "NEIU Crew" was hosted at various grant schools during the spring 2023 semester
- Éxito created VIP cohorts of 10-20 students at each school, who completes tasks together and continue their NEIU journey together
- Regular communications and instant updates
- Shift from reactive to proactive

Outcomes:

Admissions Reps are key collaborators
100% of schools hosted a placement exam
Over 100 students completed testing
66 students attended orientation earlier

Bridging the enrollment process to NEIU



Caminos al Éxito: Familias

Services offered to Partner High Schools

- Participation in Postsecondary Leadership Team (PLTs) and Bilingual Advisory Committee (BACs) meetings
- ***Bilingual Staff, culturally responsive practices, and materials in Spanish***
- FSA ID Workshops
- FAFSA Completion & Award Letter Review
- College Readiness & Transition Workshops
- Tips & Tricks for Scholarships
- College 101
- Financial Wellness Workshops
- Familias go to College (student and family campus visits)



NEIU Crew: Rebuilding NEIU Admissions

Given #1: Caminos al Éxito was steady when NEIU admissions was turbulent.

Given #2: In 2021, more than half of NEIU's incoming class were from Caminos al Éxito schools.

1. Caminos al Éxito had established many onboarding best practices experiences that could be shared with the new admission team.
2. Admission rep and Caminos al Éxito go into the schools *together*.
3. Collaborate weekly, but large group gets together monthly for professional development.
4. Admissions has a limited amount of time to learn and standardize best practices.



NEIU Crew: Impact on the University

Best way of determining “likelihood” of enrollment and retention

PLACEMENT TESTS ARE KEY!

No app fee, no tuition deposit, ~70% attend for free
Placement Tests ARE the “skin in the game”

Completion predicts orientation participation, enrollment, and fewer early alert red flags.

First-generation students need mentoring for college prep that parents are sometimes unable to provide.

“I found that if I reached out, Northeastern was willing to go the extra mile to help me.”

~Carly, Chicago, Philosophy and History

Change in culture

The lateness of NEIU’s application and acceptance fulfillment meant most students would not consider NEIU in their initial list of college options.

Also, a lack of reciprocity with the efforts of post-secondary counselors and coaches meant NEIU had few advocates in the high schools.

We are in the midst of slowly moving from a student’s last option to their first option:

- Saying “yes” to our CPS and network partners
- Investing in the whole funnel (not just seniors)
- Updating communications
- More face-to-face in the high schools
- Earlier financial aid
- Making engaged students a PRIORITY

“NEIU wasn’t my first choice, but it was my best choice.”

~Jennifer, Hometown, IL, undecided



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Questions?

Nathalia Cardenas, M.A.

Asst. Director, Caminos al Éxito Cooperative (Title V)

Northeastern Illinois University

N. Cardenas@neiu.edu

Cell: 773.785.049

Willie Correa, M.A.

Asst. Director, Caminos al Éxito Cooperative (Title V)

Northeastern Illinois University

W-Correa@neiu.edu

Cell: 773.807.4449

Tricia Rosado, M.A.

Director, Caminos al Éxito Cooperative (Title V)

Northeastern Illinois University

T-Rosado@neiu.edu

Office: 773.442.5578

Cell: 773.297.9123

Ryan Trout

Director of Admissions

Northeastern Illinois University

R-Trout@neiu.edu

Office: 773-442-4044

Cell: 708-717-4805

Thank you!

