

How to Advocate for Michigan Latino Student Advancement by Better Promoting 4-Year Universities

IMPACTING PERCEPTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION



Prepared For :
Exclusively for
ALSAME Member
Institutions

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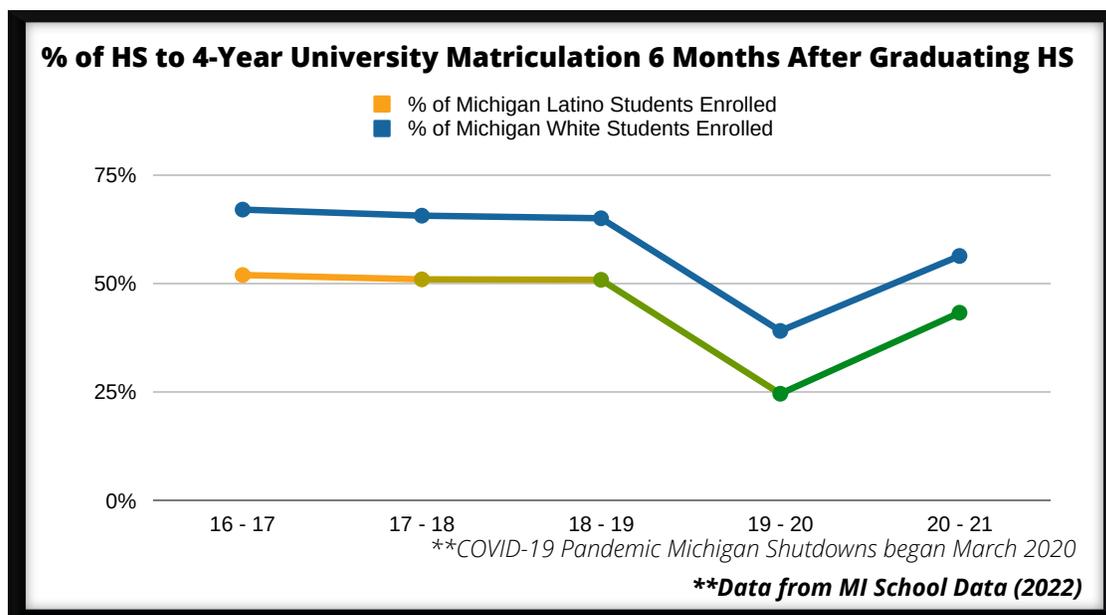
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DATA TRENDS

In the state of Michigan, taking into consideration the last five years, only an average of 44.36% of Latino students matriculate to a 4-year institution at least 6 months after graduating high school as opposed to the 58.68% of White students, the dominant racial group in the state (MI School Data, 2022). Although the college enrollment gap is incrementally closing, Michigan 4-year universities can potentially increase their Latino student enrollment (and further close the gap) by **implementing scholarly, peer-reviewed communicative outreach strategies**. Not every Latino student will want to attend a 4-year university; however, we at the very least must be able to best communicate our Higher Education opportunities with Latino students and their families. To promote Higher Education opportunities is to promote greater social mobility opportunities.



Although there are various strategies to go about impacting your Latino student college recruitment and enrollment rates, the strategies in this document can be easily implemented in your recruitment programming. The strategies herein do not require admissions policy changes; the idea is to better help you **increase the connectivity between you and your Latino students and their families**. By understanding the complexities associated with access disparities, the college decision-making process, and the perceptions Latino students have related to Higher Education, we can better impact the statewide high school to 4-year university matriculation. However, the relationships we create with these students and their families need to remain genuine, and always with the student's best intentions and desires in mind.

EXPLAINING THE DATA

Social & Educational Factors

- Up until the 1960s, federal and state laws troubled Latinos from owning homes; ultimately, this did not allow some of these folks an opportunity to generate as much generational wealth to hand off to today's Latinos (Dickerson, 2021).
- Generally speaking, Latino students typically have to deal with additional classroom challenges: larger classroom sizes, less qualified educators, low-quality curriculums (Berg, 2010).
- Some Latino students have a DACA or Undocumented status, which further complicates accessing and pursuing higher education.

Cultural & Familial Factors

- In the Latino community, "familismo" is more than a theory, it is a way of life that positions Latinos to place family over one's self (Martinez, 2013).
- Educational and Social systems are typically monolingual; Spanish and Bilingualism, then become undervalued and sometimes create barriers when accessing those systems. Thus, creating a sense of not belonging for Latino students and their families (Khan, 2020).
- When Latino students are the minority in an institution, less college-related information is obtained versus when they are the majority (Person & Rosenbaum, 2006).

Comparing Latino & White Students in Michigan

Year	# of HS Graduates	# Enrolling in a college	%
20-21	6,988	3,027	43.30%
19-20	6,870	1,691	24.60%
18-19	6,975	3,550	50.90%
17-18	6,567	3,347	51.00%
16-17	5,962	3,100	52.00%

Year	# of HS Graduates	# Enrolling in a college	%
20-21	68,431	38,605	56.40%
19-20	70,053	27,404	39.10%
18-19	70,533	45,915	65.10%
17-18	73,409	48,243	65.70%
16-17	73,228	49,120	67.10%

****Data from MI School Data (2022)**

**COVID-19 Pandemic Michigan Shutdowns began March 2020

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

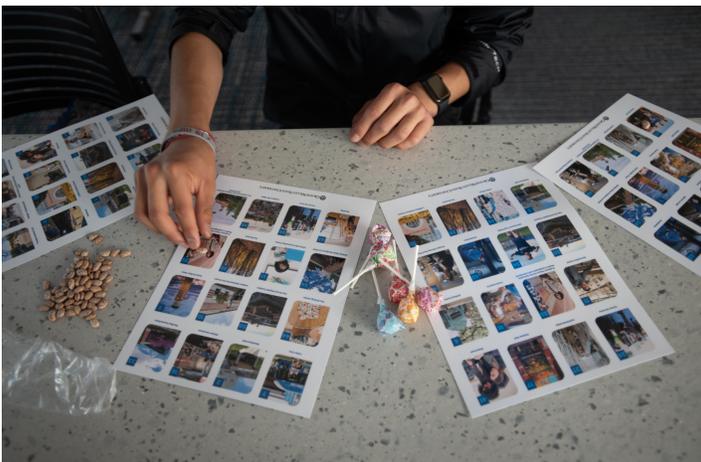
Scholarly, peer-reviewed articles, and student feedback received during the 2022 Alsame Latino Youth Conference (attended by 620 Michigan Latino students) suggest that there is an opportunity to impact perceptions of Higher Education to then better impact Michigan Latino high school student matriculation into 4-year universities. Given the Social & Educational, and Cultural & Familial factors Latino students face, you can better serve the Latino students in your networks by considering the following strategies (in no particular order). Together, as 4-year universities, we can collectively impact the Michigan Latino student 4-year college enrollment rates.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING & BUILDING COMMUNITY



- We are NOT sales representatives. Relationship building and creating community with and for Latino students is key (Khan, 2020). See students for who they are, not as numbers; have genuine relationships with these students, and create a space that values and serves them.
- "Familismo" theorizes that Latinos prioritize family over one's self (Martinez, 2013). For Latino students, family is important, and maybe the reason they are attending college (to provide for the family in the future) or chose to attend somewhere closer (to be in proximity to their family). Consider having a discussion on visiting home, Transfer plans for future enrollment, affinity groups on campus, etc.

EMBRACE THE CULTURE



- A study of 14 midwestern community colleges found that when Latino students are the minority, there is a significant information gap related to college requirements when compared to their White peers; yet, when Latinos were the majority group of an institution, they had more success obtaining the information (Person & Rosenbaum, 2006).
- Intentionality and networking surrounding Latino student programming matters. Don't be afraid to tap into the implementation of Latino music, food, and affinity groups as part of your initiatives!

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT & EARLY INTERVENTION

- A study found that Latina moms believe they and high schools each take equal responsibility in preparing their Latino students for college (Martinez et al., 2013). Thus, consider involving parents in your recruitment programming; it is important that students and parents are both in attendance and collecting college-related information together. This helps build trust and a relationship between your institution and the family (student, parents, and supporters).
- Strategic intervention needs to happen early in a student's high school years (Ward, 2006). Rather than waiting until a student's 11th grade year of high school to begin outreach and programming, consider initiatives that happen around a student's 9th & 10th grade years. In doing so, you can discuss the importance of building a strong GPA and keeping a focus on life after high school.



SPEAKING SPANISH MATTERS

- Bilingualism goes punished since educational systems were built on monolingualism, so there is a feeling of Latino students not belonging or being able to succeed in higher education (Khan, 2020).
- Not every Latino speaks Spanish, but to ensure Latino students and parents are accurately receiving college-related information, and feel like they belong, consider having informational materials translated into Spanish. It is also worth having team members and opportunities for engagements/interactions in Spanish too.



While there may be more outside of this document, these communicative strategies work to impact the perceptions of higher education shaped by familial, cultural, and educational systems and structures. It is the utmost of importance that Latino students are served to best advance themselves. While these strategies may help with your recruitment of Latino students, we must work with integrity, honesty, and empathy-- we must work to best serve students.

FAQ

Below are frequently asked questions you may have regarding this topic and the strategies discussed:

Can the strategies be used with other subpopulations?

- The scholarly, peer-reviewed research suggests that some of the strategies may be useful with other subpopulations; however, that is beyond the scope of this project. The degree to which they work with others may not be as strong.

Do I need to create specialized programs for Latino students?

- Yes, but the degree to which it is specialized is up to you and your capabilities. For example, offering admissions presentations in Spanish may not always draw up a crowd, and it may be a waste of time and resources. A better approach would be to offer one-on-one individual admissions appointments in Spanish. Alsame and other community organizations can also help with supporting and/or leading specialized programming for Latino students.

How do I connect with Latino students, and before their 11th grade year?

- Similarly, Alsame and other organizations have networks with Latino youth. Beware of information overload when working with younger audiences; consider light topics for interactions such as discussions on financial literacy, the importance of higher education, college exploration and visits, etc.

What if no one in my team speaks Spanish?

- Consider connecting with your institution's Office of Multicultural Affairs-related space and see if anyone there can collaborate with your Admissions Office. During the search and hiring process of at least 1-2 Admissions positions, consider having a preference for "Spanish-speaking". Spanish-speaking tour guides are also a great asset to have.

Do these strategies work better than changing Admissions policies? What about other strategies?

- There are lots of ways to go about impacting Michigan Latino student matriculation to 4-year universities, and although some strategies may be more impactful than others, that is also beyond the scope of this document. However, studies suggest that it is going to take a multitude of varying strategies in varying spaces and systems to truly impact Michigan Latino student college enrollment.



FAQ

Below are frequently asked questions you may have regarding this topic and the strategies discussed:



Why are you only discussing 4-year universities and not 2-year colleges?

- In Michigan, over the last 5 years, White students show a 1.55% higher matriculation rate to community colleges over their Latino peers; however, after 3 years enrolled, White students have about a 10% higher completion rate over their Latino peers. All in all, there is work to be done on both the 2-year and 4-year pathways; however, the scope of this research is focused on 4-year degree recruitment. Given that 4-year degrees are needed in higher positions of power in society (nursing, engineering, law school, teaching, accounting, etc.), and given the lack of diversity and equity in those fields, we need to advocate for Latino students to ultimately be in those spaces.

Why only discuss recruitment and not retention?

- While these strategies can also be useful in Latino student college retention work, the scope of this research is focused on recruitment and enrollment; there is scholarly, peer-reviewed research related to Latino student retention as well.

I have more questions, can I contact someone?

- Yes! Consider contacting Michael Guerra, Alsame Vice Chair at: guerrami@gvsu.edu

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WE'VE BEEN AROUND FOR OVER 50 YEARS. THIS IS OUR STORY.

Advocates for Latino Student Advancement in Michigan Education, (Alsame), is a non-profit organization that is committed to making college education a reality for Latino students in Michigan. We seek to bridge the higher education gap for Latino/a students by providing the following:

- Serving as a resource to high school and college students in their pursuit of higher education and serve the needs of higher education institutions by attracting prospective Latino students to college and university campuses.
- Assisting parents, teachers, counselors and administrators by providing information about admissions, financial aid, careers, housing, student services, retention, advocacy and Latino/a student organizations.
- Addressing culturally specific needs and special interests of Latino/a students by way of workshop, conferences, and small and large group meetings.

Find out more information at:

www.alsame.org