Securing Tennessee’s Future

Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Latino Students in Tennessee’s Private 4-Year Institutions
Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Latino Students in Tennessee's
Private 4-year Institutions

Carrie Abood, Darwin Mason, Jr., and Chris White

Lipscomb University
This Capstone Project, directed and approved by the candidate’s Juried Review Committee, has been accepted by the Doctor of Education Program of Lipscomb University’s College of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Latino Students in Tennessee's Private 4-year Institutions

by

Carrie Abood

Darwin Mason, Jr.

Chris White

for the degree of

Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

Juried Review Committee

Tracey S. Hebert, Ph.D.
Director, Doctor of Education

Teresa Bagamery Clark, Ed.D.
Ed.D. Capstone Faculty Advisor

Roger W. Wiemers, Ed.D.
Juried Review Committee Faculty Member

Reva Chatman-Buckley, Ed.D.
Juried Review Committee Faculty Member
Capstone Project Authors Permission Statement

Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Latino Students in Tennessee's Private 4-year Institutions

Carrie Abood

Darwin Mason, Jr.

Chris White

Program Doctor of Education

Print Reproduction Permission Granted
I understand that I must submit printed copies of my Capstone Project Manuscript (hereafter referred to as “manuscript”) to the Lipscomb University Library, per current LU guidelines, for the completion of my degree. I hereby grant to Lipscomb University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive and make accessible my manuscript in whole or in part in all forms of media in perpetuity. I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of the manuscript. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this manuscript.

I hereby grant permission to Lipscomb University to reproduce my manuscript in whole or in part. Any reproduction will not be for commercial use or profit.

I additionally grant to the Lipscomb University Library the nonexclusive license to archive and provide electronic access to my manuscript in whole or in part in all forms of media in perpetuity. I understand that my work, in addition to its bibliographic record and abstract, will be available to the world-wide community of scholars and researchers throughout the LU Library. I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of the manuscript. I am aware that Lipscomb University does not require registration of copyright for the electronic manuscript.

I hereby certify that, if appropriate, I have obtained and attached written permission statements from the owners of each third party copyrighted matter to be included in my manuscript. I certify that the version I submitted is the same as that approved by my committee.

Signatures below signify understanding, agreement, and permission to all the above by each author:

Signature of 1st Author: Carrie Abood Date: 8-2-12
Signature of 2nd Author: Darwin Mason, Jr. Date: 8-2-12
Signature of 3rd Author: Chris White Date: 7-31-12
Acknowledgements

We would like to give many thanks to God for the blessings and opportunities afforded to us throughout this experience. To Dr. Teresa Clark, for her guidance and encouragement throughout this project. To Drs. Reva Chatman-Buckley, Trace Hebert, and Roger Wiemers for readily sharing their insights and expertise as this project unfolded. To TICUA, especially Dr. Patrick Meldrim. This dissertation would not have been possible but for your vision. Thank you for entrusting us with this project. To the Inaugural Cohort, who in the course of two years we learned to love and respect. The memories we’ve made with each other will hopefully last a lifetime.

Carrie would like to give a “whoop, whoop” to the best teammates possible, Darwin and Chris. Also, many thanks go to her husband Adam for patiently listening, understanding, and supporting her work on this project.

Darwin would like to express thanks to his friends and capstone partners, Carrie and Chris, for an “uber platinum” experience. Additionally, thanks to his parents and sister for support, patience, and most importantly, prayers. Lastly, thanks to the Mason Jr’s: Deryn, for the hugs and kisses that kept him going, and Kayla, for being the rock that stabilized him through this journey.

Chris would like to express his gratitude for his project partners, Carrie and Darwin. It has truly been a pleasure to work with them. Additionally, special thanks to his wife, Diana, and kids, Shelby and Booth, for their patience, support, and encouragement throughout this endeavor.
Abstract

The purpose of this research study was to identify the perceived effective strategies utilized by colleges and universities to recruit, retain, and graduate Latino students. This study specifically explored the self-reported enrollment and retention strategies and their perceived effectiveness by the 34 member institutions of the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA). A survey was sent to all member institutions of TICUA. Of the 20 institutions that responded, four institutions were chosen using purposive sampling procedures. The study followed a qualitative design, utilizing case study methodology to collect detailed information through focus groups and in-depth interviews. Focus groups of currently-enrolled Latino students were utilized to further identify what factors were influential to enrollment and persistence at their chosen TICUA member institution. The data were then transcribed, coded, and analyzed for themes. Five themes emerged from the interviews with faculty, staff, and administration: Administrative Commitment, Relationships, Financial Commitment, Intentionality, and Student Support. Four themes emerged from the focus groups with persisting Latino students at the case study sites: Financial Incentives, Institutional Fit, Campus Community, and Influences. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended TICUA member institutions implement the following strategies to improve their recruitment, enrollment, and retention of Latino students: Demonstrate commitment to serving the Latino population; Provide financial aid specific to Latino students; Create a multicultural affairs department; Develop community partnerships; and, Increase the cultural competency of faculty and staff.
Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction 1
- Context 1
- Statement of the Problem 6
- Purpose of the Study 7
- Research Questions 7
- Theoretical Perspectives Guiding Research 7
- Scope and Bounds 9
- Significance of the Study 9
- Definitions 12
- Summary of Chapter One 13

Chapter Two: Literature Review 15
- Current Status of Latinos in Higher Education 15
- Barriers to Higher Education for Latinos 18
  - Financial 18
  - Family and Culture 21
  - Language 23
  - Access and Understanding 25
  - Political and Legal Climate 28
- Effective Strategies Related to the Recruitment and Retention of Latinos in Higher Education 32
  - Administrative Commitment 32
  - Community Partnerships 34
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Chapter Three</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Rate and Findings from Survey Instrument</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study Site Descriptions and Demographics</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings from Interviews with Faculty, Staff, and Administration</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Commitment</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Commitment</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentionality</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings from Focus Groups with Persisting Latino Students</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Incentives</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Fit</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Community</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influences</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Chapter Four</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five: Conclusions and Discussion</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the Study</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferences from the Data</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations to the Client</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1: Response Rate by Region</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2: Surveys Completed by Institution and Role</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3: Institutional Partnership and Degree of Effectiveness</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4: Institutional Outreach Programs and Degree of Effectiveness</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5: Institutional Financial Aid or Scholarship and Degree of Effectiveness</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6: Pre-Freshmen Immersion Programs and Degree of Effectiveness</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7: Culturally Competent Faculty and Staff and Degree of Effectiveness</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8: Latino/Multicultural Affairs Department and Degree of Effectiveness</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 9: Faculty-Student Mentoring Program and Degree of Effectiveness</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 10: Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Program and Degree of Effectiveness</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 11: ELL Instructional Program and Degree of Effectiveness</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 12: Program to Create Community Among Latinos and Degree of Effectiveness</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 13: Latino Engagement in Campus Life and Degree of Effectiveness</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 14: Latino Recruitment Program and Degree of Effectiveness</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 15: Faculty/Staff Hiring Policies and Degree of Effectiveness</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 16: Total Number and Percentage of Yes (Positive) Responses for Questions 3-15</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 17: Case Study 1 Focus Group Demographics</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 18: Case Study 2 Focus Group Demographics</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 19: Case Study 3 Focus Group Demographics</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Tables (continued)

Table 20: Case Study 4 Focus Group Demographics 109

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Nora Student Engagement Model 55
Figure 2: TICUA Member Institution Name and Campus Location 71
Figure 3: Distribution of TICUA Membership by Undergraduate Tuition and Fees 72
Figure 4: Average Tuition and Fee Charges, 2011-2012 72
Figure 5: Fall 2011 Enrollment for Undergraduate Students at TICUA Member Institution by Ethnicity 73
Figure 6: Fall 2009 Faculty in TICUA Member Institution, by Ethnicity 73
Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Latino Students in Tennessee's Private 4-year Institutions

Chapter One: Introduction

Context

The expense of college is an investment that pays off over a lifetime, even with rising tuition rates. Students who attend institutions of higher education obtain multiple personal benefits, and society as a whole profits as well. Overall, individuals with a college education earn more money and are more likely to be employed, they are more likely to receive health benefits from their employers, and they are more likely to lead healthy lifestyles (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2010). College-educated adults are more frequently voters and volunteers, and their children are traditionally better prepared for school. For society, those higher levels of education help create more active citizens, and all levels of government “enjoy increased tax revenues” and receive other financial returns by investing in higher education (Baum et al., 2010, p. 4). The benefits of a college-educated society are shared by those who are educated as well as the society in which they live.

In order to meet the demands of the current workforce and economy, the United States must improve its college completion rates. A report by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce predicted that by 2018, 33% of jobs in the U.S. will require a bachelor’s degree, while an additional 29% will require either some college, an associate’s degree, or another type of postsecondary certificate; unfortunately, remaining at the current college completion rate will leave the country in need of three million additional workers with higher education degrees (Bautsch, 2011). The United
States also finds itself losing ground as the leader of educational attainment when compared to other countries around the world. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United States ranked 12th in educational attainment in 2008, behind countries such as Canada, Russia, Korea, and Japan (College Board Advocacy and Policy Center [College Board], 2011).

Recognizing the need to increase postsecondary degree attainment, the Obama Administration, the Lumina Foundation, the College Board, and other leading foundations and organizations have each articulated their own goals for a higher percentage of college degrees (College Board, 2011; Lumina Foundation, 2010; Nawar, 2011; Santiago, Kienzl, Sponsler, & Bowles, 2010; Vice President Biden, 2011). President Obama established the goal for the United States to have the highest proportion of college graduates and best-educated workforce by 2020 (Vice President Biden, 2011). The Lumina Foundation and College Board both focused on the year 2025: Lumina’s “Big Goal” is to have a 60% higher education attainment rate, and the College Board desires 55% of young Americans to hold a postsecondary credential by the same year (College Board, 2011; Lumina Foundation, 2010). To reach Obama’s goal, nearly eight million students will need to graduate college by 2020, which is an increase of nearly 50% (Liu, 2011). For Lumina’s goal, the state of Tennessee would need to increase the college completion rate by 7.9% every year between 2009 and 2025 (Lumina Foundation, 2010).

Achieving any of these expressed goals will not be easy, but one of the most important keys to attainment will be improving college access and success for groups traditionally underrepresented, particularly the Latino population. The Lumina
Foundation (2010) states, “it is essential that we redouble our efforts to close gaps in college participation and attainment for a range of underrepresented populations, including students of color…” (p. 3). Focusing efforts to improve the enrollment and retention rates for Latino students is an important choice, since Latinos are both the fastest growing and the least successful minority for educational achievement in the United States (Bautsch, 2011; Bell & Bautsch, 2011; Santiago, 2011; Santiago et al., 2010). The success of the Latino student is essential to achieving postsecondary educational growth.

Currently, one out of every four youths under the age of eighteen in the United States is Latino (Liu, 2011). It is expected that Latinos will represent nearly 25% of the country’s 18 to 29-year-old population by 2020 (Santiago & Soliz, 2012), and the Census Bureau projects the total Latino population will grow from 48 million in 2010 to 102 million in 2050 (Hispanics, n.d., slide 3). In 2010, Tennessee ranked 27th for Latino population in the United States, with nearly 6% of the state’s population identified as Latino (Liu, 2011; Santiago & Soliz, 2012). Although the percentage is low, Tennessee experienced a 134% Latino population increase since 2000; this increase is the third largest in the country, behind South Carolina and Alabama (Bell & Bautsch, 2011; Liu, 2011; Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2011).

Historically, American colleges and universities have seen an underrepresentation of Latinos in their institutions; a 2011 report noted that only 21% of Latinos across the country held either a two- or four-year degree, in comparison to Blacks at 30% and Whites at 44% (Santiago & Soliz, 2012). Also during 2011, just over 12% of college students across the country were Latino. Even with large population increases, Latinos
only accounted for 13% of the overall undergraduate enrollment in 2009, as compared with 62% representation for Whites and 14% for Blacks (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2010). Though the number of Latinos enrolling in college has increased, the growth has been slower than expected, based on their overall population increase, and the college completion rates continue to fall behind non-Latino students (Liu, 2011).

The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) showed that in the state of Tennessee in fall 2010, 8,054 Latino students were enrolled in higher education; for comparison, 230,458 White and 65,840 Black Tennessee students enrolled during the same semester (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2011). Also in Tennessee, during 2009-10 and 2010-11, only 1,381 certificates or degrees were awarded to Latino students; during the same timeframe, 45,524 degrees were awarded to White students and 11,662 to Black students (NCES, 2011). The Southern Regional Education Board (2011) found that graduation gaps exist across the Southern region of the United States. In 2009, the six-year graduation rates for Latinos seeking bachelor degrees was 45%; for Whites and Blacks in the same category, 57% and 38%, respectively (SREB, 2011).

In contrast to these reports of underrepresentation, however, The Pew Hispanic Center recently reported a one-year 24% increase of Latinos attending college between 2009-2010 (Fry, 2011). Additional statistics show that enrollment numbers for Latinos are continually rising. Between 1980 and 2007, undergraduate enrollment for all races/ethnicities in the U.S. increased by 50%; within this same time period, the enrollment increase for only Latino students was over 300% (Santiago, 2009). Because
the Latino population is much younger than other groups, the school-age Latino population will continue to grow quickly from K-12 through postsecondary (Liu, 2011). By 2019, Latinos are projected to comprise 27% of high school graduates in the Southern region (SREB, 2011).

The facts and statistics indicate the Latino population is growing exponentially in all states, and although Latino students are proportionally underrepresented, overall enrollment rates of Latinos in higher education are rising quickly. Many institutions, both public and private, desire new, effective methods to recruit Latinos. Additionally, these institutions must develop new strategies that will enable them to retain those same students through graduation. One organization that intends to help these institutions is the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA).

TICUA is an organization established in 1956 to promote cooperation among private higher education institutions throughout the state. Working with 34 member institutions in East, West, and Middle Tennessee, TICUA “engages Tennessee's private colleges and universities to work collaboratively in areas of public policy, cost containment, and professional development to better serve the state and its citizens” ("About TICUA," n.d., para. 1-2). These 34 institutions enrolled over 76,000 full-time students during fall 2011, which was nearly one-quarter (24%) of the total number of students attending college in Tennessee (Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association [TICUA], 2011). Overall, the student bodies are diverse in terms of race/ethnicity; minority students represented 26% of undergraduate students enrolled in fall 2011 (TICUA, 2011).
TICUA recognizes the surge in Latino population both in Tennessee and in the Southeast, and the organization understands that “[Tennessee] should plan for this shift in student population in order to ensure that Latinos succeed and complete a degree” (Liu, 2011, p. 3). At TICUA member institutions in 2011, Latinos represented 4% of the TICUA total undergraduate enrollment (TICUA, 2011). Although the current enrollment percentage is lower for Latinos, TICUA member institutions can stimulate dialogue and collaboratively design better ways to support both the current and future Latino populations. As stated in Santiago’s (2011) Roadmap, “Understanding what policies and practices are effective in enrolling, retaining, and graduating Latino students is directly relevant to communities only now beginning to experience growth” (p. 2). The fast-growing Latino population in the Southeastern United States will bring an entirely new set of students to institutions that have not traditionally enrolled large numbers of Latino students, and the national workforce, economy, and college completion rates could be impacted by what happens within TICUA member institutions.

**Statement of the Problem**

In order to meet the demands of the workforce and economy, the United States must improve its college completion rates. Focusing efforts to improve the enrollment and retention rates for Latino students is an important choice, since Latinos are both the fastest growing and least successful minority for educational achievement (Bautsch, 2011; Bell & Bautsch, 2011; Santiago, 2011; Santiago et al., 2010). TICUA member institutions recognize the increase in Latino population and their importance in improving college completion rates in Tennessee; therefore, TICUA desires effective strategies to recruit, retain, and graduate this population within their institutions of higher education.
Purpose of the Study

The intent of this research study was to identify the perceived effective strategies utilized by colleges and universities to recruit, retain, and graduate Latino students. As the Latino population continues to expand and influence society, it is crucial to support their pathways to academic success. This growing minority population will most likely have a great impact on the sustainability of this nation in the years to come. The study specifically focused on how TICUA member institutions can recruit and retain Latino students in their institutions throughout the state of Tennessee.

Research Questions

Four research questions were developed for focus and direction. These four research questions were refined from the literature review and guide the current study:

Q1: What factor(s) did Latino students in TICUA member institutions perceive as influential in their decision to enroll at a particular institution?

Q2: What factor(s) do Latino students in TICUA member institutions perceive as influential in their decision to persist at that institution?

Q3: What effective strategies should TICUA member institutions implement to recruit and enroll Latino students?

Q4: What effective strategies should TICUA member institutions implement to retain Latino students?

Theoretical Perspectives Guiding Research

In this research study, attempts to understand the enrollment and retention trends for Latino college students are grounded in the vast body of literature on student retention and college recruitment.
Vincent Tinto’s (1975) interactionist theory is a definitive perspective for most studies of student retention. Many theories more recently developed continue to reference Tinto’s model and use it as a foundational cornerstone; nevertheless, Tinto’s theory has been revised, critiqued, and even abandoned by other theorists on the subject. One of the major critiques of Tinto’s work is that the model assumes students will need to assimilate into traditional college society in order to persist at an institution; this places the burden of retention almost entirely on the student. This assumption of the theory is also problematic for minority students or any student forced to integrate or assimilate in order to persist (Oseguera, Locks, & Vega, 2009; Rendón, Jalomo, & Nora, 2000).

This research study was guided by theoretical perspectives that acknowledge a shared responsibility between the student to persist and the institution to retain. Perspectives from Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon (2004), Rendón, Jalomo, and Nora (2000), and Swail, Redd, and Perna (cited in Oseguera et al., 2009) all concur that a joint effort is needed in order for a student to successfully retain at an institution.

Enrollment and retention efforts in higher education are very closely aligned; essentially, one is not enough without the other. Therefore, this study was also guided by theoretical perspectives that acknowledge shared responsibilities between enrollment and retention efforts. The Nora Student Engagement Model (2003) is a theoretical model that represents this joint effort by emphasizing “the unique interaction between the student and the institution” (Arbona & Nora, 2007, p. 250). Nora’s model identifies six major components that influence engagement in college. These six components range from precollege factors to institutional allegiance and goal determination (Garza Martinez, 2009). Collectively, these factors influence the student’s choice, transition, and
adjustment to college. In sum, this model addresses the interconnected precollege, college, and environmental factors that influence both student enrollment and persistence (Arbona & Nora, 2007).

Scope and Bounds

This study focused on the 34 member institutions within the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA). The study was further narrowed to focus on the experiences of currently-enrolled Latino students attending four TICUA member institutions. This study did not consider previously-enrolled, graduated, or future Latino students for the selected institutions. This study also did not focus on two-year institutions or public four-year institutions within the state of Tennessee.

Significance of the Study

The recruitment and retention of Latino students in higher education is a serious issue that needs to be addressed. Latinos in the United States are the fastest growing population group, yet they are the least educated and remain significantly underrepresented in the higher education system (Bautsch, 2011; Bell & Bautsch, 2011; Santiago et al., 2010). It is important to have Latino students well-represented within higher education, not only for the Latino population but also for all of society. According to Santiago & Brown (2004), “Improving the extent and quality of higher education for Latinos will indisputably raise their economic prospects and civic engagement, and contribute to the long-term economic and civic health of the entire nation” (p.1).

Research on the Latino population in higher education has become more prevalent, but it is still limited in certain areas. This study is unique in that it focused on Latinos currently enrolled and persisting at four-year private institutions, not two-year or
public institutions. A much larger amount of current research and literature focuses on the Latino experience at Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), where the Latino population is at least 25% of full-time enrolled students, or at community colleges (Arbona & Nora, 2007; Cross, 2011; Santiago, 2008; Santiago, Andrade, & Brown, 2004; Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). Focusing on the four-year, non-HSI institutions is important in order to increase the current body of research. Also, this type of institution may be a better avenue to education for some Latino students in the future. Arbona & Nora (2007) found that Latino students who initially enrolled in a community college were less likely to obtain a bachelor’s degree than those who first attended a four-year institution.

Additionally, minimal research exists to support whether or not HSIs are better for Latino students academically.

Another point of significance is the region where this study was conducted. Most studies are conducted in areas of the country with high population percentages of Latinos. There has been a great deal of research conducted in states that border Mexico, such as California and Texas, pertaining to Latinos and higher education. In contrast, this study was conducted in Tennessee, a state that ranked 27th in 2010 for its Latino population (Liu, 2011; Santiago & Soliz, 2012). Although the ranking is not particularly impressive, Tennessee experienced a 134% Latino population increase since 2000; this increase is the third largest in the country, behind South Carolina and Alabama (Bell & Bautsch, 2011; Liu, 2011; Passel et al., 2011). Additionally, Tennessee is located in the Southern region of the United States; this region is predicted to grow by nearly thirty million people in the next twenty years, with “the most dramatic increase” from the Latino population (SREB, 2011, p. 2).
This study also intended to shed light on the current political and legal climate for Latinos in higher education. There is a great amount of discussion in the literature, political arenas, and communities about illegal immigration. Currently, as a result of the 1982 Supreme Court decision in *Plyler v. Doe*, public schools cannot deny educational access to immigrant students (*Plyler v. Doe*, 1982). This ruling ensured that undocumented students would have access to a public K-12 education (Garman, 2012). However, other existing laws place many prohibitions on undocumented Latino students seeking access to higher education.

One piece of legislation drafted to help improve access is the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, more commonly referred to as the DREAM Act. The goal of this bill is “to authorize the cancellation of removal and adjustment of status of certain alien students who are long-term United States residents and who entered the United States as children and for other purposes” (S. S.952, 2011). This bill, if enacted, will allow “current, former, and future undocumented high-school graduates and GED recipients a pathway to U.S. citizenship through college or the armed services” (*The DREAM Act*, 2011, p. 2). If the DREAM Act is passed, it is speculated to benefit 360,000 undocumented high school graduates and provide incentive for approximately 715,000 more undocumented students between the ages of 5 and 17 to complete school and pursue their academic dreams (Gonzales, 2007). This study had the opportunity to hear from both documented and undocumented students; furthermore, the participants had the chance to discuss how they perceive the current political climate on illegal immigration affects their enrollment and persistence at TICUA member institutions.
Finally, this qualitative study allowed the researchers to capture the richness and depth of the stories expressed by the participants. By examining the voices and perspectives of Latino students attending four-year private institutions, the researchers found “answers to the questions of ‘how,’ ‘why,’ and ‘in what ways,’” which can often be left undiscovered in quantitative studies of research (Pino, 2005, p.8). Given the qualitative nature of the study, it is not possible to generalize the findings to the Latino college population; however, the study offers recommendations that may prove useful to other TICUA member institutions looking to develop and implement programs, policies, and practices that are conducive to enrolling, retaining, and graduating Latino students.

Definitions

To maintain clarity, the following terms and phrases were defined for this research study. The definitions are listed in alphabetical order.

1) Effective Strategy: A general phrase used to refer to successful, promising, and innovative strategies as a whole. The term may also refer to a strategy that has yet to be classified as best, promising, or innovative through a validation process (National Resource Center, 2010).

2) Hispanic: The term Hispanic is an umbrella term for many groups of people. This broad term typically identifies individuals of Spanish heritage or Latin American descent who may or may not speak Spanish as their native or primary language (Cross, 2011). Both Hispanic and Latino are widely used and accepted to describe the same population group. For this study, the researchers chose to use the term Latino for consistency and is intended to be inclusive of both terms.
3) **Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI):** any two- or four-year institution with a full-time enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least 25% Latino; also, not less than 50% of all students at the institution can be eligible for need-based federal aid ("Hispanic-Serving Institution Definitions," n.d.).

4) **Latino:** Latinos are often natives of Latin America and share a common history, language, and cultural background (Padilla, 2007). The definition for Hispanic or Latino in the 2010 Census referred to “a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.” Both Hispanic and Latino are widely used and accepted to describe the same population group. For this study, the researchers chose to use the term Latino for consistency and is intended to be inclusive of both terms.

5) **Persistence:** In this study, the term “persistence” refers to a student’s decision to continue to attend college after initial enrollment.

6) **Practice:** A program, activity, or strategy used by an organization that can be assessed for effectiveness and compared against other similar practices (National Resource Center, 2010).

7) **Retention:** In this study, the term “retention” refers to a university’s ability to maintain the enrollment of a student.

**Summary of Chapter One**

Chapter 1 identified the circumstances and facts surrounding the current status of the nation’s Latino population in higher education and specifically for the state of Tennessee. Latino students are both the fastest-growing and least-educated minority in the United States; postsecondary access and success for this population is essential for the
current and future national economy. The purpose of this study was to identify the perceived effective strategies utilized by colleges and universities to recruit, retain, and graduate Latino students. The study specifically focused on how TICUA member institutions can recruit and retain Latino students in their schools throughout the state of Tennessee. Chapter 2 consists of a review of recruitment and retention barriers, best practices, and other relevant literature. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology utilized. Chapter 4 presents the findings, and Chapter 5 offers a discussion of the findings as well as conclusions and recommendations.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Current Status of Latinos in Higher Education

Latinos in the United States are the fastest growing population group, yet they are the least educated and remain significantly underrepresented in the higher education system (Bautsch, 2011; Bell & Bautsch, 2011; Santiago, Kienzl, Sponsler, & Bowles, 2010). The Latino population is growing in all states, but some of the largest growth is occurring in the Southeastern United States (SREB, 2011). Traditionally, American colleges and universities have seen an underrepresentation of Latino students in their institutions, and this group continues to struggle in both enrollment and persistence. Bell & Bautsch (2011) claimed that out of one hundred ninth-grade Latino students, only thirteen would graduate from college and obtain a degree.

Regarding enrollment, the National Center for Education Statistics showed that in 2011, nationwide only 12% of full-time enrolled were Latino. In fall 2010 in the state of Tennessee, 8,054 Latino students were enrolled in higher education; for comparison, 230,458 White Tennessee students enrolled during the same semester (NCES, 2011). At TICUA member institutions in 2011, Latinos represented just 4% of the TICUA total undergraduate enrollment (TICUA, 2011).

Regarding persistence and degree attainment, a 2012 report from the National Conference of State Legislatures noted that only 21% of Latinos across the country held either a two- or four-year degree, in comparison to Blacks at 30% and Whites at 44% (Santiago & Soliz, 2012). In Tennessee, during 2009-10 and 2010-11, only 1,381 certificates or degrees were awarded to Latino students; during the same timeframe, 45,524 degrees were awarded to White students (NCES, 2011). Kelly, Schneider,
Carey (2010) found that at the average college or university, the six-year graduation rate for Latinos was 51%, compared to White students at 59%. The degree attainment rate for Latinos in Tennessee was 15%, compared to 32% for Whites (Lumina Foundation, 2010).

To contrast the underrepresentation, however, The Pew Hispanic Center recently reported a one-year 24% increase of Latinos attending college between 2009 and 2010. This increase caused Latinos to outnumber African American students on college campuses for the first time (Fry, 2011). Additional statistics showed that enrollment numbers for Latinos were quickly rising. Between 1980 and 2007, undergraduate enrollment for all races/ethnicities in the U.S. increased by 50%; still, the increase during that time period for only Latino students was over 300% (Santiago, 2009). Because the Latino population is much younger than other groups, the school-age Latino population will continue to grow quickly from K-12 through postsecondary (Liu, 2011). However, even with such a large increase, Latinos only account for 13% of the overall undergraduate enrollment (NCES, 2010).

Even though a clear educational gap exists, Latinos in higher education do not necessarily undervalue a college degree. A survey from the Pew Hispanic Center (Lopez, 2009) reported three findings regarding Latino young adults and their educational aspirations. First, the overwhelming majority of the Latinos surveyed (88%) agreed that a college degree is important. Second, young Latinos were actually more likely to say that a college degree is important than any other group of young people ages 16 to 25. Finally, 77% of the Latino students surveyed claimed their parents think going to college is the most important thing to do after high school (p. 1-4). The findings from Lopez
(2009) helped to contradict the feelings that Latinos and their families value education less than others.

Due to the increase of Latino enrollment in higher education, certain trends have emerged for the population. First, Latinos are more likely to attend community college compared to White students (Arbona & Nora, 2007; Cross, 2011; Padilla, 2007; Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). In 2008, almost half of Latino undergraduate students were enrolled in community colleges (Santiago et al., 2010). This trend has caused Latinos to either take longer to graduate from a four-year college or to never transfer at all. Arbona & Nora (2007) found that Latino students who initially enrolled in a community college were less likely to obtain a bachelor’s degree than those who first attended a four-year institution.

Second, Latinos tend to enroll in Hispanic-Serving Institutions over all other types of degree-granting institutions. During 2008, just over half of all Latino undergraduates were enrolled in the approximate 270 institutions identified as HSI. Large concentrations of Latino students at certain schools have their advantages, but there is little research to support whether or not HSIs are better for Latino students academically. Kelly et al. (2010) found that the graduation gaps between White and Latino students were much smaller at HSIs; however, the smaller gap was not due to high graduation rates of Latinos, but rather below-average rates for White students.

A third trend is the higher enrollment and graduation rate of Latinas over male Latinos (Hispanics, n.d.; Kelly et al., 2010; Saenz & Ponjuan, 2009; Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). In 2004, 28% of college-age Latinas were enrolled in post-secondary institutions, compared to only 22% of their male counterparts. The same report estimates that with undergraduate enrollment, 63% of all Latinos in college are female (Zarate & Burciaga,
The 2006 U.S. Census reported on educational attainment by gender for Latinos ages 25 years and older. It was reported that Latinas had a higher percentage of educational attainment than male Latinos for both high school and higher education levels (Hispanics, n.d., Slide 33).

To conclude, American colleges and universities have seen an underrepresentation of Latinos in their institutions. The Latino population is both the fastest growing and least successful minority for educational attainment (Bautsch, 2011; Santiago et al., 2010). The facts and statistics indicate the Latino population is growing exponentially across the entire United States, and although Latino students are proportionately underrepresented, the overall enrollment rates of Latinos in higher education are rising quickly.

**Barriers to Higher Education for Latinos**

**Financial.** The costs of higher education are continually rising, and financial aid is essential to obtain access to and success in higher education. Despite this reality, there continue to be a variety of factors that influence access to that much needed financial aid. According to Santiago and Brown (2004), Latino students, whether documented or not, “receive the lowest average amount of financial aid awarded – by type and source of aid – of any ethnic group” (p. 8).

Latino families and students are lacking in knowledge pertaining to accessing and financing higher education. A consistent finding in the literature was that the Latino population lacks information about financial aid for college (Chan & Cochrane, 2008; Zarate & Burciaga, 2010; Zarate & Pachon, 2006). This lack of knowledge could be attributed to a number of factors: a lack of experience with the education system,
language barriers, decision-making on whether or not to attend college, or even bias in the dissemination of information to the Latino student or family. Oftentimes due to the lack of personal experience with the journey to higher education, Latino families and students must rely on formal sources, such as high school counselors and college recruiters, to explain the process of applying and entering higher education (Brown, Santiago, & Lopez, 2003). Chan and Cochrane (2008) found that students who are “most dependent” on learning about college from high school personnel are low-income students and Latinos (p. 3). They also discussed in their work that “counselors are influential in disseminating financial aid information, especially among low-income and minority students, and their personal biases may affect the information given to students” (p. 3). It appears then that those who could be most beneficial to the Latino student in navigating the financial aid process could actually be hindering their successful pursuit of higher education.

When the formal sources do provide the information, literature suggested the information often arrives too late. Chan and Cochrane (2008) noted the following:

Students and families most in need of financial aid information tend to receive it later than others…the average age at which a student first receives financial aid information is 14 years for families with household incomes over $75,000, 16 years for families with household incomes under $25,000, and 17 years for Latino families. (p. 5)

This lack of timely information appears to be an additional hindrance for the Latino student and his or her family. According to Zarate and Pachon (2006), “three-fourths of young Latino adults in California who do not attend college would have been more likely
to enroll if they had known more about financial aid when making college-going decisions” (p. 2).

In addition to the external factors highlighted above, there are cultural and familial factors that influence the financing of higher education. Even if made aware of the financial aid opportunities, Latino students and families may decide to not incur the debt. According to a USA Today article, “many Hispanic families tend to be more debt-averse; students are reluctant to take on heavy loan debt” (Toppo, 2009, para. 9).

Buchbinder (2007) highlighted a Mexican American pursuing a nursing degree over a ten-year period. When the student was asked about acquiring loans for school, the student responded that “he and his family didn’t like to take on debt” (p. 19). Santiago & Brown (2004) found that, even though nearly 60% of Latino undergraduates receive some type of aid to attend college, the Latino population was less likely to acquire loans to pay for school. If not taking loans, students must rely on scholarships or grants, which may be in short supply, or have to work while they go to school. If the Latino student happens to be undocumented, the availability of these three sources of aid is even harder to acquire.

The Latino student may also avoid pursuing higher education because of the perceived financial impact on his or her family. According to the Pew Hispanic Center (2009), despite the recognized value of higher education, “their modest expectations to finish college appear to come from financial pressure to support a family” (p. 52). Nearly 40% indicated they could not afford to go to school, and 74% indicated the reason they left high school early or did not pursue higher education after high school was to support their family (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). There appears to be a strong sense of family
responsibility within the Latino culture (Gonzales, 2006). This sense of responsibility can lead the aspiring Latino student to put his or her hopes of long-term success aside for the short-term success of the family dynamic. Rosso (2011) described the situation this way:

Students may also feel guilty, confused, and embarrassed for being the first in their family to go to college. One may feel guilty for leaving home during a time of financial need. For example, if a student comes from a single-parent home, they may feel guilty for not getting a job after high school in order to contribute to the family income. In some cases, it is cultural to take on the responsibility. Some families don’t understand why a student would want to “abandon” their home. Confusion comes from not knowing what to do. (p. 27)

There are many factors that influence the financing of higher education for Latino students. Rosso (2011) indicated in his research, “better access to financial aid education and more opportunities to help understand the process of financial aid is seen as an area that has much room for improvement” (p. 24).

Family/Culture. Many college-age Latino students make decisions based on the possible impact those decisions would have on the family. Several studies, for example, have found the amount of encouragement and support offered by parents and other family members is cited by Latinos as the most important reason for wanting to pursue a college education (Alva, 1995; Ceja, 2001). However, when family or the student’s Latino culture conflicts with the desire to attend college, family and culture may become a barrier for college access.
One issue that many Latino students face is the cultural emphasis of *familismo*. *Familismo* includes strong identification and attachment to the family, both nuclear and extended, and requires members to prioritize family over individual interests. Contrary to the dominant culture in the United States that values individual efforts and independence, *familismo* encourages interdependence and teamwork (Espinoza, 2010). This concept fosters a strong sense of obligation to the family.

Espinoza (2010) and Orellana (2001) found this obligation to family required a number of roles, such as language/cultural brokering, sibling caretaking, financial contributions, spending time with family, and staying close to home. *Familismo* could lead to conflicting emotions for the Latino student who plans to attend college. Espinoza (2010) stated “there is a significant contradiction embedded in this cultural template for Latinos with a strong sense of *familismo* who pursue higher education because the time dedicated to school directly competes with time available for family” (p. 318).

Although the familial and cultural bind affects both Latino males and Latinas, literature posits that the barrier most often affected Latinas. Espinoza (2010) stated that this dilemma occurs because the culture of academia expects one to be entirely committed to the pursuit of knowledge, which in turn makes family issues insignificant. For women, oftentimes the expectation of *marianismo* permeates the Latino community instead: “the cultural value of *marianismo*…prescribes dependence, subordination, responsibility for domestic chores, and selfless devotion to family” (Espinoza, 2010, p. 319). This creates an expectation that Latino women who are “good” will place the needs of the family above their own individual needs. College-going Latinas are expected to
continue to support and take care of their families despite their responsibilities as a student. This cultural norm is contradictory to the norms on a college campus.

Consequently, Latinos find themselves wedged in a cultural bind amid meeting the demands of their school culture and their family culture (Espinoza, 2010). As a result, the requirement to fulfill family obligations can often compete with the time demands of their educational pursuits, making the transition to higher education more challenging. Many times these obstacles present themselves in the lives of first-generation students who have not yet established a college-going track record.

**Language.** The inability to communicate in English, also known as language deficiency or linguistic acculturation, is a commonly perceived barrier for Latinos attempting to access and increase their educational level (Becerra, 2010; Fashola & Slavin, 2001; Garcia, 2001; Tornatzky, Cutler, & Lee, 2002). Recently, a national telephone survey conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center (2009) found limited English skills to be the second biggest reason Latinos ages 16 to 25 chose to leave education early. Forty-nine percent of those surveyed identified limited English skills as a barrier; the only reason chosen more than language was the need to support family. Additionally, the survey found a negative connection between educational expectations and language acquisition. When asked the question, “How much further in school do you plan to go?” only 24% of Spanish-dominant Latinos planned to obtain a bachelor’s degree or more, while 49% of bilingual Latinos and 62% of English-dominant Latinos said the same (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009, p. 52). Based on the responses, Latinos who had a stronger ability to communicate in English were more likely to attend college.
Many Latino students are currently underserved in English language training, typically referred to as ESL (English as a Second Language) or ELL (English Language Learner) programs. Students in the K-12 setting from many language backgrounds, not just Spanish, are leaving high school and their English language courses to find that they are not prepared for academic writing and communication at the college level. Looman (2009) studied thirteen former ESL students who were enrolled in either a community college or university at the time of the study. Looman found “great dissatisfaction” from those who thought their ESL programs would prepare them for college in the United States. Two themes from the participants were they did not gain enough exposure to college content and they had negative peer influences (Looman, 2009, p. 50). Nakprasit (2010) also found that ESL programs established within university settings are not easily done and may not prepare students for future academic success in higher education.

Language barriers for Latino students can also discourage acceptance into the higher education setting. For example, oftentimes Latinos are bilingual to some degree; they may speak Spanish with family and at home but speak English in school and elsewhere. This duality can put strains on the perceptions of who they are or who they should be, and their perceptions of what people expect of them (Cavazos, Johnson, & Sparrow, 2011).

Other literature found similar connections between higher education attainment and perceived language barriers. Becerra (2010) examined the perceived barriers among Latino adults in the United States based on several items, including linguistic acculturation. Linguistic acculturation was defined as “the participants’ language preference for speaking, watching television, reading, and whether they preferred to have
the survey administered in Spanish or English” (Becerra, 2010, p. 190). Becerra found that linguistic acculturation was connected to the perceived barriers of Latinos more so than any other variable used in the study. The study also found that Latinos with higher levels of linguistic acculturation perceive “staying close to family instead of going to school” and discrimination as barriers, but they were less likely to perceive cost of tuition as a barrier (p.190). The results indicated that higher linguistically acculturated participants have been exposed to the educational system in the United States long enough to be aware of both the availability of financial aid and the instances of discrimination. Students with a poorer grasp of the English language often choose to opt out of a viable educational experience because they do not understand how to navigate the often difficult college going highways (Becerra, 2010).

Language barriers also affect Latino parents and their ability to access college information. Tornatzky et al. (2002) researched the “college knowledge” of Latino parents by surveying over one thousand parents in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles and by interviewing forty-one parents as case studies (p. 1). This two-fold research approach allowed for both quantitative and qualitative data to be analyzed. The researchers found that “far and away, the most commonly cited obstacle to gaining college knowledge was the language barrier” (p. 19). Language was highly cited as a barrier by low-socioeconomic parents and first-generation immigrants.

**Access and Understanding.** While attending college is a source of pride for many Latino families, it is not without its challenges. These multiple challenges have been documented well by researchers. Many Latino parents have limited or no ability to speak the English language. In addition, Fann, McLafferty, McDonough, & McDonough
(2009) found that “language barriers are often compounded by limited literacy skills in their native language” (p. 383). Brown (2008) stated that many parents of first generation students with little formal education depended on information available through the high school counselor’s office or through occasional college fairs that typically do not target parents. This process places the responsibility on the student to distribute information to the parent, which in many cases leaves a familial information gap and leads to a misunderstanding of the college process. The lack of information usually ranges from not knowing how to complete a college application to not knowing the cost of postsecondary education. In a study conducted by Zalaquett (2005), a Latino student expressed that “my major obstacle was that my parents couldn’t help me with any of my applications because neither of them went to school and neither of them spoke English” (p. 39). This sentiment plays out prominently throughout the Latino community.

The lack of parental experiences and understanding of the college process frequently leads to poor choices for Latino students. These choices in many cases delay or hinder Latino students from receiving higher education degrees. As described by a student in Zalaquett’s (2005) research:

I wish I would have been educated about the intricacies of college admissions and preparation. I ended up not attending the 1st year because I couldn’t complete all the required paperwork and didn’t know that I qualified for a scholarship. (p. 39)

The parental experiences of family members, which include a language barrier, can sometimes exacerbate the obstacles students face. It is not that these families lack the cognitive ability to make good decisions; rather, these families do not have access to the information that encourage good decision making. Even when the information is
available, students can miss out because families are too embarrassed to reveal the inability to communicate for fear that they will be thought of as ignorant. These realities create a cycle of ineptitude, which is difficult to break (Zalaquett, 2005).

Without a firm understanding of the methods to finance a college education, many Latino families and their students either do not consider college or limit their choices based on the perceived notion of the cost of education. This financial concern leads many Latino students to choose a community college, because it is closer to home and more affordable. However, because of the added “red tape” in an already difficult process, the ambition to begin at a community college and then transfer to a four-year institution is not often realized (Perez & Ceja, 2010; Santiago, Andrade, & Brown, 2004). For example, a six-year California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) study of community college students found that only 17% of Latino students transferred to a 4-year institution—this is compared with 31% and 39% of White and Asian students, respectively (California Postsecondary Education Commission [CPEC], 2007).

Additionally, cultural stereotypes often exist related to Latino students. According to Zalaquett (2005), many educators believe that Latino families are not interested in education or that their children do not have the ability to succeed. However, research conducted by the Pew Research Center (2009) purported that Latino students and their families have as much desire for school success as their White and Asian counterparts. Nevertheless, this inaccurate misrepresentation pervades the minds of the general population (Valencia & Black, 2002). This belief leads to low expectations and the discrimination of Latino students. Research postulated that the misunderstanding of the Latino culture could lead to discrimination. In many cases, Latino students reported
that they were more likely to experience barriers than their nonminority counterparts. This discrimination is not unique to undergraduate students; Latino doctoral students also report experiencing adverse treatment (Gonzales, 2007). In summary, the research posited that a cultural divide exists as it relates to the perceived motivation of Latino students.

**Political and legal climate.** A major challenge unique to the Latino population that directly affects their ability to access higher education is the political and legal climate in which they live. America is the land of opportunity, but undocumented immigrants are finding less opportunity and more hostility every day.

Many undocumented Latino students spend their educational lives working very hard for the day they graduate high school only to find out that they are not eligible for many of the higher education opportunities and resources because of their undocumented status. According to Professor Roberto Gonzales (2007) of the University of Washington, “…because of their immigration status, their day-to-day lives are severely restricted and their futures are uncertain” (p. 2). They are often left riding the ebb and flow of the political process and promises of aspiring politicians. This uncertainty has a substantial impact on hindering Latino students’ educational futures and career opportunities. It has even been suggested “undocumented students are being purged from access to higher education” (Diaz-Strong, Gomez, Luna-Duarte, & Meiners, 2011, p. 108). From 2007-2008, 88% of Latinos enrolled as undergraduates were U.S. citizens, 11% were resident aliens, and only 1% were international students, including those undocumented (Bell & Bautsch, 2011).
Currently, as a result of the 1982 Supreme Court decision in *Plyler v. Doe*, public schools cannot deny immigrant students the access to public schooling. This ruling ensured that undocumented students would have access to a public K-12 education (Garman, 2012; *Plyler v. Doe*, 1982). The issue arises then of being able to access higher education. Diaz-Strong et al. (2011) were quick to point out “the ability to apply does not constitute access” (p. 111). In their research, Luz, a 19-year-old survey respondent, phrased it this way:

> It’s possible for undocumented students to apply, but the way everything is set up, it’s so expensive and you’re not going to get any financial aid, so it’s kind of like they’re teasing you. (p. 111)

According to a report on the DREAM Act, “approximately 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high school, many at the top of their classes, but cannot go to college, join the military, work, or otherwise pursue their dreams” (Immigration Policy Center, 2011, p. 1). They worked hard to get to the K-12 finish line and bought into the promise that education can provide a better future, only to find that the door has essentially been closed to them. In many cases, this reality has led to a loss of incentive to even finish high school (Immigration Policy Center, 2011).

On a federal level, the most notable piece of legislation drafted to address this challenge is the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, more commonly referred to as the DREAM Act. The intention of the DREAM Act is to allow certain undocumented people, primarily those who are long-term residents or who entered the United States as a child, the chance to adjust their undocumented status to a citizenship (S. S.952, 2011). In the future, this bill would provide undocumented high
school graduates the opportunity to receive citizenship through college attendance or the armed services’ (Immigration Policy Center, 2011). It is speculated that the enactment of the DREAM Act would benefit 360,000 undocumented high school graduates and provide incentive for approximately 715,000 more undocumented students between the ages of 5 and 17 to complete school and pursue their academic dreams (Gonzales, 2007). If enacted, this bill would provide access to a variety of financial resources for the undocumented student, but they would still not be eligible for federal education grants (Immigration Policy Center, 2011). They would, however, “be eligible for federal work study and student loans, and individual states would not be restricted from providing financial aid to the students” (Immigration Policy Center, 2011, p. 2).

This proposed bill has many proponents and opponents. Proponents generally believe the children should not be penalized for entering the U.S. illegally due to no fault of their own, and that given the opportunity can make significant contributions to the economy and society as a whole (Morse & Birnbach, 2011). According to Morse and Birnbach (2011), opponents, on the other hand, believe “the bills would reward lawbreakers, that only lawful resident students should qualify for resident tuition, and that it could result in added cost to taxpayers” (p. 1). There have been many individual states that have taken it upon themselves to pass legislation to provide tuition assistance to undocumented students that meet specific requirements in their state.

While the enactment of the DREAM Act would remove prohibitions from individual states from issuing financial aid to undocumented students, currently there is a law in effect that prohibits this practice. In 1996, President Bill Clinton signed into law the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIA). The Heritage
Foundation (2011) citing section 1623 of this federal statute pointed out that state colleges and universities were prohibited “from providing in-state tuition rates to illegal aliens on the basis of residence within the state, unless the same in-state rates are offered to all citizens of the United States” (Von Spakovsky & Stimson, 2011, p. 1-2). Therefore, if a state allows an undocumented student to pay in-state tuition, it must afford that same benefit to a citizen of the United States who lives in another state, or be in violation of the law.

Many states that have enacted laws in support of the undocumented student have circumvented the residency aspect of section 1623 of the IIRIA by creating alternative pathways for in-state tuition qualification (Von Spakovsky & Stimson, 2011). Some examples of alternate criteria are attendance in a secondary school in the state for at least three years and graduating or receiving a GED in the state. There have been legal challenges to this practice, but the Supreme Court determined to not hear the cases (Morse & Birnbach, 2011). There are thirteen states – California, Connecticut, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, and Washington – that enacted legislation to allow undocumented students to qualify for in-state tuition rates (States with Laws, 2011). On the other hand, there are six states – Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, and South Carolina – that have enacted laws that explicitly prohibit undocumented students from receiving in-state tuition (States with Laws, 2011). The remaining states do not provide in-state tuition, but they do not prohibit the practice either.

According to Garman (2012), “the lack of financial aid and legal work authorization remain the primary obstacles deterring undocumented students from
postsecondary education” (para. 3). There is strong argument for and against the enactment of laws to break down this barrier to postsecondary education for the undocumented student.

Effective Strategies Related to the Recruitment and Retention of Latinos in Higher Education

Administrative commitment. Determined leaders and their committed efforts are recognized as vital to an effective recruitment and retention plan. This appeared to be the prevailing sentiment in the literature regarding leadership best practices in all institutions, not just those specifically serving the Latino population. However, as Brown et al. (2003) noted, “Policies designed to improve Hispanic educational achievement to be implemented effectively at a college campus requires thoughtful leadership, since it is that leadership that determines student success, regardless of ethnicity” (para. 38). They further stated that leaders “shape the climate by articulating institutional goals and holding faculty and staff accountable” (para. 38). The importance of leadership influence was also echoed in an article by Gonzalez (2012), which highlighted the successes of Armstrong Atlantic State University. In his article, Gonzalez (2012) found that the administrators at AASU were intentional in creating a welcoming environment for Latino students.

In an article highlighting the Latino graduation successes of University of California-Riverside, Stern (2011) highlighted three leadership factors:

1) Commitment started at the top and filtered through campus.

2) The leadership identified the graduation of Latino students as a core value.
3) The commitment to diversity went from admissions to all facets of the university’s outreach efforts. (p. 26)

Additionally, Santiago (2008) highlighted the successes of twelve Hispanic-Serving Institutions, where the common theme of success was the “presidents’ direct engagement in critical thinking about how to best serve their Latino students” (p. 7).

The leadership of an institution can demonstrate commitment to diversity by empowering others (AASCU, 2007; Cortez & Cortez, 2004; Santiago, 2008). Santiago (2008) found a leader must share his or her vision of a culture for Latino student success, a vision that perceives them as an asset and not a liability. Cortez & Cortez (2004) indicated it was essential for the leader to build strong relationships, be collaborative, and be able to select faculty and staff who support the vision and who will be able to advocate for the students. The AASCU (2007) studied the leadership of 12 campuses; this study found that successful leaders were less “heroic” and more of an empowering “servant leader” (p. 24). Also, the study found that the leaders established successful institutions through shared authority and teamwork and a purposeful focus on faculty and staff recruitment.

Santiago (2010) discussed additional practices reflective of administrative commitment to serve more Latino students. Those practices were identified in four Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institutions and included the following:

1) An increased awareness of Latino enrollment
2) Using data to drive decision-making
3) Administrators and staff articulated a consistent message
4) Presidential leadership to improve institution-wide practices
5) Experimentation in creating or adopting promising practices

6) Broad ownership of student success at all levels (p. 3-4)

Research conducted by the AASCU (2007) found specific characteristics of institutions that exhibited positive behaviors toward Latino students. For leadership practices, those characteristics included a clearly articulated message on increasing diversity, verbal and tactile support for students of color, and a “personal leadership style that emphasized empowerment and shared authority” (p. 24). The report also found that successful institutional leaders sustained partnerships with the Latino community, were seen publicly in those communities, and recognized the value of both recruiting Latino faculty and familiarizing all faculty with the needs of this specific demographic.

**Community partnerships.** The majority of ongoing collaborative efforts between school districts and higher education institutions to address access, retention, and achievement gap issues for underrepresented students called attention to universities and school districts. Research recognized universities as the central partners in working with school district or community organizations (Carey, 2004; Gomez, Bissell, Danziger, & Casselman, 1990; Grant & Murray, 1999; Henschel & McLaughlin, 1992; Ravitch, 2000; Timpane & White, 1998). This traditional model of partnerships, one where the university is the focal point, has created some success with the majority population of postsecondary students. However, it has harvested little fruit as it relates to underrepresented minority populations like Latinos.

Researchers suggested that universities and school districts search for new avenues of addressing entrenched community problems, such as lack of college access. One new avenue would be the third culture, where neither the postsecondary institutions
nor the K-12 schools are the focal point (Kezar, 2007). Nuñez and Oliva (2009) stated that “new approaches to collaboration that involve creating cultural norms that are neither K-12 nor higher education, but something else—some sort of third perspective and organizational culture that is co-created by multiple stakeholders in multiple and disparate contexts” is needed (p. 332). In this view, an authentic P-20 approach involves a situation in which K-12, higher education, and other stakeholders build new knowledge and practice together in a bi-directional or dialogic manner, with neither sector being privileged (Oliva, 2002). With this third culture colleges can better address the needs of underrepresented students.

Research suggested that one way to create a third culture was through participatory action research (PAR) (Jarsky, McDonough, & Nunez, 2009). This strategy erodes the walls of distrust and shifts the concept of control from the lead researcher to the students. In this sense the lead researcher is more a facilitator who creates interactions of inquiry and learning (Weerts, 2007). The aims of PAR are to help develop public knowledge, contribute to the improvement of problem situations and to develop the self-help competencies of people facing problems. PAR recognizes that people learn through active adaptation of their existing knowledge in response to their experiences with other people in their environment (Jarsky et al., 2009). In the college setting, administrators can do well by employing this strategy. The natural process of utilizing Latinos’ prior experiences and building on them in this action research environment allows them to “fine tune” and formalize their experiences.

Literature has discussed in depth the multiple challenges that Latino families face when trying to understand and participate in the post-secondary world. These challenges
have hindered many Latino students from enrolling and/or persisting in the colleges and university. Researchers suggest that there is an opportunity for partnerships between parents and schools to have an impact on first-generation Latino students’ aspirations and preparation for college. In order for these partnerships to be successful, Springer & Girolami (2007) stated three types of strategies must be employed:

1) Strategies that directly serve students
2) Strategies that engage parents and the larger community
3) Strategies that change the state and institutional policies that govern how students experience education.

The goal of partnerships is to engage each entity that impacts the Latino student’s life. By engaging the student, the parent, and the community, one can holistically develop the child.

In order to engage the students, community partners must create a personal connection with students to help boost their achievement (Springer & Girolami, 2007). Often partnerships begin and exist between educational institutions without forging personal connections with individuals. These partnerships struggle because they do not fully address the needs of each student. While they are able in some cases to prohibit fatal damage they struggle to stop the problem at its roots. It is vital that partnerships develop positive connections with students to receive the best results.

Parents are cited as one of the top three sources of college information and help for students, yet most parents hold erroneous beliefs about crucial information, such as the cost of college (Auerbach, 2004). This is an area in which partnerships are important. Springer & Girolami (2007) recommended significant strategies that have been
successful with encouraging the college going experiences of young Latino students. This research suggests that there are at least four arenas of work that have been successful with parents. The first arena was to reach Latino families by starting in the early grades, with information about getting a college education. The meta-analysis here points to the following:

1) Teach parents about college-going so they can share information with other parents.

2) Host orientations for the families of college-going students.

3) Take parents and families on college visits

4) Ask students what their parents need to know in order to support college aspirations

5) Use the media and technology to reach parents with college preparatory information (Springer & Girolami, 2007)

In addition, Springer & Girolami (2007) suggested best practices for community partnerships through the ENLACE (ENgaging LAtno Communities for Education) initiative. The recommended practices embedded in this initiative were as follows:

1) Create family centers

2) Sponsor Latino “Parent Information Night” to empower with knowledge about how schools systems work.

3) Create intergenerational academic programs for both parents and students.

Rooted in all of the concepts that were supported by literature were two premises: open the lines of communication, and educate the Latino family to create a culture of education. Within the literature one can find a number of community organizations that
have bought in to these ideas and have received positive results (Springer & Girolami, 2007).

Auerbach (2004) presented invaluable information regarding successful partnerships. This body of research discussed the Futures and Families program. Futures and Families works to narrow the information gap, enhance social networks, and decrease college inequities in schooling. The result of the work of the Futures and Families program has been shown to equip Latino families with new knowledge and confidence. Additionally, Futures and Families teaches Latino families how to interact with educational institutions with confidence, thus easing students’ pathway to college.

Another program that has shown promise for encouraging partnerships is the GEAR UP Program. This program fosters achievement by educating parents and students as well as supplying students with peer mentors to help transition both academically and socially. Additionally, GEAR UP project provides an example of how scholarly engagement is applied to address the Latina/o educational achievement gap on a local level. Several school districts are finding programs like GEAR UP beneficial to achievement.

Arredondo & Castillo (2011) highlighted the GEAR UP success at Bryan Independent School District in Bryan, Texas. The school partnered with GEAR UP to create a six-year, school-based intervention consisting of mentoring, tutoring, and academic and career counseling to facilitate graduation and preparation for postsecondary education. The partnership provided services to a cohort of seventh-grade students and followed this same cohort of students for six years. In addition, GEAR UP has helped to encourage partnerships to be developed between universities, businesses, and community
organizations to develop specific programs to meet the needs of cohort students and their parents. By creating a partnership that focuses on students for an extended period of time, it allows stakeholders to tailor the programs to address the needs of the community. This model not only addresses the need for community partnership but long term partnerships that listen to the voices of all stakeholders.

**Family outreach.** As a best practice for the recruitment and retention of Latino students, institutions of higher education must work to reach the entire family, not just the student. Family outreach is a well-established best practice in literature. Ortiz (2004) recognized that the role of family in Latino education is discussed and recognized to the point of borderline stereotype; regardless, the family does influence “college choice, motivation, and the integration of students into campus communities” (p. 91). A study on Latino degree attainment by Garza Martinez (2009) found that Latino students mostly mentioned parental motivation, guidance, and support as the influences that caused them to academically succeed (p. 83). Additional studies by Pino (2005), Cross (2011), and Mina, Cabrales, Juarez, & Rodriguez-Vasquez (2004) also pointed to the importance of the family on student persistence in higher education. Kelly et al. (2010) recognized that Latino consumers needed better information regarding which school to attend. Latino students and their families can suffer from a lack of information about various aspects of college, and Latino students are particularly susceptible to enrolling in a school that does not match their institutional fit. Informing students and their parents about the differences in institutions would lead to a better college match, and in turn increase graduation rates.
Numerous recommendations and practices are mentioned in the literature on how an institution could include the family in the college-decision process. The majority of the recommendations revolved around communication, family recruitment activities, academic and social programs for parents, and special activities for Latino families. For communication, institutions of higher education could offer financial aid sessions for parents in Spanish and English (Cross, 2011; Garza Martinez, 2009), train and utilize bilingual admissions counselors (Cross, 2011; Tornatzky et al., 2002), and advertise and recruit using materials in both Spanish and English (American Association of State Colleges and Universities [AASCU], 2007; Cross, 2011; Mina et al., 2004; Tornatzky et al., 2002). Recruitment activities for Latino students and their families could include orientation programs where families are invited to attend and participate (AASCU, 2007; Ortiz, 2004; Springer & Girolami, 2007), recruitment parties and receptions hosted in the homes of current Latino students (Garza Martinez, 2009), and creating campus visits for families that are visible and economically/logistically accessible to the Latino community (Tornatzky et al., 2002).

Academic and social programs for parents would specifically focus on the parents, therefore encouraging and helping them stay involved during their child’s enrollment at the institution. Acknowledging parents as individuals who can help their children in the educational process empowers them to learn and help others. Best practices included offering courses and programs for parents on educational advocacy (Springer & Girolami, 2007), connecting Latino parents of prospective students with parents of current Latino students (Ortiz, 2004), and involving Latino parents in institutional recruitment efforts (Mina et al., 2004). For special activities designed to
reach Latino families, literature suggested asking Latino students and their families to
pose for institutional publications, such as recruitment brochures (Mina et al., 2004), and
holding special graduation activities for Latino students (Ortiz, 2004; AASCU, 2007).

Financial aid. Removing financial barriers to improve the recruiting, retention,
and persistence of Latino students was noted as a top effective strategy. However, with
few exceptions, most provided recommendations and not much in the way of concrete
examples of best practices. The most consistent best practice focused on closing the
information gap. Springer and Girolami (2007) identified a key element to closing this
gap was to “demystify financial aid requirements” (p. 15) and the financial aid process.
Brown et al. (2003) stated that the information gap can be closed by “widely
disseminating accurate information about preparing and paying for college, and more
effectively target outreach to communities” (para. 47). In her study, Cantu (2004)
identified financial aid and financial aid packages as greatly facilitating the admission
and retention of Latino students. In their work on student retention at the Northern
Virginia Community College Office of Institutional Research, Gabriel et al. (n.d.) stated:

Colleges need to develop a comprehensive financial aid plan for students.
Financial aid opportunities need to be widely publicized and marketed, especially
towards minority students and their parents. Parents and students should also be
informed about the importance of correctly filling out financial aid applications
and the importance of selecting a comprehensive financial aid package. (p. 11)
One suggestion to provide information more effectively was to allow Latino
college students to guide and mentor Latino high school students through the process of
applying to college (Springer & Girolami, 2007). This mentoring would include
information about financial aid policies and process. Presenting solutions regarding various financial aid opportunities, Zarate & Pachon (2006) stated that various organizations and government agencies should create ways to deliver information and “directly address the misinformation that exists among Latino college-age youth” (p. 7). This type of communication could be a large-scale, mass communication campaign, or the information could be delivered more locally and at the school level.

While dissemination of information is important, it is essential to present it in the right forum. Presenters at the 2004 Tomas Rivera Policy Institute Education Conference described how Latino parents “preferred gaining knowledge through one-on-one conversation, rather than reading brochures or pamphlets” (Gomez, Lee, & Shireman, 2004, p. 41). The timing of the information is essential as well. According to Gomez et al. (2004), the recommendation is “that information about college and financial aid be part of a regular curriculum throughout middle and high school” (p. 41). The W.K. Kellogg Foundation recommended this communication occur “as early as possible in their school careers” and that it should be infused into the curriculum, specific recruiting events, and other community events (Springer & Girolami, 2007, p. 30).

Although “flexibility in financial aid packaging” (Cortez & Cortez, 2004, para. 29) was identified as an effective strategy, there were few specifics on what a flexible financial aid package looked like. Brown et al. (2003) claimed it is essential to “provide an appropriate level of financial aid – federal, state, institutional, and private – to help Latino students go to, stay in, and graduate from college” (para 48). One organization provided the recommendation of creating a financial aid leveraging task force. The taskforce would work “to leverage financial aid to selected eligible students and provide
supplementary grant aid, scholarships and campus-based student employment” (Galdeano, 2011, p. 23).

Santiago (2010) detailed an issue brief focusing specifically on Texas border colleges and universities, and generally on Hispanic Serving Institutions. The issue brief presented the following financial aid strategies deemed as effective:

1) Campus-based work-study programs. Allow a student to work and earn income while enrolled.

2) Guaranteed need-based scholarships. Provide low-income students with sufficient institutional aid to cover college costs that remain after federal and state aid.

3) Early college high schools and dual enrollment programs. Allow students to earn college course credits while still in high school (often without expense to the student).

4) Emergency loans and installment/payment plans. Provide access and retention for students who lack a credit history or who have limited income and prefer to pay as they go.

5) Integration or coordination of outreach activities, program information, and student services. Greater collaboration will simplify and align the financial aid process for current and prospective students.

6) Improved student/customer service and staff training. Can result in increased participation in financial aid options and greater accuracy by staff of institutional policies and funding opportunities.
7) Increased outreach. Results in greater access to financial information and resources for students and increases their participation in financial aid programs. (p. 5)

Each educational institution and state must determine what it can or cannot do financially and legally in the provision of creative financial aid packages. Regardless of the package created, the consistent theme was that it must be communicated in a timely and effective manner to Latino students and parents, as well as counselors and administrative personnel providing support to the Latino student. The translation of existing policy and procedure from English to Spanish without support does not constitute effective delivery and should be merely the foundation on which to build upon (Zarate & Pachon, 2006).

**University programs.** University-sponsored programs are defined as any type of program or institutional effort sponsored and supported by the university. These programs can be academically or socially connected. University programs can quickly attach Latino students to their institution, particularly those that are proactive in identifying and advising students in need, integrated within the institutional system, and intentional in helping Latino students succeed in college (AASCU, 2007).

Research supports the idea that Latino students who connect with academic programs or other college-arranged activities tend to feel a stronger bond to the institution and therefore are more likely to persist (Sandoval-Lucero, Maes, & Chopra, 2011). When interviewing enrollment officers at HSI and non-HSI institutions, Cross (2011) found that academic support programs were top strategies used by over 90% of those surveyed to increase Latino retention. Organizations such as *Excelencia* in
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES FOR LATINO STUDENTS

Education also understand the importance of university programs. In 2005, *Excelencia* launched the initiative Examples in *Excelencia*, which recognizes and honors programs and departments across the United States that are improving the achievement of Latino students within higher education.

One institution recognized in 2008 by Examples in *Excelencia* was Armstrong Atlantic State University in Georgia. This institution responded to the demographic change in its community by creating new, innovative programs to retain and graduate Latino students. Some of those programs included the Hispanic Outreach and Leadership program (HOLA), Latino fraternities and sororities, and a dance team (Gonzalez, 2012).

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) selected eleven institutions to evaluate in 2007; these institutions were selected for their high graduation rates for Latinos. The researchers for the AASCU found that most if not all of the institutions had the following programs on their campuses: mandatory advising, peer tutoring, early-warning systems through which faculty and staff could alert each other when signs of difficulty arose for students, Greek organizations for Latino students, tutoring and developmental instruction for those who needed it, and cultural diversity requirements for all students, as well as majors and minors in Ethnic Studies (AASCU, 2007).

Another study by Mina et al. (2004) presented a personal connection to the literature on university programs. The authors of the study used their own personal stories as former college students to present their recommendations; those recommendations included integrating Latino research, culture, and literature into course content as well as bringing in Latino speakers and presenters (p. 87-88). Other university
programs recommended specifically for Latino students included professional internships, additional scholarships and financial aid, and peer learning communities (Springer & Girolami, 2007).

Saenz & Ponjuan (2009) endorsed a focus on university programs and initiatives specifically for Latino males, considering research that claims Latino males are “vanishing” from higher education (p. 54). One recommendation was for male fraternities specifically for Latinos. Examples included La Unidad Latina, started at Cornell University, or Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity, started at Kean College, New Jersey. Undergraduate chapters of Lambda Theta Phi are already at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, and University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

When creating and implementing university programs, Ortiz (2004) recommended the involvement of Latino students in the process. Allowing Latino students to create solutions and build programs would “legitimize” their knowledge of the needs for an institution (Ortiz, 2004, p. 96). Also, because most college campuses have limited numbers of Latino faculty and staff, Latino students would offer valuable information and insight for creating authentic and appropriate programs.

Faculty/Staff hiring and development. The faculty and staff of an institution are a critical element in supporting the leader’s vision and the mission of the institution. As Santiago (2009) stated, “They are the institutional representatives with the most student contact, and they play an influential role in the retention and success of their students” (p. 16). Faculty and staff serve as role models, mentors, advisors, and advocates. One study of Latino students identified mentoring and counseling as greatly facilitating their retention in institutions of higher education (Cantu, 2004).
A theme in the literature was that institutions who were successfully recruiting, retaining, and graduating Latino students maintained a bilingual and bicultural faculty and staff (Santiago, 2009). Bilingual staff included Spanish-speakers as well as faculty and staff who were Latino. Brown et al. (2003) recommended the faculty and staff demographics mirror that of the student body. Additionally, Pino and Ovando (2005) recognized that the presence and engagement of Latino faculty and staff members “represents individuals who have successfully managed the educational environment and have the ability to enhance a student’s self-efficacy in succeeding academically, enhancing their persistence” (p. 9).

Hiring Latino faculty and staff was stated as important, but the value in having bicultural and culturally competent faculty and staff was mentioned more frequently. According to Pappamihiel & Moreno (2011), “it seems that colleges and universities that are able to successfully retain and graduate Latino students are the ones that maintain close personal relationships with their Latino students and the sense of impending success rather than failure” (p. 332). Garza Martinez (2009) found that 8 of 10 participants in a study described the faculty of the institution as one reason for their academic success. Characteristics attributed to the faculty included the ability to relate to the student on a personal level, caring about the student’s learning and well-being, and knowing the names of the students (Garza Martinez, 2009).

Research performed at 4-year institutions by the AASCU (2007) found that successful institutions “paid unusual attention to attracting and retaining capable faculty and staff dedicated to the objective of helping all students – but especially Hispanic students” (p. 26). Once hired, professional development for faculty was used to develop
culturally competent faculty and staff. Examples of professional development found by the AASCU (2007) included symposiums where minority students share their experiences to the faculty and roundtable discussions to develop pedagogy for teaching in diverse classrooms. Santiago (2008) identified another example of professional development: the creation of a course for faculty, titled “Pronunciation of Names.” The purpose of the course was to teach faculty how to properly pronounce non-English names correctly. Professional development demonstrates a valuing of the students and enhances classroom participation, as well as the relationships between faculty and students.

On a broader scale, Santiago (2010) found the following initiatives for faculty and staff at Emerging Hispanic Serving Institutions:

1) Require basic multicultural training for all new Student Affairs staff
2) Increase the cultural competency of faculty to work effectively with Latino students
3) Implement policies that lead to hiring and retention of a more diverse faculty, including more tenured positions
4) Assess and strengthen the presence of Latino faculty on campus (p. 17)

**Social/Institutional climate.** As students come into the institution, they do so with a variety of backgrounds, intents, and commitments. As Latino students work to acculturate themselves in post-secondary institutions, research suggested social clubs and organizations play a key role in retention. A study done by Gonzalez & Ting (2008) suggested that social organizations, in many cases, help give Latinos a sense of belonging to their institutions. Strayhorn (2008) described a sense of belonging as a feeling of connectedness, a sense that one is important to others, and that one matters. This idea of
connectedness can be accomplished through a number of avenues. Literature explores a number of options.

The socio-cultural theory is akin to human and cultural capital theory; Coleman (1998) postulated on social capital. The premise is that one must have a reserve of these kinds of currency if they are going to be successful as they matriculate up the ladder of success. The sociocultural concept supports and advances the earlier social and cultural capital theories explaining that marginal groups can find support and use the collective capital of others to anchor themselves in difficult settings. One option offered by Strayhorn (2008) is peer mentoring. Peer mentoring programs consider the interactions of novice learners as they learn from their more expert counterparts. The experts assist the novice partners by teaching them how to navigate their way through participation in culturally relevant tasks. Novices gain confidence and skill by working through these settings with their expert mentors, gradually entering these complex communities (Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). In this way, peer-mentoring programs have contributed to retention of Latino students.

Consistent with this research is a program hosted by University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC). This program targeted high school students offering them an opportunity to visit the college campus. During their visit, the students are paired with UCSC undergraduates, the experts in this case, and are introduced to collegiate interactions. These prospective students are encouraged to return for longer residential programs where the process is broadened and deepened (Moran, Cooper, Lopez, & Goza, 2009). This process is termed peripheral participation. Lave & Wegner (1991) supported this practice and revealed that novices often learn from their more experienced
counterparts who are merely a step ahead of them. Capitalizing on the success of this program, Educational Partnership Center (EPC) trains and assigns college-age tutors to work in high school classrooms, summer, and after-school programs where prospective college students are concentrated. Student apprentices internalize dialogues used in college-bound communities and develop skills relevant to them (Moran et al., 2009).

The social and institutional climate of an institution is vital to the success of students. Hurtado, Carter, and Spuler (1996) affirmed Latino students who perceived a negative climate for diversity on a campus also expressed it was increasingly difficult to adjust academically, socially, and emotionally as well as more difficult to build a sense of attachment to the college. Additionally, a Latino student’s sense of belonging in the college environment was critical to social cohesion and identifying with a college community or marginalization (Hurtado & Carter, 1997). These findings are consistent regardless of the type of institution attended, Latino enrollment at the college, and variations in the background of Latino college students. According to Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005), social climate is critical and significant if institutions hope to improve Latino retention and create a functioning multicultural learning environment.

**Hispanic Serving Institutions**

As the percentage of Latinos enrolled in higher education continues to increase, it is valuable to analyze those institutions that currently serve large numbers of Latinos. Recent statistics showed that approximately half of all Latino students in higher education were enrolled in less than ten percent of U.S. institutions (Santiago, 2006). This notable concentration, highlighted in the 1980’s, contributed to the designation of Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). HSIs were not founded specifically to meet the
needs of the Latino population; it is the enrollment percentage that defines an HSI, not the mission of the institution (Santiago & Andrade, 2010). With the enrollment of Latinos increasing in higher education, the expectation is that HSIs will play an even larger role in the college success of this population. According to Santiago (2006), postsecondary stakeholders “need to understand the history of the HSI designation and the characteristics of HSIs to accurately assess the impact of those institutions on Latino student achievement now and in the future” (p. 5).

By definition, an HSI is any two- or four-year institution with a full-time enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least twenty-five percent Latino; also, not less than fifty percent of all students at the institution can be eligible for need-based federal aid ("Hispanic-Serving Institution Definitions," n.d.). HSIs were included in the Higher Education Act in 1992 and therefore recognized by the federal government for grants and funding under Title V and Title III ("Hispanic-Serving Institution Definitions," n.d.). Recent and current legislation, including the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007, pushed for increased funding for HSIs (Santiago & Andrade, 2010).

Because HSIs are identified by enrollment numbers and not by institutional mission, the number of institutions with this label can change from year to year. Understandably, the number of schools designated as an HSI has continued to increase. Although there is no official HSI list kept by the U.S. government, unofficial lists are retained by various departments and organizations. One commonly-used list is maintained by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU). HACU requires dues-paying members, so the number of HSIs on its list only accounted for those with HACU membership. IPEDS data from the Department of Education gave a more
accurate list. According to IPEDS, in 2003-04, there were 236 institutions that met the requirements for HSI designation (Santiago, 2006). In 2009-10, the number increased to 293 (Excelencia in Education [EdExcelencia], 2011b).

The majority of HSIs are located in California, New Mexico, Puerto Rico, Texas, New York, and Florida; in the southeastern United States, Georgia is the only state with one identified HSI. In 2009-2010, 47% of HSIs were public two-year institutions. Private four-year institutions made up the second highest percentage with 28% (EdExcelencia, 2011b). Institutions that do not meet the 25% enrollment requirement but are nearing the target with 15 to 24% Latino enrollment rates are labeled as Emerging HSIs. Data collected from 2009-10 identified 204 Emerging HSIs. Similar to the growth of HSIs, the majority of Emerging HSIs were two-year public institutions, located in California, New York, New Jersey, Texas, and Florida; however, the list of Emerging HSIs identified institutions in new states, including North Carolina, Louisiana, and Tennessee (Excelencia in Education [EdExcelencia], 2011a).

Because of their recent designation, little research exists on HSIs; however, general findings on growth and institutional practices have been analyzed. Based on collected data, HSIs are concentrated in urban areas where the Latino population is also concentrated; almost half of these institutions are public community colleges (Santiago, 2006). Additionally, HSIs consistently provide open enrollment, are more affordable than other similar institutions, and typically graduate a large number of Latinos (Santiago, 2006).

Regarding institutional practices, the organization Excelencia in Education is a leader on researching Latino students in higher education. Their Vice President for
Policy and Research, Deborah Santiago, published multiple works pertaining to HSIs and Emerging HSIs. Santiago (2008) observed twelve top-ranked HSIs and made several recommendations for institutions experiencing increased Latino enrollment based on the observations. Those recommendations included using disaggregated data to measure academic progress, partnering with educational organizations within the community, and seeking external sources of funding and grants beyond the norm to finance needed activities (p. 4). In another policy brief, Santiago (2009) interviewed HSI presidents from around the country in order to gather their perspectives on how to lead their students to success. Presidents from the HSIs tied the success of their institutions primarily to knowing the students they serve and to balancing the access, costs, and quality to meet the students’ needs (p. 3). Specific areas of focus included increasing the diversity of faculty and staff, adding academic and campus life programs specifically for Latinos, engaging the entire community and families, and addressing costs and financial aid in new and creative ways.

Emerging HSIs were also examined for their practices and policies regarding the Latino population. Santiago & Andrade (2010) surveyed a large number of Emerging HSIs to find institutional efforts and practices that serve their increasing Latino populations. They found that just over one-third of the surveyed Emerging HSIs offered programs and services specifically focused on Latino students (p. 3). The survey also claimed that Emerging HSIs that are pursuing Latino success have and/or use the following: increased awareness of the growing Latino population at all levels of the institution; use of data to change institutional practice; presidential leadership to support the practices; encouraged experimentation in creating practices; and a consistent message
and vision from administration and staff regarding how to serve all students, including Latinos (p. 3-4).

**Recruitment Theory**

In this section of literature, theoretical frameworks and guidelines of recruitment follow three categories: student engagement, college choice, and enrollment management. Although each topic also relates to student retention and retention theory, the focus of recruitment theory is in the connection with prospective students before and/or during the college selection process.

The Nora Student Engagement Model (2003) is a theoretical framework for understanding the factors that influence student engagement in college from pre-enrollment to graduation (Garza Martinez, 2009). Figure 1 shows the Nora Student Engagement Model, which identifies six major components or areas of engagement: precollege/pull factors, sense of purpose and institutional allegiance, academic and social experiences, cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes, goal determination and institutional allegiance, and persistence.

Precollege and pull factors play a role in the recruitment of Latino students. Examples of precollege factors include home environment, academic preparedness, financial assistance and support from family, and environmental pull factors such as work responsibilities and the commute to college. The assumption is that if students have
positive experiences and connections precollege, they will continue to be engaged with
the institution and therefore more likely to succeed (Garza Martinez, 2009, p. 28-29).

Arbona & Nora (2007) tested this model in a quantitative study that examined the
influences on degree attainment for Latino college students. The findings of the study
were consistent with the model and “indicated that precollege characteristics and college
experiences predicted bachelor-degree attainment among Hispanic high school

College choice was defined by Litten as “the deductive actions students go
through when deciding whether or not to continue into higher education” (as cited in
Rutledge, 2010, p. 2). Many years of research have provided institutions of higher
education with evidence on how students select a college, which is highly valuable
information for admissions directors and college recruiters. Some of the factors that
influence college choice included personal characteristics, academic ability, family and
friends, quality of faculty, availability of majors, financial aid, location of school, and
social and academic reputation of the school (Rutledge, 2010, p. 3).

The key literature on college choice suggested that students go through a three-
phase process when choosing a college: predispositions phase, search phase, and choice
phase. These three phases were theorized in a model developed by Hossler & Gallaher in
1987 (Brown, 2010; Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Perez, 2010; Rutledge, 2010). The
predispositions phase involves the development of plans and aspirations for attending
college; this phase normally occurs in grades 7-9. During the search phase, students will
create their “short list” of colleges and begin to evaluate them based on their personal

*Figure 1.* The Nora Student Engagement Model (Computing Alliance of Hispanic
Serving Institutions [CAHSI], n.d.)
needs and interests. Finally, the choice phase is where students actually select and apply to a college or colleges (Brown, 2010; Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000). Hossler & Gallaher’s model has been used to understand college choice for all students, and it was also applied in an attempt to understand the choice process of undocumented Latino students (Perez, 2010).

Enrollment management is an institution’s all-encompassing process of successfully attaining its ideal enrollment “profile” (Kalsbeek & Hossler, 2009, para. 5). The roots of enrollment management and institutional aid can be traced to Harvard College in the late 1600s, but the terms became highly significant during the college boom of the 1960s and 1970s. The increase in enrollment during this time period was supported with new federal, state, and institutional support programs as well as a growing body of research on college choice and student access (Coomes, 2000). More recently, enrollment management has taken a more strategic approach, even reinventing itself as Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM). SEM collects research-based information and then evaluates an institution’s competitive market position before determining its optimal enrollment profile (Kalsbeek, 2006; Kalsbeek & Hossler, 2009).

Kalsbeek (2006) described four orientations to SEM: administrative, student-focused, academic, and market-centered. An institution that practices administrative orientation focuses on the integration of all the administrative processes practiced by an institution. This orientation is the traditional approach to enrollment management, where all the processes are housed under one leader. Student-focused orientation focuses on the student as an individual person; institutions with this orientation seek to maximize student satisfaction, similar to a student affairs program. The academic orientation
concentrates on the development and integrity of academic programs and curriculum. The academic focus is to ensure the institution meets the needs of students through its academic vision. An institution with a market-centered orientation understands the external marketplace in which the institution exists; the focus is on external realities rather than internal processes. Although Kalsbeek’s theory on SEM does not connect exclusively with the Latino population, institutions that used a student-focused or market-centered orientation would be more successful in understanding the needs of the Latino students interested in their schools.

**Retention Theory**

In higher education, the recruitment of students is only the starting point for improving graduation rates. Once students are accepted and agree to enroll at the chosen institution, students must be retained until graduation. Retention is a different challenge from recruitment. Otero, Rivas, and Rivera (2007) stated that “recruitment means little if students cannot finish their degrees” (p. 164). They further pointed out that a focus on student retention is particularly important for the Latino population, since attrition rates for this population have been consistently high for several years. The challenge for the institution is determining which theory and strategies will work best for their institution and student population. Since there is an expected increase in the number of college-age Latinos for the foreseeable future, it is imperative that institutions evaluate their strategies and determine ways in which they can improve how they are retaining students, particularly Latino students (Oseguera, Locks, & Vega, 2009).

Vincent Tinto’s (1975) interactionalist theory is a definitive perspective for most studies of student retention. According to Tinto, students enter college with
characteristics that help or hinder their persistence. Some of those characteristics include family background, individual traits, and precollege schooling experiences (Braxton, 2000). These characteristics both influence the commitment to enroll and to persist. In his later study in 1993, Tinto added that “commitment to the institution, commitment to goals, and integration with the campus environment would be the best predictors of student retention” (Otero et al., 2007, p. 164).

Tinto asserted that students would need to academically and socially integrate into the institution in order to fully commit, which was restated by Braxton (2000): “Initial commitment to an institution and to the goal of graduation in turn affects the student’s degree of integration into the academic and social systems of the college or university” (p. 2). Tinto’s model suggested that “students are the primary if not only actor in pursuing an undergraduate degree” (Oseguera et al., 2009, p. 25). This perspective appeared to place the burden on the student and absolve the institution of any responsibility for retaining the student.

Many theories more recently developed still reference Tinto’s model and use it as a foundational cornerstone; nevertheless, Tinto’s theory has been revised, critiqued, and even abandoned by other theorists on the subject. One of the major critiques of Tinto’s work is that the model assumes students will need to assimilate into traditional college society in order to persist at an institution; this places the burden of retention almost entirely on the student (Oseguera et al., 2009; Rendón, Jalomo, & Nora, 2000, p. 128-129). Oseguera et al. (2009) stated that the applicability Tinto’s model “to ethnically and culturally diverse students has increasingly been questioned” (p. 28).
Later theorists, such as Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon (2004), included college experiences in the retention discussion, which eventually led to the idea of a shared responsibility for retention between both the student and the institution. In their work, Braxton et al. (2004) defined college student departure “as the result of individual students interacting with their institutions in a specific context and that ‘the onus of retention or persistence [does not] rest with the individual students’” (Oseguera et al., 2009, p. 26). They suggested that persistence and retention are two different things. Persistence is the outcome of student behavior, and retention is the outcome of institutional behavior and effort. This perspective alone should give insight into the complexities of factors pertaining to persistence and retention.

In their reframing of Tinto’s model, Braxton et al. (2004) made several recommendations for successful retention practices, including the following:

1) Residential colleges and universities have mandatory orientation programs that provide opportunities for quality interpersonal interactions with peers.

2) All 1st year students be required to live on campus in order to develop a sense of community and increased social interaction.

3) Promote and encourage proactive behavior during the 1st year of college as it facilitates the successful transition to college.

4) Administration must achieve and maintain a critical mass of students enrolled and retained.

5) Administration must make space for diverse students (e.g. special programs, events, and tangible acts), showing that the institution honors the history and culture of different racial and ethnic groups. (Oseguera et al., 2009, p. 28-29)
Similar to Braxton et al., Rendón, et al., (2000) offered the concept of “dual socialization,” when institutions share responsibility for successfully integrating students into the social and cultural fabric of the institution (Jensen, 2011, p. 1). Rendón et al. (2000) took particular issue with the assimilation perspective of Tinto with minority students. They asserted that much research on student retention and departure was performed during a time when “it was believed that minority individuals were engaged in a self-perpetuating cycle of poverty and deprivation and that they could avoid societal alienation…by adapting into the dominant culture” (p. 128). Also, research on retention was occurring before a critical mass of minority students were on campuses; therefore, much of the historical knowledge was based on white male participants. Rendón et al. (2000) believed that traditional theories of retention need extending “to uncover race, class, and gender issues (among others) that impact retention for diverse students in diverse institutions” (p. 151).

Although literature suggests that it has not been around long enough to be empirically tested, the geometric model of student persistence proposed by Swail, Redd, and Perna was applicable because of its focus on minority student retention (Oseguera et al., 2009). Their retention model proposed re-conceptualizing “the relationships between academic achievement and persistence that explicitly focuses on institutional services and practices and not individual behavior” (Oseguera et al., 2009, p. 29). This proposal appeared to be in complete opposite position from Tinto and consistent with the responsibility of retention falling squarely on the shoulders of the institution. Swail, Redd, and Perna’s retention framework included five areas for institutional focus:
financial aid, recruitment and admissions, academic services, curriculum and instruction, and student services (Oseguera et al., 2009).

Despite the attention given to retention theory and efforts over the last three decades, Latino retention efforts have had limited success. Some suggest this is due to attempts “to fit the Latina/o experience into existing theories, designed to explain the experiences of White college students” (Oseguera et al., 2009, p. 27). To effectively measure the success or failure of Latino retention efforts, it must be viewed from a context specific to the Latino experience.

**Summary of Chapter Two**

Chapter 2 first reviewed the current status of Latinos in higher education in the United States, and more specifically, in Tennessee. Research indicated that although Latinos are the fastest growing population, they continue to be the least educated. There were historic enrollment numbers for Latino students in 2009-2010; however, enrollment does not equate to persistence or graduation. In Tennessee specifically, in 2010 the degree attainment rate for Latinos was 15% compared to 32% for Whites. Despite the current underrepresentation in institutions of higher education, the overall enrollment rates are rising.

The second section identified the variety of barriers Latino students face in their pursuit of higher education. These barriers hinder their access and ability to enroll and persist. The greatest barrier to access and persistence according to the literature was access to financial aid. According to the literature, Latino students received the lowest amount of financial aid of any ethnic group. The Latino is affected directly by way of tuition costs and other expenses, as well as indirectly by lost income due to attending
college. Even if eligible for financial aid, many Latino students were not aware of the opportunities.

The family and culture was also identified as a barrier. The decision to attend college can have a major impact on the family dynamic within the Latino culture. The Latino student may experience conflicting emotions between attending college and the perceived severing of attachment and identification with their family, both immediate and nuclear.

Language barriers were noted to have a significant impact on the Latino student experience. Lack of English language skills was a barrier in and of itself, but it also served to exacerbate many of the other barriers. The literature indicated that limited English languages skills were a major reason for Latino students leaving school. Additionally, it caused difficulties for students and families in navigating the higher education process.

A barrier closely associated with family and language was lack of access and understanding. Many Latino families do not have experience in navigating the higher education process and are embarrassed to admit they do not understand. The literature indicated Latino students have a greater need to rely on outside sources to help guide them.

The last barrier was the political and legal climate. The citizenship and/or immigration status of the Latino student, and his or her family, can prohibit access to higher education and the financial aid available to access it. Current law allows all students, regardless of citizenship, to receive a K-12 education. The access to higher education is essentially denied to those undocumented Latino students.
The next section focused on the effective strategies identified in the literature. Administrative commitment was identified as key to the experience of the Latino student. The leadership should build relationships, be collaborative, engage faculty, and make educating Latinos a priority. Additionally, the development of community partnerships was identified. The goal of the partnerships is to engage each entity that impacts the Latino student’s life. The literature suggested partnerships can help overcome knowledge and experience deficits the family and student may have in navigating higher education.

Family outreach was another key practice identified in the literature. While the programs may vary, essentially it is necessary to invite, include, and educate the family throughout the entire higher education experience for the Latino student.

Financial aid packages were identified as being essential to effectively recruiting and retaining the Latino student. This is of particular importance for the undocumented student who does not have access to traditional aid. The literature suggested institutions must demystify financial aid requirements and the process, provide guaranteed need-based scholarships, and be creative and flexible in the aid they provide.

University programs, both social and academic, were considered vital to the Latino student experience. The literature indicated students are more likely to persist if they feel a strong bond to the institution. The programs must aid students in the transition to higher education and then support them once they are there. Some examples of effective programs identified were mentoring, early warning systems, and celebrations of heritage.

Lastly, faculty and staff were identified as being key players in the recruitment and retention of students. Ideally, they would be bilingual or bicultural; however, by just
being culturally aware and competent, much can be achieved. The connections between faculty-staff and students were noted as a powerful influence on the student’s persistence.

The last section of the chapter provided information on Hispanic Serving Institutions and theories related to recruitment and retention. To be identified as a Hispanic Serving Institution, the total full-time Latino student population must be at least 25%. These institutions, typically two-year schools and located in states that border Mexico, can provide many examples of programs and practices that have been found to be effective in recruiting and retaining Latino students. Finally, a brief identification of theories pertaining to recruitment and retention was presented.

The following chapter addresses the Methodology, with specific presentation of the research design, the role of the researcher, population, participants and sampling procedures used, instrumentation and materials, data collection, and data analysis and storage.
Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter restates the purpose of the study as well as the research questions addressed. An explanation of the research design is presented, followed by a description of the role of the researcher, population and participants, sampling procedures used, and instrumentation. In addition, data collection, analysis, and storage are described. The chapter concludes with a summary of the methodology.

Purpose of the Study

The intent of this research study was to identify the perceived effective strategies utilized by colleges and universities to recruit, retain, and graduate Latino students. The study specifically focused on how TICUA member institutions recruit and retain Latino students in their schools throughout the state of Tennessee.

Research Questions

Four research questions were developed for focus and direction. These four research questions were developed from the literature review and guide the current study:

Q1: What factor(s) did Latino students in TICUA member institutions perceive as influential in their decision to enroll at a particular institution?
Q2: What factor(s) do Latino students in TICUA member institutions perceive as influential in their decision to persist at that institution?
Q3: What strategies should TICUA member institutions implement to recruit and enroll Latino students?
Q4: What strategies should TICUA member institutions implement to retain Latino students?

**Research Design**

This study followed a qualitative design, utilizing case study methodology to collect detailed information through focus groups, in-depth interviews, and the collection of artifacts, such as brochures, recruiting materials, and detailed scholarship information. The purpose of qualitative research is to provide in-depth understanding of a human experience; researchers must ask how and why questions to get to this level of meaning (Lichtman, 2010). The goal of qualitative research is not to provide broad, generalizable findings, as in quantitative research, but instead to give a voice to the studied population and to allow others to apply the findings to their own situations (Lichtman, 2010; Pino, 2005). According to Lichtman (2010), qualitative research in education “opened up” in the 1980’s, allowing more voices to be heard in new and creative ways (p. 35). In this study, a qualitative approach was chosen in order to fully capture the human understandings and perceptions of the Latino experience in higher education.

Case study methodology is widely-used in educational research; according to Gall, Gall, & Borg (2007), case studies allow a phenomenon to come to life through an in-depth study within a real-life context. With this study, the phenomenon was the Latino college experience. Four selected institutions were studied in-depth, and the researchers traveled to the selected institutions to perform fieldwork. Fieldwork allowed the participants to be studied within their natural setting, the college campus. This case study methodology could also be called life history research. Life history is “the study of the
life experiences of individuals from the perspective of how these individuals interpret and understand the world around them” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 498). The Latino students who participated in this study allowed the researchers to gain understanding of their perceptions and life experiences as currently-enrolled minority college students.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is particularly crucial in qualitative research, for the researcher is the primary instrument for collecting data. It is the role of the researcher to take qualitative data and “thematize,” design, and prepare it so that it tells the deeply embedded story that the numbers cannot reveal (Creswell, 2008). As stated by Lichtman (2010): “The researcher is the conduit through which information is gathered and filtered. It is imperative, then, that the researcher has experience and understanding about the problem, the issues, and the procedures” (p. 20).

The researchers gained knowledge of the research problem through one formal interview and multiple informal conversations with the president and vice-presidents of TICUA. Also, the researchers attempted to understand preconceptions and assumptions of the issue through a discussion with two experts in the area studied. Questions were asked to gain insight into the Latino culture before collecting data. Finally, throughout the course of data collection, the researchers took advantage of having multiple investigators by debriefing with one another. This time of conversation allowed for careful analysis of feelings and observations regarding each focus group session and interview. The researchers were able to help one another systematize the procedures and maintain focus on the research questions.

Population
The population for this study consisted of the 34 TICUA member institutions across the state of Tennessee. These 34 member institutions consist of 31 four-year colleges and three professional colleges. As noted in Chapter 1, TICUA is an organization established to promote cooperation among private higher education institutions throughout the state. TICUA is “a strong advocate for educational opportunity and freedom of choice in higher education at the State and federal level as well as internationally” (TICUA, 2010, p. 2). In fall 2011, member institutions of TICUA enrolled 24% of all students participating in college in Tennessee. Students enrolled in TICUA member institutions represent every county in the state and all 50 states in the nation; in addition to geographical diversity, students are diverse in age and race/ethnicity. Nearly one in five students in fall 2011 were non-traditional undergraduates (aged 25 or older), and minority students were 26% of the total undergraduate enrollment during this same time (TICUA, 2011).

These institutions also serve as one of Tennessee’s largest employers, employing over 30,000 faculty and staff and sustaining an additional 260,000 community jobs (TICUA, 2010). TICUA member institutions offer degrees at the associate, bachelor, master, and doctoral levels. Furthermore, the individual institutions embrace a variety of missions; some institutions are religiously-focused, while others are dedicated to excellence in a specific academic field. TICUA aims to help all of Tennessee’s private colleges and universities prepare their students to impact the world in a variety of ways (TICUA, 2010). Figures 2 through 6 offer additional demographic information on TICUA member institutions. Figure 2 identifies the name and location of each TICUA member institution. Figure 3 shows the undergraduate tuition and fee ranges for TICUA
member institutions during 2011-2012, while Figure 4 compares the average tuition and fee charges to both Southern and National institutions during the same time period. Figures 5 and 6 highlight the ethnic makeup for both undergraduate students and faculty at TICUA member institutions.

Participants and Sampling Procedures Used

The research sample consisted of 20 TICUA member institutions that self-reported through a survey instrument, four TICUA member institutions chosen as case studies through purposive sampling, focus group participants who were persisting Latino students at the four selected TICUA member institutions, and institutional participants who were faculty, staff, and administration at the four selected TICUA member institutions.

Survey instrument participants and sampling procedures. All 34 TICUA member institutions were emailed a link to a survey instrument created through Survey Monkey®. The survey instrument was attached and sent via email by a vice president of TICUA to three TICUA listservs: financial aid, enrollment management, and student affairs. Twenty of the 34 member institutions self-reported by completing the survey and submitting it to the researchers.

Case study participants and sampling procedures. Using the survey instrument findings, the researchers chose four TICUA member institutions for case studies. Selection of the four member institutions used purposive sampling procedures. Purposive sampling selects cases “that are likely to be ‘information-rich’ with respect to the purposes of the study” (Gall et al., 2007, p. 178). The researchers believed the four member institutions would provide in-depth understanding based on the total number of
positive (yes) responses on the survey instrument and their location within the state of Tennessee (at least one institution from West, Middle, and East).
**Figure 2.** TICUA Member Institution Names and Campus Locations (TICUA, 2011). Used with permission of Author.

**Figure 3.** Distribution of TICUA Membership by Undergraduate Tuition and Fees (TICUA, 2011). Used with permission of Author.
Figure 4. Average Tuition and Fee Charges, 2011-2012 (TICUA, 2011). Used with permission of Author.

Figure 5. Fall 2011 Enrollment for Undergraduate Students at TICUA Member Institutions, by Ethnicity (TICUA, 2011). Used with permission of Author.
Focus group and institutional participants and sampling procedures. After selecting the four case studies, the researchers used both focus groups and individual interviews to collect data. Participants within each institution were selected through both purposive and snowball sampling.

With purposive sampling, the participants were chosen based on their perceived ability to provide valuable information to the study. The focus group participants were persisting Latino students who were undergraduate students at the selected institution. The institutional participants, those interviewed individually and in small groups, were faculty and staff members who were either directly connected to the Latino population or were in a position to affect their college experience. The researchers sought to interview admissions recruiters, financial aid directors, student affairs directors, and multicultural/diversity service providers at each institution.

With snowball sampling, one person is asked to recommend someone else as a case, and then that recommended person can suggest other potential cases (Gall et al., 2007). The researchers asked representatives from each institution who understood where to find information-rich data to recommend student and faculty participants. The recommended participants were then free to suggest others for additional study.

Instrumentation and Materials

This study utilized an online survey instrument to collect data (Appendix A). The researchers used Survey Monkey® to create, distribute, collect, and analyze responses. The intent of this survey was to identify the existence and effectiveness of programs,
policies, and practices focused on recruiting and retaining Latino students at each of the 34 TICUA member institutions.

After a paragraph addressing informed consent, the first section of the survey asked demographic information relevant to the study. The second section of the survey contained a series of questions, asking the participant to indicate the existence of a program/policy/practice as well as its perceived effectiveness. Participants had a choice of Yes, No, or Unsure to indicate the existence of a program/policy/practice related to the factor in question. If answered in the affirmative (Yes), its perceived effectiveness was rated on a 5-point Likert scaled index. Participants were also provided space to offer additional thoughts or comments regarding any of the questions presented, as well as an open-ended, optional section at the end of the survey to add final comments.

In addition to the survey instrument, the researchers prepared three sets of open-ended questions to assist in fostering open dialogue in structured interviews with both individuals and focus groups (Appendix B, C, and D). The guided questions presented to students (Appendix B and C) were divided into five sections: demographic information, general attitudes about college, preparing for college, influences, and institutional programs. The guided questions presented to faculty and staff (Appendix D) followed the same questions asked within the Survey Monkey® instrument.

**Pilot Tests**

Pilot tests were performed on instruments prior to use. First, the researchers sent the survey link to approximately 12 professional educators for editing. These individuals were asked to assess the survey for grammatical errors, readability, and content covered. Based on the feedback, the researchers adjusted the structure of each question, added a
third option of “ Unsure,” and edited one question for diction. Next, the researchers piloted the focus group guided questions (Appendix B) by arranging two mock focus groups with both Latino high school students and currently-enrolled Latino college students. One participant in a pilot group recommended one minor change using the word “role” in a question; however, the researchers chose not to make the recommended diction change because the word choice was not an issue for any other piloted participant. Otherwise, the pilot group affirmed all the questions and made no other recommendations.

**Data Collection**

Data collection commenced following IRB approval of the study. Additionally, the researchers collected case study data from the four selected member institutions after an appropriate person at each institution granted permission.

The 34 TICUA member institutions were asked to complete a survey on their practices and policies related to Latino enrollment and retention, to be completed by an appropriate representative(s) of the institution. The survey instrument was attached and sent via email by a vice president of TICUA to three TICUA listservs: financial aid, enrollment management, and student affairs. Two weeks later, a follow-up email was sent to the same listservs as a reminder to complete the survey. One week after the follow-up email, the researchers contacted all unresponsive institutions with an email and/or phone call to encourage participation.

After collecting the surveys, the researchers analyzed the survey data to select four TICUA member institutions as case studies. With the help of a TICUA vice president, the researchers contacted each of the chosen institutions and requested
permission to visit their campus in order to meet with administrators, faculty, staff, and students. Upon receipt of permission, a point of contact was established at each institution to aid in coordinating the visit. Coordination included arranging locations for focus groups to meet, informing the students, and scheduling meetings with relevant faculty, staff, and administration. The researchers provided each point of contact with an informational flyer (Appendix E) to email and send to Latino students on their campus.

The researchers traveled to each of the four selected institutions and spent one or two days on campus. To gain better understanding of the climate and community, the researchers ate in the university cafeteria at all four institutions, and they also participated in a campus tour, conducted by the admissions department, at three of the institutions. Two focus group discussions with persisting Latino students were conducted at each institution, for a total of eight focus group sessions. Each focus group contained two to seven participants and lasted approximately one hour each. Participants were provided an informed consent form to review and sign before the sessions began. The participants were also provided a blank copy of the informed consent for their own records. Students who agreed to participate and signed the informed consent were provided a $5 Starbucks gift card before the session and audio recording began.

At the beginning of each focus group session, participants were asked to provide their name, country of origin, educational background, and classification by year. At this point, the researcher provided a brief explanation of the study and began using the guided questions. In the interest of maintaining consistency, the same researcher served as primary interviewer for each of the eight focus group sessions. The remaining two
researchers served as note-takers and observers. At the conclusion of questioning by the primary interviewer, the other researchers asked questions to clarify responses provided.

Additional data were collected through individual and group interviews with faculty, staff, and administration at each case study institution. The researchers sought to interview the following people and/or job positions at each institution: Financial Aid Director, Enrollment Dean, Admissions Recruiter for students of color, and Multicultural or Diversity Office Director. The researchers interviewed two to eight participants at each case study, with interviews lasting approximately thirty minutes each. These interviews were conducted using guided questions. All participants were provided an informed consent to review and sign before the interview began, and each participant was given a blank informed consent to keep for his or her own records. Participants were informed that follow-up interviews might also be conducted to ensure accuracy of the data gathered.

The researchers collected materials, brochures, and other literature from each institution as additional data. Memo writing during each visit allowed the researchers to document nonverbal cues, personal thoughts, and other reflections before leaving each institution.

Data Analysis and Storage

Upon the conclusion of each case study visit, the digital audio files were uploaded to the researchers’ computers and prepared for transcription. Once the data were collected and transcribed, the data were printed in three copies and inserted into notebooks. Next, the researchers manually coded all interview and focus group data in two rounds. The four research questions guided all coding completed. First, each
researcher individually coded using a combination of InVivo and Descriptive coding methods. The individual researchers coded in individual notebooks; the notebooks were divided by case study, and blank space was provided to write codes directly onto the paper.

During the second round of coding, the researchers coded as a group, using Pattern coding methodology. The researchers first combined all codes and began to find similar patterns. Once codes were assigned, the researchers developed categories; from the categories, the researchers analyzed and generated themes. Themes were divided into two sections: those derived from the focus group interviews, and those derived from faculty and staff interviews.

Through the triangulation of survey instrument data, focus group data, individual interview data, and collected literature and materials, the researchers were able to increase the soundness of the findings. The survey instrument data provided a starting point for conversation and discussion. The focus group data provided perspectives from Latino students, while the individual interviews provided perspectives from faculty, staff, and administration. Finally, the literature and materials collected allowed the researchers to compare perspectives with formal advertised information.

After the analysis of the data and completion of the research project, the data will be saved for at least one year. Data will be preserved in a locked file cabinet or in password-protected files in an office within the College of Education at Lipscomb University.

Summary
This chapter reviewed the methodology utilized for the study. After restating the purpose and research questions, the qualitative research design was described. Additional sections in Chapter 3 include the role of the researchers, population, participants and sampling procedures followed, instrumentation, and data storage.

Data collection methods included a survey instrument for all TICUA member institutions, focus group interviews with persisting Latino students at four selected TICUA member institutions, and individual interviews with faculty, staff, and administration at the same selected institutions. Collected qualitative data were analyzed through InVivo, Descriptive, and Pattern coding methodology. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study.
Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of the study. The first section presents the response rate and the findings of the institutional responses to the survey instrument. The second section provides site descriptions and participant demographics of the four TICUA member institutions selected as case studies. The third section presents emerged themes from the individual and group interviews conducted with faculty, staff, and administration of the selected institutions. Finally, the fourth section presents emerged themes from the focus groups conducted with persisting Latino students. A summary of the chapter concludes Chapter 4.

Response Rate and Findings of Survey Instrument

All 34 TICUA member institutions were emailed a link to a survey instrument created through Survey Monkey®. Specifically, it was distributed to the following three listservs managed by TICUA: financial aid, enrollment management, and student affairs. Thirty-two completed surveys were returned, representing 20 institutions; thus, 59% of TICUA member institutions participated in the survey. Table 1 identifies the number of participating institutions and response rate by region.

Table 1
Response Rate by Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region (N)</th>
<th>West Tennessee (10)</th>
<th>Middle Tennessee (13)</th>
<th>East Tennessee (11)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Rate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the 20 institutions that participated in the survey, a total of 32 completed surveys were received. This reflects the fact the survey was distributed to various roles and departments within each institution. As indicated above, the survey was distributed to those included on the financial, enrollment, and student affairs listservs within TICUA. Therefore, multiple individuals at each institution were given the opportunity to complete the survey. To ensure privacy, the participating institutions are identified by pseudonym. Table 2 identifies the number of completed surveys received by institution and role of the responding representative at each institution.

The online survey consisted of 16 questions. The first question asked for the participant’s voluntary participation and explained that there were minimal risks associated with the study. Also, the first question described the data collection process and communicated they could withdraw at any time. All survey participants (32) elected to continue with the survey. The second question solicited demographic information. Specifically, it asked for the participant’s name, institution, position (role), and email address. The purpose of name and email address was to provide contact information in the event clarification was needed. All participants provided this information.

Questions 3 through 15 focused on identifying the presence or absence of specific policies or practices relevant to recruiting, enrolling, and retaining Latino students. The participants were able to respond with Yes (indicates presence of policy or practice), No (indicates absence of policy or practice), or Unsure. The Unsure option was provided in the event the respondent did not have the institutional knowledge to answer the question.
## Table 2

_Surveys Completed by Institution and Role_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution by</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Role(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>College A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Director of Admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dean of Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dean of Student Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dean of Enrollment Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>College B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Registrar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dean of Student Financial Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University D</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Coordinator International Studies Admissions/PDSO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dean of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Director Office of Recruitment and Admission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>College C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Director of Enrollment Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University F</td>
<td>2**</td>
<td>Academic Success Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>College D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>International Student Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University G</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Asst Director of Admissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Admin Asst to VP Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VP for Enrollment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University H</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Admissions Recruiter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sr. Director of Admissions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Indicates the same person completed survey twice**

If respondents indicated the presence by marking Yes, they were then asked to provide their perceptions of the degree of effectiveness of the policy or practice. Degree of effectiveness was marked on a 5-point Likert scaled index, using the following options: Very Ineffective, Somewhat Ineffective, Unsure, Somewhat Effective, and Very Effective. A sixth option of N/A was also provided next to the Likert scale. The Unsure option was provided for those unable to make a determination pertaining to degree of effectiveness. The N/A option, meaning “not applicable,” was provided for participants who responded No to the presence of the program, policy, or practice. Additionally,
participants were given the opportunity via an “Additional Comments” box within each question to provide explanation or details to their response.

The final question, Question 16, was open-ended and allowed the respondent to provide additional details regarding any of their earlier responses. Likewise, the respondent could provide information regarding institutional policies and practices relevant to Latinos that may not have been addressed in the questions. Any comments provided in Question 16 were added to the discussion of Questions 3 through 15.

The following section details findings from Questions 3 through 15 in table format, as well as provides the information given in the “Additional Comments” box within each question.

**Question 3: Institutional partnerships.** Participants were asked to identify the presence or absence of institutional partnerships with “feeder” schools or community organizations specifically to increase Latino student access. Feeder schools were identified as either a high school or community college. Table 3 identifies the response rate and perceived effectiveness related to Question 3. All 32 participants responded to the question; however, two participants skipped the follow-up regarding effectiveness. 21.9% of participants indicated their institution had partnerships, and 13.3% indicated the relationship was either somewhat effective or very effective.

In the additional comments box, one participant identified a formal relationship with YMCA Latino Achievers. They meet several times per year for tours and recruiting meetings. Another participant indicated his institution had some “loose” partnerships with schools that aided in giving access to Latino students. Finally, one participant indicated his institution had approved for an admission recruiter to be charged with
specifically recruiting Latino students in Tennessee, but this was a new process and the details were still being worked out.

Table 3

Institutional Partnership and Degree of Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Degree of Effectiveness**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(21.9%)</td>
<td>(62.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Two respondents did not answer

**Question 4: Outreach programs.** Participants were asked to identify the presence of institutional outreach programs to better inform Latino parents, students, and community members regarding college opportunities. Table 4 identifies the response rate and perceived effectiveness related to Question 4. All 32 participants responded to the question; however, five participants skipped the follow-up question regarding effectiveness. 28.1% of participants indicated their institution had outreach programs, and 25.9% indicated the outreach programs were either somewhat effective or very effective.

The YMCA Latino Achievers was once again mentioned as being an invaluable relationship and one that opened many doors to Latino students and parents. One participant further indicated seeing more parent involvement related to college readiness from the association with organization Conexión Americas.

Another participant indicated a close connection with administrators in the Brownsville Independent School District in Brownsville, Texas, in their recruiting
efforts. Additionally, this institution was piloting a local program with Spanish-speaking churches to further attract Latino students.

Table 4

*Institutional Outreach Programs and Degree of Effectiveness*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Degree of Effectiveness**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(28.1%)</td>
<td>(56.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Five respondents did not answer

Lastly, one participant indicated his institution would be holding their inaugural information/outreach program for underrepresented minorities this summer. Two other participants indicated they were in the process of developing outreach and recruiting strategies.

**Question 5: Financial aid.** Participants were asked to identify the presence or absence of institutional financial aid packages or scholarships specific to the needs of Latino students. Table 5 identifies the response rate and perceived effectiveness related to Question 5. All 32 participants responded to the questions; however, 4 participants skipped the follow-up regarding effectiveness. 40.6% of participants indicated their institution had financial aid packages or scholarships specific to the needs of Latino students, and 35.7% indicated the financial aid packages or scholarships were either somewhat effective or very effective in recruiting and retaining Latino students.
Several participants provided additional comments regarding financial aid and scholarships. One participant indicated his institution has one scholarship specified to under-represented minorities, but it is not ethnicity specific.

Table 5

*Institutional Financial Aid or Scholarship and Degree of Effectiveness*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Degree of Effectiveness**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very Ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13 (40.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13 (40.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>6 (18.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Four respondents did not answer**

The YMCA Latino Achievers program was identified as a means for specific grant opportunities, ranging from $3,000 to $5,500. Their students are also eligible for academic scholarships based on their ACT score. This participant indicated he believed the grant money could be raised to meet the increased yearly tuition costs. He also indicated the development of a new program for emerging leaders, specifically sophomores and upperclassmen, which allows them to gain more scholarship money.

Another participant described two opportunities that were specific to National Hispanic Scholars (NHS). If students are NHS Finalists, they are automatically eligible for an award that equates to three-quarters tuition. NHS Honorable Mention students are eligible for an award that provides half-tuition. Lastly, the participant identified a minority scholarship that provides up to $2000 annually.
Question 6: Immersion programs. Participants were asked to identify the presence or absence of institutional pre-freshman immersion programs specific to Latino students or other minority students. These programs are intended to aid the Latino student in transition to the college experience. Table 6 identifies the response rate and perceived effectiveness related to Question 6. All 32 participants responded to the Table 6

Pre-Freshmen Immersion Programs and Degree of Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Degree of Effectiveness**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15.6%)</td>
<td>(78.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Seven respondents did not answer question; however, 7 participants skipped the follow-up regarding effectiveness. 15.6% of participants indicated their institution had pre-freshmen immersion programs in place specific to either Latino or minority students, and 8.0% indicated the programs were very effective.

One participant indicated his institution has a program designed specifically for multicultural students to introduce them to campus. Another indicated they have a “pre-orientation” session with Latino students who participate in their scholarship program. One participant indicated his institution had a program beginning Summer 2012. One participant boldly declared, “WE DO NOT!” and was emphatic in his belief that they needed one and perceived it would be “HIGHLY” effective for minority students.
**Question 7: Cultural competence.** Participants were asked if their institution has culturally competent faculty and staff. Examples of cultural competence, such as being bicultural or bilingual, or training to work with a diverse student population, were provided. Table 7 identifies the response rate and perceived effectiveness related to Question 7. All 32 participants responded to the question; however, two participants skipped the follow-up regarding effectiveness. 56.3% of participants indicated their institution had culturally competent faculty and staff, and 56.7% indicated this characteristic was either somewhat effective or very effective. One participant indicated this characteristic was somewhat ineffective in his institution.

One participant indicated his institution had a few bicultural and bilingual staff; however, with a (student) diversity rate of 20%, they were in need of many more. Additionally, the participant indicated there were several faculty and staff who were “close-minded” to other cultures. This participant desired the institution provide more training on sensitivity to other cultures and faith backgrounds outside of Christianity.

Another participant indicated his institution had invested a “significant amount of time in recent months” to train faculty and staff in a variety of topics to ensure a more positive and welcoming atmosphere for students of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Lastly, one participant indicated his institution had a faculty position specifically oriented toward minority student recruitment. Another debated the effectiveness of the cultural competence of his institution’s faculty/staff, but did indicate it was valuable when dealing with non-U.S. visa issues.

Table 7

*Culturally Competent Faculty and Staff and Degree of Effectiveness*
Question 8: Latino/Multicultural services. Participants were asked to identify the presence or absence of either a Latino or Multicultural Affairs/Services office or department in their institution. Table 8 identifies the response rate and perceived effectiveness related to Question 8. All 32 participants responded to the question; however, 5 participants skipped the follow-up regarding effectiveness. 37.5% indicated their institution had either a Latino or Multicultural Affairs/Services office or department, and 37% indicated the office or department was either somewhat effective or very effective. One participant indicated their office/department was somewhat ineffective.

For additional comments, two participants indicated their international student services programs serve the international population, as well as Latino students.

Question 9: Faculty-Student mentoring. Participants were asked to identify the presence or absence of a formal faculty-student mentoring program at their institution. Table 9 identifies the response rate and perceived effectiveness related to Question 9. All 32 participants responded to the question; however, 6 participants skipped the follow-up regarding effectiveness. 50% indicated their institution had a formal faculty-student mentoring program, and 57.7% indicated the program was either effective.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Degree of Effectiveness**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(37.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Five respondents did not answer

Table 9

Faculty-Student Mentoring Program and Degree of Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Degree of Effectiveness**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(50.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Six respondents did not answer

somewhat effective or very effective. One participant indicated the program was somewhat ineffective. It is important to note this question was not asked as being specific to Latino students.

Two participants identified “one-on-one” advising and “faculty advisors” being in place, but no formal mentoring program. One participant identified a specific faculty-student mentoring program being in place and indicated that it “could be so much more.”

**Question 10: Peer-Peer mentoring.** Participants were asked to identify the presence or absence of a formal peer-to-peer mentoring program at their institution. Table 10 identifies the response rate and perceived effectiveness related to Question 10.

All 32 participants responded to the question; however, 7 participants skipped the follow-up regarding effectiveness. 40.6% indicated their institution had a formal peer-to-peer
mentoring program, and 48% indicated the program was either somewhat effective or very effective. It is important to note this question was not asked as being specific to Latino students. In additional comments, one participant described having a peer-to-peer tutorial program that is run by the institution’s tutoring center.

Table 10

Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Program and Degree of Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Degree of Effectiveness**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(40.6%)</td>
<td>(43.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Seven respondents did not answer

Question 11: English language learner program. Participants were asked to identify the presence or absence of an institutional instructional program for English Language Learners (ELL). Table 11 identifies the response rate and perceived effectiveness related to Question 11. All 32 participants responded to the question; however, 8 participants skipped the follow-up regarding effectiveness. 15.6% of participants indicated their institution had an instructional program for English Language Learners, and 20.8% indicated their program was either somewhat effective or very effective.

Table 11

ELL Instructional Program and Degree of Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Degree of Effectiveness**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**
**Question 12: Promote community.** Participants were asked to identify the presence or absence of institutional programs to promote small groups, cohorts, or a sense of community among Latino students on campus. Table 12 identifies the response rate and perceived effectiveness related to Question 12. All 32 participants responded to the question; however, 7 participants skipped the follow-up regarding effectiveness. 40.6% of participants indicated their institution had programs to help promote a sense of community among Latino students, and 48% indicated their program was either somewhat effective or very effective. Two specific groups, YMCA Latino Achievers and Avancemos Juntos, were identified by one participant as being valuable in establishing a sense of community.

**Question 13: Campus life events.** Participants were asked to identify the presence or absence of specific activities or events to engage Latino students in campus life. Table 13 identifies the response rate and perceived effectiveness related to Question 13. All 32 participants responded to the question; however, 7 participants skipped the follow-up regarding effectiveness. 46.9% of participants indicated their institution hosted activities or events to engage Latino students in campus life, and 48% indicated the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Degree of Effectiveness**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>(15.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>(68.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>(15.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Ineffective</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat effective</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Effective</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>(75.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Eight respondents did not answer**
programs were either somewhat effective or very effective. Several participants indicated their institutions hosted international fairs, but nothing specific to Latino students was mentioned in the additional comments.

**Question 14: Recruitment goals.** Participants were asked if their institution has affirmative action, or percentage plan, goals for the recruitment of Latino students. Table 14 identifies the response rate and perceived effectiveness related to Question 14. All 32 participants responded to the question; however, 7 participants skipped the follow-up regarding effectiveness. 9.4% indicated their institution had affirmative action/percentage plan recruitment goals for Latino students, and 12% indicated their program was somewhat effective.

One participant indicated his institution was in the process of developing goals. Another indicated his institution has a designated recruiter for the purpose of recruiting
Latino students. Two participants indicated their institutions had plans and sought to increase exposure to all under-represented minorities. One participant indicated he would “love to see” his institution become a Hispanic Serving Institution in the next 5-10 years.

Table 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latino Recruitment Program and Degree of Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9.4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Seven respondents did not answer

**Question 15: Faculty/Staff diversity.** Participants were asked to identify the presence or absence of institutional policies that lead to the hiring/retention of diverse faculty and staff. Table 15 identifies the response rate and perceived effectiveness related to Question 15. All 32 participants responded to the question; however, 6 participants skipped the follow-up question regarding effectiveness. 40.6% of participants indicated their institution had policies that lead to hiring/retention of diverse faculty and staff, and 38.4% indicated the policies were either somewhat effective or very effective. Two participants indicated their institutional policies were somewhat ineffective. For additional comments, several participants indicated the generic practice of encouraging minorities to apply, but they did not describe any specific policies or practices as examples.
Table 15

*Faculty/Staff Hiring Policies and Degree of Effectiveness*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Degree of Effectiveness**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Very Ineffective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(40.6%)</td>
<td>(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Six respondents did not answer**

Tables 3 thru 15 detailed the survey findings by each participant’s response. To evaluate the findings further, the researchers combined each institution’s survey results. The researchers grouped the surveys by institution and then totaled the number of Yes (positive) responses for questions 3 thru 15. Table 16 presents both the total number of Yes responses as well as what percent of the total number of questions were answered with a Yes. This table indicates that the majority of participating institutions had few programs, policies, or practices specific to recruiting and retaining Latino students.

**Case Study Site Descriptions and Demographics**

As detailed in the Methodology, the researched analyzed the survey data to select four TICUA member institutions as case studies. The researchers traveled to each institution and conducted both focus groups with persisting Latino students and interviews with faculty, staff, and administration. In total, 29 students and 19 faculty,
staff, or administrators participated in this study. It is important to note that all participants remained in the study and did not ask to be removed either during or after the interview or focus group.

Table 16
Total Number and Percentage of Yes (Positive) Responses for Questions 3-15, by Institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution by Pseudonym</th>
<th># of Yes</th>
<th>Percentage of Yes (13 possible)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University C</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University D</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University E</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University F</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University G</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University H</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College E</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College F</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College G</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College H</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following section briefly describes each case study as well as the demographic information for all focus groups and interviews conducted. The identities of the selected institutions have been withheld to protect student and institutional identity. Demographic information provided was obtained through IPEDS.

**Case study #1 site description.** This small religiously-affiliated liberal arts college is located in East Tennessee in a suburban locale. Site 1 is a four-year not-for-profit institution offering Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees. It has an enrollment of approximately 1,100 students and offers housing to its more than 900 undergraduate students. The school offers special learning opportunities ranging from ROTC to teacher certification and studies abroad. Various forms of financial aid are available to students including Pell grants and a diversity scholarship; approximately 92% of students receive some form of aid. Combined undergraduate tuition and room and board charges at this school are approximately $35,000 per school year for students who live on campus, $29,300 for off-campus students, and $24,000 for students who live off campus with their family.

The 102 teachers, 64 full-time, allow a 13:1 pupil teacher ratio. Eighty-nine percent of the students are full time, 11% part-time. The gender make-up is 59% female and 41% male. Eighty percent of the students are White, 6% Black, 3% Latino, 1% Asian, and the remaining percentage of students is of various ethnicities/races. Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Retention Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University I</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College I</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University J</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College J</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
at this school range in age from 24 years of age and under (81%), to 25 years of age and over (19%). These statistics reveal a predominantly young, white, female student body.

Approximately 70% of the applicants are accepted to this school. The retention rate for full-time, first-time students pursuing a Bachelor’s degree is approximately 81%. The overall graduation rate (measured over 6 years) for students pursuing a Bachelor’s degree is 66% for students who began their careers in the fall of 2002 and 56% for those who began their careers in the fall of 2004. Of the students that enrolled in 2004, 59% of female students and 51% of male students graduated within 6 years. Furthermore, when categorized by race/ethnicity, the graduation rate for those enrolled in 2004 and graduated within 6 years was as follows: 59% White, 40% Latino, 33% Black, and 50% non-resident alien students.

This small school is a member of the NAIA and offers basketball, golf, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, and volleyball for women. Men can participate in the same sports with baseball replacing softball. Site 1 is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges. They are also accredited by the American Occupational Therapy Association, Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

**Case study #1 focus group demographics.** From the first case study, 8 students total participated in two focus group sessions (23.5% of total Latino population at this institution). Table 17 describes the demographics of both focus groups. Information includes gender, classification by year, cultural heritage, and K-12 educational experience. Cultural heritage was explained to the participants as their family's cultural
background. For K-12 educational experience, students were asked to describe the extent of their education in the United States.

**Case study #1 faculty, staff, and administration demographics.** There were 8 participants at case study #1. The staff was equally represented as it relates to gender.

Table 17

*Case Study 1 Focus Group Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants Gender Classification</th>
<th>Cultural Heritage</th>
<th>K-12 Educational Experience (All, Partial, or None in the U.S.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Female Freshman</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Male Freshman</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Female Freshman</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Male Freshman</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Male Freshman</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Female Sophomore</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Female Junior</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Female Freshman</td>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Site 1 has a 3% Latino population. Table 17 represents 23.5% of the Latino population.

Those who participated worked in a number of positions at the institution. Two participants were faculty members, five were identified as staff, and one was an administrator. The researchers interviewed two participants individually, and the remaining six were interviewed as a group.
Case study #2 site description. This small liberal arts college is located in West Tennessee. The four year, private not-for-profit school offers a variety of Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees. Site 2 is located within the boundaries of a city, has a large campus, and serves 1,721 students of which 1,703 are undergraduates. Campus housing is available to the students. Special learning opportunities offered are ROTC and the ability to study abroad. Students are eligible for Pell grants and other forms of financial aid.

There are 196 faculty members; of those, 165 are full-time employees. The pupil teacher ratio is 10:1. Tuition and fees at this school are $34,464 in 2011-2012. Combined undergraduate tuition and room and board charges at this school are approximately $49,001 for students who live on campus, $49,001 for off campus students, and $39,816 for students who live off campus with family.

The student gender breakdown is 58% female and 42% male. Race/ethnicity representation is 75% White, 7% Black, 5% Asian, 3% Latino, and the remaining percentage of students are of varying races/ethnicities. One-hundred percent of the students at this school are 24 years old or younger, 72% are out-of-state, and 100% are full-time students. The student body is predominantly white, female, full-time and come from out-of-state.

The retention rate (students who begin their studies in fall 2009 and returned in the fall of 2010) is 87%. The overall graduation rate, measured over 6 years, for students pursuing a bachelor’s degree is 72% for students who began their careers in the fall of 2002 and 80% for those who began their careers in the fall of 2004. Of the students that enrolled in 2004, 83% of female students and 76% of male students graduated within 6 years. Furthermore, when categorized by race/ethnicity, the graduation rate for those
enrolled in 2004 and graduated within 6 years was as follows: 80% White, 100% Latino, 75% Black, 87% Asian, and 100% non-resident alien students.

Case study #2 has an array of varsity athletic teams. Women can participate in track, basketball, field hockey, golf, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, and volleyball. Men participate in most of the same sports, with football replacing field hockey and baseball replacing softball. The school is affiliated with the NCAA Division III for football. The school is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges.

**Case study #2 focus group demographics.** From case study #2, five students total participated in two focus groups (11% of total Latino population at this institution). Table 18 describes the demographics of both focus groups. Information includes gender, classification by year, cultural heritage, and K-12 educational experience. Cultural heritage was explained to the participants as their family's cultural background. For K-12 educational experience, students were asked to describe the extent of their education in the United States.

**Case study #2 faculty, staff, and administration demographics.** The researchers interviewed two participants in separate interviews. Both participants were female employees who worked on the institution’s staff. One participant worked in Table 18

**Case Study 2 Focus Group Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Cultural Heritage</th>
<th>K-12 Educational Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Site 2 has a 2% Latino population. Table 18 represents 11% of the Latino population.

Admissions, while the other participant represented her institution’s office of Multicultural Affairs.

**Case study #3 site description.** Site 3 is located within the boundaries of a large city in Middle Tennessee. The 2011-2012 enrollment was 3,742 students, 2,644 were undergraduates. This school offers an array of Bachelor’s degrees, Master’s degrees, and a Doctor’s degree. Additionally, the school offers the Post baccalaureate certificate. The relatively large school offers housing to its students. Site 3 is considered a private co-educational, not-for-profit 4-year liberal arts institution. Special learning opportunities including ROTC, teacher certification, distance learning, studies abroad, and weekend/evening classes are available. The institution is religiously affiliated and offers various federal aid packages including Pell grants. The pupil-teacher ratio is 16:1. There are 196 faculty members; of those, 165 are full-time employees. Tuition and fees in this school are $23,494 in 2011-2012. Combined undergraduate tuition and room and board charges at this school are approximately $36,504 for students who live on campus, $36,994 for off campus students, and $27,494 for students who live off campus with family.

The enrollment at Site 3 was 3,742 students; 2,644 were undergraduates. Eight percent of the students are part-time and 92% are full-time students. The student gender
breakdown is 58% female and 42% male. Race/ethnicity representation is 81% white, 7% Black, 3% Asian, 3% Latino, and the remaining percentage of students are of varying races/ethnicities. Ninety percent of the students at this school are 24 years old or younger and 10% are 25 years old or over. The student body is predominantly white, female, full-time, and in-state students.

The retention rate for students who began their studies in fall 2009 and returned in the fall of 2010 is 73% for full-time students and 50% for part-time students. The overall graduation rate (measured over 6 years) for students pursuing a bachelor’s degree is 63% for students who began their careers in the fall of 2002 and 55% for those who began their careers in the fall of 2004. Of the students that enrolled in 2004, 57% of female students and 52% of male students graduated within 6 years. Furthermore, when categorized by race/ethnicity, the graduation rate for those enrolled in 2004 and graduated within 6 years was as follows: 60% White, 75% Latino, 15% Black, 67% Asian, and 33% non-resident alien students.

Site 3 is a member of the NCAA Division 1-AAA and provides athletic opportunities for students in track, baseball (men only), basketball, golf, soccer, softball and volleyball (women only), and tennis. The school is accredited by several accreditation organizations including the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges, the American Dietetic Association, Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics, Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission.
Case study #3 focus group demographics. Seven students total participated in two focus groups at case study #3 (7.8% of total Latino population at this institution). Table 19 describes the demographics of both focus groups. Information includes gender, classification by year, cultural heritage, and K-12 educational experience. Cultural heritage was explained to the participants as their family's cultural background. For K-12 educational experience, students were asked to describe the extent of their education in the United States.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Cultural Heritage</th>
<th>K-12 Educational Experience (All, Partial, or None in the U.S.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Site 3 has a 3% Latino population. Table 19 represents 7.8% of the Latino population.

Case study #3 faculty, staff, and administration demographics. Four members of the staff at case study #3 participated in the interviews. Two of the participants were interviewed as a pair, and the other two participants were interviewed individually. All
those who participated were female staff members of the institution. The participants represented Admissions, Financial Aid, and Multicultural Affairs.

Case study #4 site description. Case study #4 is located within the boundaries of a large city in Middle Tennessee. The 2011-2012 enrollment was 2,345 students; 1,312 were undergraduates. This school offers an array of Bachelor’s degrees, Master’s degrees, and a Doctor’s degree. Additionally, the school offers the Post baccalaureate certificate. This school offers housing to its students in male and female dormitories. Site 4 is considered a private co-educational, not-for-profit 4-year liberal arts institution. Special learning opportunities including ROTC, teacher certification, distance learning, and studies abroad are offered at this school. The institution is religiously affiliated and offers various federal aid packages including Pell grants. The pupil-teacher ratio is 16:1. There are 229 faculty members; of those, 87 are full-time employees. Tuition and fees in this school are $20,490 in 2011-2012. Combined undergraduate tuition and room and board charges at this school are approximately $33,186 for students who live on campus, $39,411 for off campus students, and $25,698 for students who live off campus with family.

Ten percent of the students are part-time and 90% are full-time students. The student gender breakdown is 57% female and 43% male. Race/ethnicity representation is 80% white, 9% Black, 1% Asian, 3% Latino, and the remaining percentage of students are of varying races/ethnicities. Seventy-two percent of the students at this school are 24 years old or younger and 25% are 25 years old or over and 3% of the students did not report their age. The student body is predominantly white, female, full-time, and comprised of in-state students.
The retention rate for students who begin their studies in fall 2009 and returned in the fall of 2010 is 78% for full-time students. The overall graduation rate (6 year graduation rate) for students who began their studies in fall 2004 is 46%. Students pursuing Bachelor’s degrees who began in fall of 2002 was 50%. Of the students that enrolled in 2004, 48% of female students and 44% of male students graduated within 6 years. Furthermore, when categorized by race/ethnicity, the graduation rate for those enrolled in 2004 and graduated within 6 years was as follows: 44% White, 50% Latino, 44% Black, 50% Asian, and 86% non-resident alien students.

Site 4 is a member of the NAIA and provides athletic opportunities for students in track and field, baseball (men only), basketball, golf, soccer, and softball and volleyball (women only). The school is accredited by several accreditation organizations including the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the National Association of Schools Music, Commission on Accreditation, Commission on Community/Junior College Accreditation, and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

**Case study #4 focus group demographics.** At case study #4, a total of 9 students participated in two focus group sessions (25% of the total Latino population at this institution). Table 20 describes the demographics of both focus groups. Information includes gender, classification by year, cultural heritage, and K-12 educational experience. Cultural heritage was explained to the participants as their family's cultural background. For K-12 educational experience, students were asked to describe the extent of their education in the United States. This school was unique in that six of the nine students were completely educated in the United States. However, unlike any of the
other institutions studied, two student participants were educated solely in another country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants Gender Classification</th>
<th>Cultural Heritage</th>
<th>K-12 Educational Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Female Freshman Mexico</td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Male Junior Dominican Republic</td>
<td></td>
<td>None in the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Female Sophomore Mexico</td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Male Freshman Mexico</td>
<td></td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Female Senior Brazil</td>
<td></td>
<td>None in the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Female Sophomore Mexico</td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Male Senior Peru</td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Female Freshman Columbia</td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Female Freshman Mexico</td>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Site 4 has a 3% Latino population. Table 20 represents 25% of the Latino population.

**Case study #4 faculty, staff, administration demographics.** Five members of the staff participated at case study #4. Four participants were female, and one was male.
Those who participated worked in a number of positions at the institution, including Enrollment, Student Affairs, and Admissions, but were all members of the staff. One of the participants was interviewed individually, while the remaining four participants were interviewed as a group.

Findings from Interviews with Faculty, Staff, and Administration

A total of five themes emerged from the interviews with faculty, staff, and administration at the four selected case studies. The data related to programs, practices, and strategies for the recruitment and retention of Latino students in their institutions. Each theme is listed below followed by its description. Additionally, the voices of participants are presented as excerpts to illustrate the essence of each theme.

Administrative commitment. Participants indicated a commitment to diversity was better received when institutional leaders pledged their support both in word and deed. Initiatives and programs supported by presidents of the institutions garnered better buy-in from faculty and staff. Participants acknowledged the myriad of ways administration could show commitment to diversity, including maintaining active goals, valuing diversity in speech and action, providing awareness trainings, and creating formal diversity positions and services.

The word “champion” was used to describe administrators who were dedicated to improving the Latino experience at their institutions. At the four institutions, presidents and other school leaders demonstrated their commitment by going out into the community, speaking to corporations, asking business partners for funding, and attending
conferences to further their knowledge. Additionally, one participant recognized her institution’s Board of Trustees as a champion for valuing diversity. She indicated that the Board “tries to make sure that [diversity is] something that’s kept on the front of our agenda.”

Administrative commitment was also referred to as top-down support in the data. One participant expressed the importance of top-down support for minority students because this demographic normally requires more resourcing than other students. Top-down support made students feel valued; a specific example given by a participant was when the president of one institution invited Latino students to his house and explicitly told them they are valued and they are a passion of his. This same participant indicated her relief that the president is supportive of Latino outreach and support, indicating that she is simply “putting feet on the work” of the president.

The words and actions of an institutional leader were mentioned by participants at all four institutions. One participant recalled a conversation between him and the president of the institution. In this conversation, the president indicated that he wanted to move to a point where diversity conversations are removed because the institution now embodies diversity: “I want [the institution] to be, to come to a point where we don’t have to talk about diversity because we are diversity. I want us to be the leading example of it.” This same president also showed his future-focus on diversity when he told students of color on his campus that he wanted them to graduate, obtain a graduate degree, and then come back and be a part of the institutional experience as faculty or staff.
The school leader can demonstrate commitment in a variety of ways. Participants indicated a commitment to diversity was seen when leadership provided cultural awareness trainings and professional development. Examples from the participants included inviting consultants to campus, having intentional conversations and forums on diversity, and spending money on national workshop trainings that teach faculty and students how to diffuse racism and mediate diversity struggles.

One participant indicated she saw her institution’s commitment to diversity through hiring commitments. At her institution, there are two Assistant Deans who work exclusively with minority development, which was described as a notable exception:

...because at other schools, my counterparts are counselors, they may be an Assistant Director, um, they may be a part-time staff member who do what I do and here we have not just me, but we have [another Assistant Dean] as well, two of us, full time doing diversity and inclusion work.

Another participant detailed the feelings of not having that commitment to diversity from administrators, stating that she knew her institutional president cared about the big picture, but he had yet to really empower others to have the resources to do the job well.

**Relationships.** Interviews with participants supported relationship-building as an important theme, and the conversations revealed a focus on relationships between faculty and students as well as between the institution and community partners.

Participants were clear as they described the importance of faculty availability. Faculty participants were aware that students considered additional time for tutoring and extended office hours an appreciated quality. These faculty members also recognized the benefit of learning more about the Latino population and using that knowledge during
initial and ongoing interaction with the students. Utilizing “bicultural empathy” helped
the faculty members to create and cultivate the tender relationships with this population
of new students.

Mentoring was another area of relationships discussed as valuable to student
success. Participants were acutely aware that providing mentoring programs for new
students is a vital quality. Participants from three of the four institutions described the
importance of fostering relationships with students that allowed them to talk to the
students face-to-face, to support them as they encountered difficulties, and to challenge
them in their academic endeavors. Mentoring was also discussed as a method of
motivating students to reach their greatest potential. One staff member described such a
conversation:

You know, our faculty is not afraid to pull the students, one of my students
out of class and say, okay, you’re slacking. I require those who do
academic progress reports, and so if they, if one comes back as a D or F, I
just tell ‘em, if I see those letters on your progress report, expect to have a
meeting with me shortly thereafter. And it’s not a, where you’re dealing
with what’s wrong with you. It’s okay, I see this. What’s going on? Is it
life? Is it the class? Is it the professor? What could we do to help?

In addition to supporting students academically, participants discussed the
importance of supporting students when struggling with personal issues. One participant
from case study #1 articulated his willingness to support students at any time of the day,
on or off campus:

You’ll be more than welcome to come by. My rule is if the lights are off,
that means I’m asleep. But if you really need me, I will wake up and I’ve had it happen. 3AM, wakeup call, I just broke up with my girlfriend. I don’t know what I’m going to do with my life. Calm down. Grab a Coke, get some caffeine in me. What’s going on?

This quote was typical of the type of mentoring and close relationship building described at the four institutions visited. These kinds of student-faculty connections are essential toward building and bonding with Latino students.

Community relationships were also seen as valuable in the eyes of participants. Participants at all four case study institutions discussed a relationship of reciprocity with members of the community. One participant at case study #1 articulated several programs that are in place to encourage students to be involved in the community. One such description follows:

We require them to do 20 hours community service, that’s both on and off campus. We work with three or four organizations here in the little community, congregational-centered, Interfaith Hospitality Network, and the Excel Mentor program over at the local university as well as Girl Scouts of America. So we work with them to kind of help our students give back to the community.

Additionally, participants discussed how community organizations worked with their institutions and students to provide meaningful experiences and opportunities for the Latino students. A staff member at one institution articulated the multi-dimensions of the community relationships on their campus:

So ideally every student will leave with having had two mentors during
the course of their four years here at [the institution] and they, they will be interacting with businesses that have a specific diversity and inclusion model, so whether they have Affinity groups or they um are just really engaged with having a percentage of minority employees, they will interact with those companies and what’s so important is our Latino students are hearing businesses say, we want you, you’re skills not only being bilingual, but bicultural so that you understand the Latino community and you understand the American community, you’re able to serve that many more people you know? So it’s great because they’re, we’re constantly insuring that they’re reinforcing the value of maintaining their dual heritage.

**Financial commitment.** Financial commitment refers to the institution’s willingness to ensure financial resources are allocated for recruiting and retaining Latino, and other minority, students. This willingness is manifested in values, budgets, and various means of providing financial assistance to the Latino student in need. This commitment can be further characterized as being either direct aid to the student or as allocation of funds to support institutional strategies to recruit and retain Latino students.

The financial commitment to the Latino student directly was provided in a variety of ways. Some examples were scholarships and grants specifically for Latino students solely due to their ethnicity. Participants from two of the four case study institutions indicated they had scholarships specifically for Latino students. The remaining two institutions indicated their scholarship opportunities were generally for students of color.
The institutions recognized the financial challenges associated with undocumented Latino students. Since an undocumented student is not eligible for federal financial aid, it was recognized that institutional aid and merit based aid were the primary avenues of being able to meet the needs of the undocumented Latino student. Participants used words like “creative”, “flexible”, and “case-by-case” to describe the manner in which they addressed the financial needs of the undocumented Latino student. One institution created a work-study program for the undocumented student, but the participant was quick to emphasize the program was funded from institutional money, not federal money.

Regarding the provision of aid to the Latino student, the level of commitment varied by institution. While participants from all four case study institutions recognized the importance of financial support for these students, not all indicated a full level of commitment to this end. For example, one participant indicated her institution was “not at the point we’re willing to lose money” in working towards achieving their desire of increased diversity. In contrast, another participant indicated his institution valued achieving their goal of diversity so much that they were “willing to lose money.”

Financial commitment manifested itself in other ways as well. For example, three of the four case study institutions indicated they had created either multicultural affairs (services) offices or departments; the fourth had an individual assuming responsibility for this function in conjunction with her primary role. These offices and personnel had responsibility for striving to meet the unique needs of the Latino student and to enhance their overall higher education experience. The size and scope of these offices varied from institution to institution. However, each of the four case study institutions allocated
funds to support this office or initiative. In addition to this office, two of the four case study institutions indicated they had personnel identified as minority recruiters working within Admissions.

Another way in which institutions demonstrated their financial commitment was to provide training for faculty, staff, and students related to cultural and diversity awareness. This was further manifested through various on-campus events to celebrate the various heritages represented in their campus communities. Again, allocation of funds to support these activities was reflective of financial commitment to Latino, and other minority, students.

In summary, the financial commitment to the Latino student can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, both directly and indirectly. The level of commitment varies from institution to institution and may not always be reflective of their institutional desires regarding diversity. As one participant communicated, if diversity is what is desired, “put your money where your mouth is.”

Intentionality. The theme of Intentionality connects to both the recruitment and retention of Latino students at the four case study institutions. Participants mentioned the importance of intentionality and deliberativeness in order to value and show priority to Latino students. Intentional recruitment findings included the use of translated materials in admissions, supporting Admissions through recruiters who were bilingual or assisted by current Latino students, and having specific recruitment initiatives for the Latino population. Other intentional efforts included community partnerships and formal diversity positions.
Participants indicated multiple ways to be intentional when recruiting Latino students. Three of the four case study institutions use or are in the process of creating some Spanish-translated materials and documents for their prospective Latino families. Participants from two of the institutions indicated unique recruitment activities for prospective Latinos: a weekend experience for students of color and a day-visit for Latino families only. The weekend experience allows students of color to spend the night on campus with a current student of color. According to the participant, the intent is to allow the prospective students to “ask the questions that they might not feel comfortable asking other people about.” The day-visit is a time for prospective Latino students and their families to visit campus, ask questions, and observe classes, with bilingual guides and translated materials all available.

Having admissions personnel devoted to minority students was also noted under the theme of intentionality. Participants at two of the four institutions indicated they had recruiters specifically assigned to minority students, and a participant from a third institution stated that he was used quite often in admissions due to his bilingual abilities. One participant detailed the importance of having a bilingual Latino student worker in admissions:

And [the student] comes with me to the meetings and translates, and just offers another sort of voice for those students that feel like they’re different or feel like they don’t know what to do…moving forward, it’s going to be formalized. When she graduates there will be the intention of we need to replace that individual with another Latino student.
Participants also used the word Intentional to describe the commitment from others at their institutions. Regarding commitment, one participant noted that “there have been conversations, intentional conversations on campus related to diversity issues”; another participant from the same institution indicated that the original commitment to diversity came from the faculty, but now “the President finally realized, not finally, but he at that point decided to do something very intentional about it.”

Finally, participants recognized intentional effort by having formal diversity positions and multiple people working specifically to help students of color. From the four institutions, all but one have designated Multicultural/Diversity offices. The institution without a formal office, however, does have a designated person who focuses on “Hispanic Initiatives.” Additional efforts mentioned included community partnerships. One participant indicated that she is “constantly collaborating” with a local organization whose main focus is to help Latino students and their families understand the routes to a college education. Another participant from a separate institution indicated they also work with this same organization by hosting events on their campus. Intentional partnerships were mentioned because they were thought to bring attention to the institutions as places that are welcoming and inviting to Latino families.

**Student support.** A fifth and final theme from interviews with faculty, staff, and administration was student support. This support included formal diversity offices on campus, mentoring programs, and clubs that value diversity on campus. The student support programs help Latino students acclimate to college life, as well as encourage retention. Three of the four case study institutions have formal multicultural affairs departments that cater to the needs of the students of color on campus. These offices are
responsible for not only supporting students of color but also exposing the greater college community to the diversity that is sometimes overlooked on campuses. One director of diversity discussed an activity that successfully included that Latino population:

It was great! There were 32 countries out there that were represented, food from all those cultural groups, music and everything that was representative. So it’s great because it allows the minority students who sometimes feel very isolated, to all be in the same place at the same time and realize that they’re not walking across campus alone you know.

Support programs at the institutions offer many opportunities. In one institution a participant described how Latino students are encouraged to utilize one another as a source of strength. Additionally, she articulated the benefits of having a safe place for students to gather to socialize and study:

One of the biggest conversations that I’ve had in the last few months is that, here we are, my office is in the middle of the Campus Life main offices, and every day there are anywhere from 6 to 25 Latino students in the lobby sitting around talking, studying together, they will come down here and study because we are very community driven.

The plethora of support programs described in the four case study institutions are designed to foster an enjoyable experience at the institutions. While the experience of the Latino population is different at every institution, it is clear that the focus is the same. A participant from
one institution spoke proudly of their mentor program and the type of leaders it has been able to produce:

They [students of color] get the opportunity to interact with their mentors as a group, meet the other freshmen and they also get to meet faculty and staff from campus, they’ll come over and talk to them about resources and develop more personalized presentations so they get to talk to them on a one on one level.

Student support programs serve to counter negative school or community influences by providing the missing elements that help students aspire to, prepare for, and obtain college enrollment and persist once they enter college. Programs provided by the institutions attempt to provide students with the social capital necessary to achieve at the college level; they also provide important interventions that emphasize academic preparation as well as the development of attitudes and beliefs about college that will result in a positive outcome.

Findings from Focus Groups with Persisting Latino Students

A total of four themes emerged from the focus groups with persisting Latino students at the four selected case studies. The data related to factors that contributed to enrollment and persistence at their selected institutions. Each theme is listed below followed by its description. Additionally, the voices of participants (referred to as “students” in this section of the findings) are presented as excerpts to illustrate the essence of each theme.

**Financial incentives.** Financial incentives refer to forms of monetary assistance enable Latino students to enroll and persist at their chosen institution. Generally, all of
the students recognized that without financial assistance they would not have been able to attend their current institution. Several students indicated money was the most significant barrier to the Latino student when considering attending college. One student stated, “…it’s expensive to go to college. And it’s just most Hispanic, Latino students, they come from lower income families where their parents could not provide all the financial need and students have to work part-time to pay for college.”

When asked for specific influences regarding their decision to attend college or choosing one institution over another, overwhelmingly the response was financial aid. One student stated, “the scholarship is really what got me here.” Similarly, another stated, “…a big financial package, and so that really made me come here to be honest.” The students identified scholarships and grants that were specific to Latinos, as well as those they were eligible for due to being a student of color or for academic excellence as being significant in their enrollment and persistence.

The students also were aware of the challenges, and greater need, facing the undocumented Latino student, sometimes referred to as “Dreamers,” which refers to the DREAM Act. Again, not being eligible for federal aid, there is need for alternative sources of aid. One student commented, “There are donors and people that are willing to help provide the students with, you know, financial assistance. So, because of that I’m here.” One undocumented student, after her peers had left, provided details on a very creative financial aid package that her institution offered. Interestingly, she informed the researchers that this, referring to acceptance of undocumented students, was not something the administration highlighted or actively promoted in their recruiting efforts.
She indicated this had been facilitated due to a personal connection to a person of influence in the institution.

It was interesting to note one student’s remarks regarding the power of money as it related to how he perceived minorities were being treated on his campus and his decision to persist. The student stated,

If [the institution] was free and another school was free, and [the institution] was treating you this way, I doubt, I would want to stay, but I think money is that sort of incentivizer, if that’s a word. The incentives to put up with it because you’re given, you know, a certain amount of money.

Recognizing the importance of financial incentives on diversity and persistence, one student remarked, “If you wanted to keep Latino students, then you have like increasing the amount of scholarships available to Latino students.”

In summary, generally all of the students recognized the importance of a financial aid package to their enrollment and persistence. For the undocumented students, the availability of non-federal aid was critical to their access to higher education. Lastly, money is a powerful influence in the decision to persist.

**Institutional fit.** Students at all four institutions described their feelings toward the climate, fit, and personality of each institution. The theme of Institutional Fit emerged not only as the reasons why students chose to enroll and persist at an institution, but also as their feelings toward the climate of the institution. Specific codes within the theme included safety, fate, welcoming, school size, degree programs, comfort, Christian environment, relational, polite, and personal contact.
Students from three of the four case study institutions used the word safe to describe both their physical safety and comfort level. Students referred to times when lost items were returned unharmed, and a commuter student stated he felt safe leaving campus at night. Additionally, one student indicated that the feeling of safety persuaded her family to allow her to live in a dormitory:

I know my parents were at first like, you’re going where? To live on campus? Can’t you just stay here and be in the room next door? And I was like, no, they’re offering me this opportunity and I want to do it. And they were like, oh well. And then I had to go about like, well, it’s not a mixed dormitory, and it’s, you know, like they have a curfew. I have to be back at 10 pm and they’re like, okay.

In addition to safety, students from two institutions indicated that a Christian environment increased their comfort level and was a positive fit. One student indicated that he believed his institution worked to help him in multiple areas of his life: “I believe that [the institution] not only helps grow the students academically, but also morally and spiritually, and I think that’s just a big part of just being human after they get out of [the institution].” Another student indicated his family preferred to send him to a school that teaches morals, stating that “if you hang around with wolves, you learn to have a rat. So if you hang around with good people, you learn good things.”

Students at all four case study institutions commented that school size played a positive role in their institutional fit and decision to enroll. The size of the school allowed for a community feel, as stated by one student: “It’s like we’re all family and most of the time we know each other because it’s a small campus. It’s not a huge campus so we kind of share a lot between us.” Small class sizes and close interaction with
professors were also mentioned as a positive fit by students. However, two students at different institutions indicated that the small size was occasionally a negative factor, because programs can be limited and gossip can spread quickly.

Students from two institutions indicated they felt connected to their campuses because the people were relational, sincere, and welcoming. One student described his positive reaction to the campus climate as a great “vibe.” Another student spoke about the persistence of an admissions recruiter and how the persistence confirmed that he was wanted at the institution. Finally, students from three institutions indicated a positive fit or comfort level with academics and degree programs offered. One student felt the flexibility of degree creation helped her craft the perfect major for her future; another student described his enthusiasm for performing research with professors.

**Campus community.** When defining community one might extract two words that encapsulate these powerful concepts. The first is *communion*, or the act of sharing or celebrating. The second word is *unity*, which can be defined as oneness. These two words (concepts) defined, to share or celebrate oneness, is the essence of what students at the case study institutions described in this theme. It was clear that the students preferred not to analyze the differences; instead, students wanted to highlight the similarities. In one focus group a student described the camaraderie on their campus in a brief but compelling statement “I think everyone is really like, united.” Another student echoed his sentiments by describing the relationships with his professors as an important element toward building community:

I think [the institution] has managed to create a culture, for however many years, of openness. And I think the professors have a lot to do with it
because the professors are incredibly open to speak to you, to get to know you, to, I mean if you tell ‘em, I want to come into your house, I don’t think there would be one that would tell you, no.

Students not only define community as caring about their academic success but also as caring about their personal needs and safety. One young lady described how her professors extend themselves far past the classroom:

Like just yesterday my advisor and my accounting professor, you know, they call me in because I just got my first car, and they gave me like an emergency kit and a gift, you know. And like, teachers just don’t do that, you know?

Community was further defined as it relates to the relationships among students. It has proven important throughout the analysis of this theme that a sense of community must permeate the classroom, the cafeteria, and also the dormitories:

Something I love about the community, especially in the dorms, the dorms are amazing…And so we’ll leave the door open and I’ll sometimes walk into my room and just find guys in there, but they’re not doing anything, like their my friends and they’re just kicking it…You walk into your room and you find people that you didn’t expect would be there, but it’s not, it’s not weird.

A young lady echoed the importance of community in the dormitories. She described her roommates as a family and a primary reason for her persistence at her institution:

The family that I formed here, that’s what makes me stay here. Like my roommate is like my sister and my suitemates, like we’re all Mexican, and
we’re always like speaking Spanish in the suite and we’re like, we’re like family.

Finally, students articulated how the campus community helps to supply opportunities such as internships so that they can be comfortable in the larger community outside of campus. The programs observed were multifaceted, offering students an opportunity to gain “real world” experiences, create networking and contacts, and get introduced to occupational ideas. These programs were designed to help Latino students diversify their backgrounds and experiences. The students felt that the opportunity to avail themselves to these opportunities offered them confidence, exposure, and connections needed to pursue their interests and careers.

Influences. Influences refer to those factors that were considered or persuaded students in their decisions to enroll and persist in their chosen institution. The source of the influence could be further categorized as being either institutional or personal. Personal influences refer to those factors stemming from the student. Institutional influences refer to those factors originating from the institution and its policies, strategies, or partnerships.

Personal influences described were family, the desire for a better life, and a sense of obligation or responsibility. Many of the students described their nuclear family as being encouraging and supportive of their desire to attend college. Additionally, several students indicated their parents and family sacrificed a great deal in order to help provide this opportunity for them. That being the case, they described having a “sense of
obligation” to be successful and set a good example for others. One student stated, “I owe it to them and also to myself.”

Interestingly, though family was most often discussed in a positive light, several students indicated family could be a barrier as well. They indicated that the strong sense of family and obligation within the Latino culture could also dissuade a student from seeking opportunities in higher education. One student remarked, “Like I need to stay home and help my mom with the kids because there’s no one to help my mom with the kids, if you’re a girl especially. I need to stay home because that’s what they want me to do.” Echoing that sentiment, another student stated, “…my extended family kind of held me back a little bit like, you’re not going to do that, or you’re crazy, that’s not going to happen” when referring to her pursuing higher education. Another communicated there was a sense of jealousy. He stated, “The Hispanic culture is very unique in the sense that when someone might succeed, like people get jealous.”

Students also described their desire for a better life as a factor that led to their enrollment and persistence. Several students who were originally from the same location were very descriptive about the cycle that traps many in their community. One student described the situation this way:

Yeah, you stay in [home city], you go to the same community college that your mother went to, you get a degree in something, and you do like one of the five or six well-paying jobs there, you know, and then you get married and you have kids and your kids go to the same schools that you went to. It’s a cycle. It’s very much a cycle.
Higher education, and more specifically higher education out-of-state, was viewed as a means to break the cycle and improve their opportunities in life. Others viewed a “better life” differently. One student stated, “I associate a college degree with a higher earning potential.”

Students further communicated it was an opportunity to “expand your social network.” Referring to higher education and its importance, one student remarked, “I think it’s the key to unlocking all those doors to get better and just building a better future for us and for everyone.” Another student shared, “…the more education you have, the better the opportunities. And coming from a community that’s, hasn’t seen a lot of that, and oh my gosh, I’m getting a little bit.” One student shared that he had worked in construction prior to coming to college, and he saw a better life ahead if he went to college and succeeded. He communicated the end result as, “We go to school and then we’re able to provide for our kids to go to school because we have more resources available to us.” This student saw a path to break the aforementioned cycle.

Institutional influences, again, are those policies, programs, or strategies originating from the institution that factored in to the student’s enrollment and persistence. Some of the factors identified were the following: the prestige of the institution, mentoring programs, English language tutoring, flexible degrees, admissions recruiters specifically for Latinos (or minorities), partnerships with feeder schools, organizations (i.e. HOLA, Latino Achievers, and Futuro), and professional connections (Chamber of Commerce, businesses in the community). The students felt these programs and opportunities demonstrated that they were valued, and this was key in their decision to enroll and persist.
Chapter Four Summary

This chapter addressed the findings of the study. The first section presented the response rate and the findings from the survey instrument, which was distributed to all 34 TICUA member institutions. Twenty member institutions self-reported for a 59% response rate.

The second section described the characteristics of each of the four case study institutions. This section also provided the demographics for the focus groups and the faculty, staff, and administration interviews.

Lastly, Chapter 4 presented the themes identified from the qualitative data obtained from the focus groups and interviews. Themes were divided into two categories: those generated from faculty, staff, and administration interviews and those generated from focus groups with persisting Latino students. Chapter 5 will provide a summary of the research study, conclusions, discussion, and recommendations.
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Discussion

This chapter provides a summary of the research study, conclusions and the relationship of those conclusions to extant literature, discussion, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Research Study

Historically, American colleges and universities have seen an underrepresentation of Latinos in their institutions. The Latino population is both the fastest growing minority and the least successful minority for educational attainment (Bautsch, 2011; Bell & Bautsch, 2011; Santiago, 2011; Santiago, Kienzl, Sponsler, & Bowles, 2010). The facts and statistics indicated the Latino population is growing exponentially across the entire United States, and although Latino students are proportionately underrepresented, the overall enrollment rates of Latinos in higher education are rising quickly. Focusing
efforts to further improve the enrollment and retention rates for Latino students is important to meet the demands of the current workforce and economy, as well as to improve the nation’s college completion rates and satisfy the Obama administration’s goal of having the world's largest share of college completers by 2020.

Many institutions desire new, effective ways to recruit Latinos. Additionally, these institutions must develop new strategies that will enable them to retain those same students through graduation. One organization aiming to help these institutions is the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA). TICUA recognizes the surge in Latino population both in Tennessee and in the Southeast, and so the organization intends to prepare its 34 member institutions by providing resources, information, and research on how to effectively recruit, retain, and graduate this growing demographic.

The purpose of this study was to identify the perceived effective strategies utilized by colleges and universities to recruit, retain, and graduate Latino students. The study specifically focused on how TICUA member institutions could recruit and retain Latino students in their institutions throughout the state of Tennessee. Four research questions guided this study:

Q1: What factor(s) did Latino students in TICUA member institutions perceive as influential in their decision to enroll at a particular institution?

Q2: What factor(s) do Latino students in TICUA member institutions perceive as influential in their decision to persist at that institution?

Q3: What effective strategies should TICUA member institutions implement to recruit and enroll Latino students?
Q4: What effective strategies should TICUA member institutions implement to retain Latino students?

The research study followed a qualitative design, utilizing case study methodology to collect detailed information through focus groups, in-depth interviews, and the collection of materials. All 34 TICUA member institutions were emailed a link to a survey instrument created through Survey Monkey®. The survey was intended to gather information on currently used practices and strategies for working with Latinos in their institutions. Twenty of the 34 member institutions self-reported by completing the survey and submitting it to the researchers, for an overall response rate of 59%.

Using the survey instrument findings, the researchers chose four TICUA member institutions for case studies. Then, the researchers traveled to each case study institution and used both focus groups and individual interviews to collect data. The focus group participants were persisting undergraduate Latino students at the selected institution. The institutional participants, those interviewed individually and in small groups, were comprised of faculty, staff, and administrators who were either directly connected to the Latino population or were in a position to affect their college experience.

Two focus groups and multiple interviews were conducted at each case study institution. From the eight focus groups, a total of 29 persisting Latino students were interviewed. From the faculty, staff, and administration interviews, 19 people participated in either individual or group interviews on the four campuses. All qualitative data were transcribed and coded in two rounds using InVivo, Descriptive, and Pattern coding methods. Once codes were assigned, the researchers collaboratively developed categories; from those categories, themes emerged. Themes were divided into two
sections: those derived from the focus group interviews, and those derived from faculty, staff, and administration interviews.

Five themes emerged from the interviews with faculty, staff, and administration at the four selected case studies: administrative commitment, relationships, financial commitment, intentional, and student support. Four themes emerged from the focus groups with persisting Latino students at the four selected case studies: financial incentives, institutional fit, campus community, and influences.

Conclusions

Research Question 1: What factor(s) did Latino students in TICUA member institutions perceive as influential in their decision to enroll at a particular institution?

A first conclusion is that access to financial aid information and creative financial incentives influence enrollment. Latino students from all four case studies identify financial aid as a main influence for enrollment; in fact, financial aid packages and minority-specific scholarships brought most of the students to their respective institutions. Students appreciate recruiters and other institutional staff who take the time to detail financial aid information and the process to apply. Many students in this research study credit admissions recruiters and community organizations for the support and knowledge needed to understand financial aid.

According to the literature, information on financial aid is significant for access to higher education, but Latino students and their families often lack this vital information (Chan & Cochrane, 2008; Zarate & Burciaga, 2010; Zarate & Pachon, 2006).
Furthermore, Latinos often receive the lowest amount of financial aid when compared to other ethnic groups (Santiago & Brown, 2004). A consistent practice found in the literature to combat this gap in knowledge is to clarify the requirements to financial aid through publicized, accurate information to Latinos and their families (Brown, Santiago, & Lopez, 2003; Gabriel, Bettenberg, Chang, Dennett, Herzfeld, & Hoffman, n.d.; Springer & Girolami, 2007).

Latino students in this study also recognize that leaders who want to increase their institution’s Latino population will find ways to financially support them. Commitment to finding creative and flexible financing shows students that they are valued by the leaders of the institution. Corroborating this conclusion, Santiago (2009) identified the search for public and private funding as an effective strategy to serve the Latino population, and other literature noted that the leaders of an institution must go to great lengths to establish an environment where the Latino student feels accepted and valued (Brown et al., 2003; Gonzalez, 2012; Stern, 2011).

The financial knowledge and incentive brings Latino students to campuses they might otherwise perceive as closed. Providing financial assistance to the undocumented student is yet another way to show the desire to increase diversity on campus. Overall, the financial aid factor is mentioned as highly important for enrollment, and Latino students believe that flexible, intentional, and creative financial aid packaging is important to reach a wide variety of Latino students, which is validated in the literature (Cortez & Cortez, 2004; Santiago, 2009).

In addition to financial influences, two secondary conclusions for enrollment are institutional fit and personal influences. Institutional fit includes a connection or positive
feeling toward the people, the programs, or the climate of the institution. Positive feelings can be in connection with school size, a welcoming atmosphere, academic and degree programs, a Christian environment, or an overarching sense of comfort and safety. A personal connection when deciding to enroll or visiting campus is important to many Latino students in this study. Several recall connecting with particular people, primarily admissions recruiters and those who are directors of Multicultural Services on campus. Those first connections or feelings are important to students in recognizing institutional fit. Extant research supports the idea that Latino students who connect with academic programs or other college-arranged activities tend to feel a stronger bond to the institution (Sandoval-Lucero, Maes, & Chopra, 2011).

Finally, personal influences affect the enrollment of students in this study. Family is the most common personal influence; some students enroll because their families are supportive and encouraging, while other students enroll to prove to their families they should and can go to college. Students recognize that their families are motivators for enrollment, even if families have little understanding about higher education access. The cultural influence of the family is widely discussed in literature both as an incentive and a barrier to college attendance (Espinoza, 2010), and Ortiz (2004) noted that the role of family in Latino education is discussed and recognized to the point of borderline stereotype.

Aside from family, students also indicate other personal influences, including a desire for a better life, more opportunities, and a personal sense of obligation or responsibility. Overall, the students feel that a college education will better prepare them for the future. They desire a college degree to change their lifestyles. Some students feel
an obligation to attend college in order to set a good example for friends, family, and their community.

Research Question 2: What factor(s) do Latino students in TICUA member institutions perceive as influential in their decision to persist at a particular institution?

According to Latino students, reasons for persisting at an institution include the following: continuing financial incentives, campus community, opportunities, family obligation, and internal motivation. Students recognize that even though financial aid is the main reason they enrolled, continuing to provide financial support is key to their persistence. Students feel it is a responsibility of the institution to help them understand the vagaries and economic impact of their college existence. In an effort to make informed decisions, students need to know more about the “hidden” college costs that are not included in the tuition such as book fees, club fees, and other costs. These “hidden” costs cause economic hardships for new students, particularly those who are first generation college-goers. Therefore, additional financial resources can be offered.

One of the primary factors affecting college retention is the quality of interaction a student has with a concerned person on campus. Additionally, students spoke of the quality of student life that also provided them a safe environment. These students used terms such as safety, trust, and “it just feels right” to describe the feeling of community. The term that it “just feels right” was used by several students. They communicated this sentiment in the same breath as they discussed the people in the institution that showed interest in them as individuals and not just students. This factor was demonstrated in several schools in the form of additional tutoring after school hours and during free time during the day. It was also epitomized when students described relationships that were
fostered with faculty members and peers outside the classroom. Students spoke about the various programs where staff discussed social and personal challenges that new first-year students experience, such loneliness and management of finances. Additional features were mentioned such as informal social outings, such as attending institutional gatherings, lectures and shows, and athletic events. In addition, students described opportunities to work with faculty and staff on academic-related skills and resources. All of these characteristics described what was generally termed “community.” Social support is especially important to students who are away from home for the first time, are from ethnic or minority background, have limited English proficiency are first-generation college attendees, have low socioeconomic status, or face other obstacles that impede their ability to fit in socially.

Another factor that Latino students expressed as important for persistence is the availability of certain opportunities. Such opportunities presented themselves in the form of internships and mentoring programs. Some schools had extensive intern programs which allowed students to work in their expressed area of occupational interest, while others gave the students an opportunity to network with people in the professional world. These intern arrangements also produced mentoring opportunities. Students felt that these intern and mentor arrangements were vital influences for persistence in college.

Students also discussed the notion that responsibility to family was an incentive for staying in school. Latino students feel a tremendous responsibility to do well in school especially if they are the first to go to college in their family. The need to do well is almost overwhelming for some of them. Students understand that they are expected to be successful in school because their success signifies an opportunity for the entire family
to improve their social and economic standing. Additionally, it is important for Latino students to demonstrate a level of proficiency so as to give their siblings and peers hope. Students elaborated on the notion that their success was not just their own and that the entire community was dependent on them. In essence, doing well in school and staying in school is talked about as a vital factor in the desire to attend college and a contributing factor in their ability to persist.

Research Question 3: What strategies should TICUA member institutions implement to recruit and enroll Latino students?

Participating institutions, via survey and case study, indicate they use a variety of strategies to recruit and enroll Latino students. One strategy alone will not be sufficient; to be effective, institutions should use a broad range of strategies to achieve the desired recruitment and enrollment of Latino students. The following key strategies will be discussed further: administrative commitment, financial aid packages, community partnerships, family outreach, and development of faculty and staff.

The leadership of the organization needs to demonstrate they value diversity. This demonstration comes in the form of creating a culture that embraces diversity. It may be further demonstrated by implementing programs and policies that support the desired culture. Many of the study participants express the commitment must come “from the top down.” It must permeate all levels of the institution – from administration, to faculty, to staff, to students. This is consistent with the literature. Brown et al. (2003) pointed out, “policies designed to improve Hispanic educational achievement to be implemented effectively at a college campus requires thoughtful leadership, since it is that leadership that determines student success” (Brown et al., 2003, para. 38). In this
same study, they stated leaders “shape the climate by articulating institutional goals and holding faculty and staff accountable” (Brown et al., 2003, para. 38). Focus group respondents indicated that professional development in cultural awareness and diversity appreciation are further demonstration of administrative commitment. One focus group participant indicated it was important for the institution to “put their money where their mouth is” in order to demonstrate their commitment to diversity goals.

The greatest barrier to access to higher education indicated by the literature and findings in the study is finances. According to one study, Latinos “receive the lowest average amount of financial aid awarded – by type and source of aid – of any ethnic group” (Santiago & Brown, 2004, p. 8). This is compounded further if the student is undocumented.

Thirteen (40.6%) respondents of the survey indicated their institution had financial aid packages specific to the needs of Latino students. Those interviewed indicated it was important be flexible and creative in the distribution of aid to Latino students. One institution indicated they have “gone out of our fairly strict awarding policies to help Latino students.” They further provided an example of the need to be flexible when they shared a story about a Latino parent coming to pay on their student’s account with rolled coins.

Several of the participating institutions identified grants and scholarships specific to Latino students. Others identified work-study programs that aided the Latino student in defraying the cost of enrollment. It is important to remember that ability to apply does not equal access. Institutions desiring to recruit and enroll Latino students must provide financial aid packages specific to their needs in order to provide access.
Seven (21.9%) survey respondents indicated their institution had partnerships with community organizations specifically to increase Latino student access. Examples of these partnerships include: recruiting relationships with specific schools or school systems, associations with the Chamber of Commerce, and Latino organizations within the community. Focus group respondents indicated these relationships were valuable in creating trust within the Latino community and for providing opportunities for the Latino student.

Nine (28.1%) survey respondents indicated their institutions have outreach programs to better inform Latino parents, students, and community members regarding college opportunities. Numerous recommendations and practices are mentioned in the literature on how an institution could include the family in the college-decision process. The majority of the recommendations revolved around communication, family recruitment activities, academic and social programs for parents, and special activities for Latino families. Some examples are listed below:

- Offer financial aid sessions for parents in English and Spanish
- Train and utilize bilingual admissions counselors
- Advertise and recruit using materials in both Spanish and English
- Orientation programs where families are invited to attend and participate

All of the concepts that are supported by literature share the underlying premise; open the lines of communication and educate the Latino family so that a culture of education can exist in the Latino community. The bottom line is that institutions must make the effort, using a variety of communication tools, to close the information gap.
Research Question 4: What strategies should TICUA member institutions implement to retain Latino students?

Administrative commitment is vital to retaining Latino students. In the institutions that were studied it was evident that this level of commitment impacted the Latino experience and encouraged retention. We coined the term “top down commitment” and use it to refer to the investment of administrators in the support of programs that support diversity in their institutions. Latino students seem to flourish in school when top-level school administrators are intimately involved in the creation and implementation of programs that are designed to encourage Latino students both academically and socially. Latino students consistently made the point that they thrive in these supportive environments. Additionally, this “top down commitment” was demonstrated in the creation of a culture of acceptance on the campus. Administrators are instrumental when they actively recruit Hispanic faculty and staff. This strategy signals to the students that the administration is sincere in the effort to acculturate the entire campus community.

Involving the Latino students in decision making opportunities by way of student government programs and student advisory activities allows them to have a voice in the social and academic operations of the school. Both faculty and students were encouraged from the support of the administrator and both mentioned this as the start of obtaining and maintaining diversity at their institution.

Creating a campus climate is important to retention of the Latino population. Our study indicates that much of what encourages the student to persist is linked to campus climate. This conclusion is consistent with Braxton’s theory (2000) that when students feel comfortable and acculturate themselves they are more likely to be engaged and
persist. This was critical to students, who believe they do best when they feel at home. With the rapid growth of the Hispanic population in the United States, more Latinos are expected to attend college, and it is imperative that they feel welcome and supported. Administrators can do this by deliberately analyzing how their institutional missions are serving Latinos. The schools we visited were astute at creating such an environment by having events, lessons, foods, lectures that relate to the Latino culture. Another strategy is the creation of programs where the presenters are primarily of Hispanic heritage also encourage Latino students to be more involved and to take a chance in these high needs areas. Creating a campus climate is important to the Latino population. Consistent with Hurtado & Carter (1997) our study reveals that much of what encourages the students to persist is linked to the campus climate.

A positive campus climate also fosters one to feel “safe” at their institution. This safety leads to engagement and success. Throughout our research we found that a “safe place” has the capability to manifest itself in a number of ways. Many Latino students have transferred from several institutions before settling at their current schools. Latino students talked about the close communication between the recruiter and the adviser responsible for transferring over the required courses.

Our study reveals that intentionality is vital to retaining Latino students. This deliberateness begins with each institution’s administrators. Leaders must be purposeful in their formation of policy and programs, which encourages faculty and staff to be intentional about creating a campus culture where students can thrive.

Discussion
Inferences from the data. This portion of the discussion allows the researchers to synthesize the findings by “reading between the lines” of all the information gathered throughout the study. Through this evaluation, the researchers recognize four areas worthy of further discussion.

The need for a campus champion. The work for recruiting and retaining Latino students must begin somewhere, and institutions who are effectively reaching this population are guided by a determined person(s). There must be a champion on campus who desires to improve the college experience of Latino students. Institutions of higher education work tirelessly in many areas, but effective work with the Latino population should be pursued intentionally. If no one is concerned enough to resolutely focus on this demographic, then other items will take precedence. A champion needs time, money, and resources, and this person should have a formal position dedicated to the work of increasing diversity. If the champion is the president of an institution, then he/she must show commitment through actions and speech. Additionally, the president should empower others with the resources necessary to effectively recruit and retain Latino students.

Targeted policies and programs. TICUA member institutions should be purposeful when creating policies and programs for Latino students and other students of color. Programs and initiatives established without the proper support for sustainability are less likely to produce effective change. As mentioned in the findings, students of color require extra resources; minority recruitment and retention most likely will not evoke buy-in from the students nor the overall institution unless actions speak louder than words. Purposeful programs and initiatives should have the human capital and financial
resources needed to support the work. Also, inviting prospective students of color (and their families) to campus to see the programs at work is more effective than sending a brochure in the mail. In essence, it is not enough to establish a practice and then assume it will grow and work on its own. Those directly involved must be passionate, administration should be supportive both in word and deed, and students must be recruited and continually pursued.

**Recognizing the current big picture.** TICUA member institutions should recognize the “big picture” of current work for improving the recruitment and retention of Latino students within their institutions. The researchers of this study had the opportunity to visit four TICUA member institutions, and each of these institutions are attempting to impact the Latino community in a variety of ways. All four case study institutions are using effective strategies for the population, although some are doing more than others; however, as indicated in the survey instrument findings, the 20 self-reporting institutions all have room to increase practices and improve current work. From the 13 possible Yes/No/Unsure questions, 8 of those questions had more No responses than Yes; additionally, the average number of Yes responses by an institution was 5 out of 13. This information leads the researchers to believe that overall, the work to recruit and retain Latinos in TICUA member institutions can be vastly improved. The information is available and implementation is occurring, but the scale of implementation needs improvement.

**The unique vantage point.** The researchers recognize that the Latino students interviewed for this research study provide a unique vantage point for understanding the personal backgrounds and educational dreams of the Latino population. In comparing the
findings and information from this study to existing literature and research, the researchers recognize the importance of not assuming all Latino students are the same. The educational background, language struggles, and family influences of the student participants differed from what was expected, and it was clear that Latino students in Tennessee provide distinctive information when compared to Latino students in other parts of the country or in other types of institutions.

Recommendations to the client. The findings of this study provided the researchers with valuable information from which to base their recommendations to TICUA member institutions. Whether the recommendations are implemented in part or in total, the desired result is for participating TICUA member institutions to see improvement in their recruitment, enrollment, and retention of Latino students through graduation.

Recommendation 1: Institutional leaders demonstrate commitment to serving the Latino student population. Participating institutions communicated the need for “top down” commitment to serving the Latino population. The efforts towards recruiting and retaining Latino students must be intentional and viewed as a priority. This commitment must be communicated clearly and consistently throughout the institution. In addition to intentionality and communication, the leadership can further demonstrate commitment through allocation of funds to directly serve the needs of Latino students.

Recommendation 2: Provide financial aid that is specific to Latino students. Had it not been for generous, creative, and flexible financial aid packages, most of the students in the study could not have afforded the tuition and other expenses associated with pursuing higher education at a private institution. Financial aid is a complex ordeal;
therefore, the institution should be willing to explain and promote their packages to both the student and his or her family. The aid packages must include institutional and private funding in order to provide the greatest flexibility in meeting the needs of the Latino student. This is of utmost importance for the institution accepting undocumented Latino students.

**Recommendation 3: Create a multicultural affairs department or office.** Three of the case study institutions had this department (or role) with varying levels of commitment. The fourth case study had a single person whose job was only partially for Latino outreach. Regardless of the institutional level of commitment, the participants in this study indicated this function was valuable to developing relationships with the Latino students and serving as a resource center for their specific needs. Creation of this department is further demonstration of institutional commitment and valuing of the Latino student, and other minority, populations. Both student and staff participants indicated how a formal multicultural affairs office enhanced the college experience for the Latino student, giving them a place to go and a group of people to connect.

**Recommendation 4: Develop community partnerships.** Study participants indicated community partnerships provided many opportunities to aid in the recruiting of Latino students, to secure additional private funding to aid the Latino student, and to provide networking and mentoring opportunities for the Latino students. Institutions should consider partnerships with local high schools and community colleges, churches with Latino populations, chambers of commerce, and youth activity centers. While community often refers to the area immediately bordering the institution, one case study institution indicated they had community partnerships several states away due to alumni
connections and a large Latino population. Institutions can be creative in their definition of community.

**Recommendation 5: Increase the cultural competence of faculty and staff.**

Study participants at all four case study institutions indicated the relationships between faculty/staff and Latino students were critical to the retention and persistence of Latino students. All participating institutions indicated they were lacking in faculty/staff diversity. Although a diverse faculty and staff that mirror the demographics of the student body is desirable, in the absence of ethnic diversity, institutions can increase their cultural competence through professional development opportunities on basic multicultural training. Cultural competence does not require being bilingual or being of the same ethnicity as the Latino student. It requires the faculty or staff member to be aware of the various cultures, and to appreciate and celebrate the various heritages represented. Finally, this study’s findings support the idea that Latino students value close relationships with their faculty more so than having faculty members who look like them.

**Limitations**

Similar to most studies, this study has a variety of limitations. First, although the researchers were able to interview multiple faculty, staff, and students at each institution, no follow-up interviews were given. The one-time interview can pose a problem with reliability and authenticity. This limitation rests in the idea that there may be a lack of trust and participants may not provide insightful information, giving only the information that they think the interviewer wants to hear or providing only insights that the interviewee is comfortable sharing.
Second, none of the research team was Latino, nor did they speak Spanish. This factor could have restricted the responses of the participants particularly within the focus groups. Qualitative research depends heavily on the researchers’ ability to establish a relationship to uncover deep seated and guarded information. In this study a language barrier could have been present between the researchers and participants. While all of the students who participated in the study were bilingual, there is a possibility that some of the conversations could have lost its original intent in translation.

A third limitation is that no TICUA member institution that is recognized as an Emerging Hispanic-Serving Institution (Latino enrollment between 15 and 24%) chose to participate in the study. Ideally, the researchers would have preferred to interview students at an Emerging HSI institution because of its percentage of Latino students.

A fourth limitation is that one of the researchers of this study is an employee of a case study institution. In an effort to avoid researcher bias, the employed researcher did not interview students and staff. Nevertheless, the absence of one researcher limits the perspective within the interviews and focus groups at that institution.

Finally, this study is not generalizable. The study gathered personal experiences that are unique to each individual; therefore, this study is an interpretation of the perceptions of the participants who chose to share their experiences. The focus on small independent colleges and universities in the state of Tennessee narrows the scope from which more in-depth information could be derived. The demographics in these institutions can be quite different from other independent institutions in other regions of the country, community colleges, as well as public four-year institutions located in the state of Tennessee or throughout the country.
Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study present areas of interest for future scrutiny regarding the enrollment and persistence of Latinos in colleges and universities. For future research, the researchers make the following recommendations:

1) Explore the perceptions of Latino students who chose not to enroll in a four-year private postsecondary institution. Specifically, it would be enlightening to know the factors that discouraged enrollment.

2) Identify influences or factors that discourage Latino students from persisting in four-year institutions. This study would require researchers to identify former students who chose to leave before graduating.

3) Use a mixed-methods study to provide correlative data. Such a study would provide the empirical basis for subsequent studies. Conducting a similar study that correlates effective strategies with enrollment and retention rates would produce additional findings; as it is, this qualitative study explores perception only. Introducing a quantitative portion would add depth and a basis from which to validate the valuable lessons uncovered in this research study.

4) Explore the differences that family has on Latino students as it relates to gender.

5) Expand the research to identify any regional differences between Latino students within the state of Tennessee. This study could also further expand to compare TICUA member institutions with public 4-year institutions as well as 2-year institutions.

Reflections
In addition to the reported findings, the researchers individually made observations and reflections regarding the entire research experience. Each researcher had his/her own reflections, which are detailed in the paragraphs below.

**Researcher #1.** One observation that left an impression on me was student self-identification as a Latino and the way students recognized their Latino heritage. Latino students in the focus groups who did not look like a stereotypical Latino or were further removed from the first-generation experience seemed to be less likely to identify themselves as Latino and embrace their heritage. Despite their Latino heritage, they seemed to be more comfortable in identifying themselves, and sharing in, what they perceived to be the “white” experience. A few students indicated this was due to the belief they would be more readily accepted by not identifying themselves as Latino and outwardly embracing their heritage. Conversely, those that more closely resembled the Latino stereotype and first-generation higher education experience appeared to more readily self-identify as Latino and openly embrace their heritage.

**Researcher #2.** Throughout our capstone experience I had several moments where I could devote time to careful introspection and reflection. Paramount in my thoughts is the following: Latino students’ issues and concerns are very similar to those that I have encountered in the African American race. First, it is clear that Latino students suffer from a “validation” concern. What I mean is the students feel as if they are not respected and validated as an ethnic group. Students asked the question, “Do they [teachers, other non-Latino students] really know what we’ve been through?” My observations continue in this vein as I think about the “hunger” for education, and the opportunities that it promises, that the Latino students exhibit. I am both encouraged and
dismayed by what we witnessed. First dismayed at what I perceive to be an imbalance in the opportunities that these students have to pursue an education, but a bit of encouragement realizing that TICUA member institutions are making a genuine effort to provide these vital opportunities for their students. A closer introspection with the African American race reveals that this same desire is quite evident in a large number of young African American students. However, it is my experience that the number of African American students, per capita, who seek higher education opportunities is not enough. Reflecting on our capstone, I realize that the Latino population experiences a very strong familial impact on what students do and how they behave. This factor is also very similar to what happens in the African American community, where education has long been understood to be the vehicle that both enlightens and elevates.

Researcher #3. My ultimate reflection as a researcher is that this topic of research needs more champions, more people who are willing to be passionate about the higher education experiences of Latino young people. As I listened to story after story, I realized that I can be that person, that champion. Young Latinos, as mentioned earlier in this study, are “hungry” for a better life and education, and they are looking for people to listen and to help. Those who are willing to listen, help, and research do not need to be Latino themselves to make a difference. As a non-Latino female, I feel compelled to continue our research and to spread my knowledge and expertise in order to inspire others to get involved.

Closing

The United States finds itself in the unenviable position of lagging behind in educational attainment compared to other countries around the world. In order to
improve its competitiveness on the world stage and strengthen its economic future, it
must improve its college completion rates. Recognizing this need, leaders in
government, education, and special interest groups have established bold goals for the
future. President Obama, for example, has indicated his desire to have the highest
proportion of college graduates by the year 2020. A key to attaining this goal is the
improved college access and success for Latino students.

Latinos are the fastest growing and least successful minority for educational
achievement. As the Latino population continues to expand, those leading institutions of
higher education must recognize both the unique challenges and opportunities for
enrolling and retaining this population. Latinos, as indicated by this and other studies,
are hungry for educational opportunities. Too often, this appetite goes unfulfilled due to
the myriad of challenges they face in gaining access to higher education. The desire is
there, but it has to be given an opportunity to be realized.

This study identified many factors relevant to the recruitment, enrollment,
retention, and persistence of Latino students. It is up to the leaders and educators within
higher education to consider the practices of their own institutions and what their desire is
regarding the opportunity afforded by this quickly expanding minority population.
Latino students, at or nearing college age, can be a source of growth and value to the
institution desiring to embrace this opportunity. It is the hope of the researchers of this
study that the recommendations provided will be considered and implemented for the
benefit of the institutions, the growing Latino population, and the nation as a whole.
References


doi:10.1177/1538192711401917


doi:10.1177/1538192710380919


doi:10.1177/1538192709347847

Effective programs for Latino/a students (pp. 67-100). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.


http://www.nvcc.edu/oir/reports/sturetent.htm


Available from ProQuest. (UMI 3374199)


doi:10.1177/1538192705276548


http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/reports/32.pdf


States with laws prohibiting or permitting in-state tuition for illigal aliens [PDF file].


Appendix A: TICUA Survey Instrument

**TICUA Survey: Latinos in Higher Education**

The purpose of this survey is to identify the existence and effectiveness of programs, policies, and practices focused on recruiting and retaining Latino students in TICUA member institutions.

Please set aside 15-20 minutes for the completion of this instrument.

Thank you for providing your candid responses below.

---

*By completing this survey, I (the participant) volunteer to participate in this research project. I understand there are minimal risks to my well-being by completing this questionnaire. All data collected during the research process will only be reported as aggregate (group) data, and my anonymity will be protected. I may withdraw from participating in this project at any time during the data collection period. I agree to voluntarily participate in this research project. If I have concerns or questions, I may contact Dr. Bill Talon, Chair Lipscomb IRB at bill.tallon@lipscomb.edu or 615-966-5825.*

- [ ] I elect to continue with this survey.

**Demographic Information**

*Please tell us about yourself.*

(This information is needed only for collection purposes and/or for follow-up questions. Your anonymity will be protected in any research reports.)

- **Name:**
- **Institution:**
- **Position:**
- **Email Address:**

For each of the following questions, please indicate the following:

- The existence of the program, policy, or practice at your institution
- The degree to which the program, policy, or practice has been effective in recruiting and retaining Latino students at your institution

Space is provided at the end of each question to allow you an opportunity to briefly describe the program, policy, or practice. You may also use the comment box to identify anything unique to your institution.
### TICUA Survey

1. **My institution has partnerships with "feeder" schools (high school or community college) or community organizations specifically to increase Latino student access.**
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

   **Degree of Effectiveness**
   - Very ineffective
   - Somewhat ineffective
   - Unsure
   - Somewhat effective
   - Very effective
   - N/A

   **Partnership effectiveness**
   - 

   **Additional Comments**
   - 

2. **My institution has outreach programs to better inform Latino parents, students, and community members regarding college opportunities.**
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure

   **Degree of Effectiveness**
   - Very ineffective
   - Somewhat ineffective
   - Unsure
   - Somewhat effective
   - Very effective
   - N/A

   **Outreach effectiveness**
   - 

   **Additional Comments**
   - 

3. **My institution has financial aid packages and/or scholarships specific to the needs of Latino students.**
   - Yes
   - No
   - Unsure
**TICUA Survey**

**Degree of Effectiveness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial aid effectiveness</th>
<th>Very Ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat Ineffective</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat effective</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments

---

**My institution has “pre-freshmen” immersion programs specific to Latino students or other minority students.**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**Degree of Effectiveness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immersion program effectiveness</th>
<th>Very Ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat Ineffective</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat effective</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments

---

**My institution has culturally competent faculty and staff (e.g., bicultural; bilingual; trained to work with a diverse student population).**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
### TICUA Survey

#### Degree of Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat ineffective</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat effective</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culturally competent faculty effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Comments**

---

*My institution has a Latino or Multicultural student services office/department.*

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

#### Degree of Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat ineffective</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat effective</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural services effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Comments**

---

*My institution has a formal faculty-student mentoring program.*

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

#### Degree of Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat ineffective</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat effective</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty-student mentoring effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**TICUA Survey**

**My institution has a formal peer-to-peer mentoring program.**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**Degree of Effectiveness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peer-to-peer mentoring effectiveness</th>
<th>Very ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat ineffective</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat effective</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments

**My institution has instructional programs for English Language Learners.**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**Degree of Effectiveness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELL program effectiveness</th>
<th>Very ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat ineffective</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat effective</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments

**My institution has university programs to promote small groups, cohorts, or a sense of community among Latino students.**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
**TICUA Survey**

### Degree of Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat Ineffective</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Comments**

**My institution has specific events or activities to engage Latino students in campus life.**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

### Degree of Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat Ineffective</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat Effective</th>
<th>Very Effective</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus life activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effectiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Comments**

**My institution has affirmative action/percentage plan goals for the recruitment of Latino students.**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
### TICUA Survey

#### Degree of Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage plan effectiveness</th>
<th>Very ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat ineffective</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat effective</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments

---

*My institution has policies that lead to the hiring/retention of diverse faculty and staff.*

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Unsure

#### Degree of Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hiring/retention policy effectiveness</th>
<th>Very ineffective</th>
<th>Somewhat ineffective</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Somewhat effective</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Comments

---

Please list any additional programs, policies, or practices your institution uses to specifically recruit and retain Latino students. Please include the perception of effectiveness, using the following scale: Very ineffective, Somewhat ineffective, Unsure, Somewhat effective, and Very effective.
Appendix B: Focus Group Guided Questions

Identifying the perceived best practices and programs utilized by colleges to recruit and retain Latino students.

Introduction

Thank you for participating in our study. We are interested in identifying the perceived best practices and programs utilized by colleges to recruit and retain Latino students. Hi my name Darwin Mason, and with me are my fellow researchers Carrie Abood and Chris White.

A. First, I would like you to introduce yourselves (FIRST NAME ONLY). Please tell me:

1. What is your name?

2. What is your classification?

3. What is your country of origin?

4. Where educated solely in the Unites States or have you been educated in another country?

5. What your major is or what your current favorite class is

B. General Attitudes about College (0:10)

1. Tell me a little about your experience in college so far.

   PROBE: What are the most positive things about attending college?

   PROBE: What are the most negative things about attending college?

2. Do you think that every high school student in America should aspire to a college degree? Why or why not? Why is it important to go to college?

3. What does a college education mean for individuals? What are the outcomes or results?

4. What does a college-educated public mean for our society as a whole? What are the outcomes or results for society?

C. Preparing for College (0:20).

1. Tell me who influenced you to commit to this institution?
2. What impact did family have on your enrollment?

3. What impact did the community have on your enrollment?

4. What role did current programs at this institution play in your decision to attend?

5. What impact did incentives (ex. scholarships, grants, sports) play in your decision to attend this institution?

D. Influences (Family/Community) (0.15)

6. How do you define family?

7. How do you define community?

8. Does your community support your decision?

9. If so, in what ways is this support shown?

10. If not, why do you feel you are not supported?

E. Institutional Programs/ People (0.20)

1. Are there programs at this institution that have impact your desire to remain? How have they impacted you?

2. Are there people at this institution that have impacted your desire to remain? Between programs and people, which of the two would you consider to have the greatest impact?

3. What other factors have helped you remain at this institution?

4. Are you involved with any extracurricular activities sports, clubs etc.? ..

5. Do you have positive relationships with your classmates?

6. How do these relationships influence your decision to remain?
Appendix C: Individual Interview Guided Questions for Students

Identifying the perceived best practices and programs utilized by colleges to recruit and retain Latino students.

Introduction

Thank you for participating in our study. We are interested in identifying the perceived best practices and programs utilized by colleges to recruit and retain Latino students. Hi my name Darwin Mason, and with me are my fellow researchers Carrie Abood and Chris White.

A. First, I would like you to introduce yourself (FIRST NAME ONLY). Please tell me:

6. What is your name?

7. What is your classification?

8. What is your country of origin?

9. Where educated solely in the Unites States or have you been educated in another country?

10. What your major is or what your current favorite class is

B. General Attitudes about College (0:10)

5. Tell me a little about your experience in college so far.

   PROBE: What are the most positive things about attending college?

   PROBE: What are the most negative things about attending college?

6. Do you think that every high school student in America should aspire to a college degree? Why or why not? Why is it important to go to college?

7. What does a college education mean for individuals? What are the outcomes or results?

8. What does a college-educated public mean for our society as a whole? What are the outcomes or results for society?

C. Preparing for College (0:20).

11. Tell me who influenced you to commit to this institution?
12. What impact did family have on your enrollment?

13. What impact did the community have on your enrollment?

14. What role did current programs at this institution play in your decision to attend?

15. What impact did incentives (ex. scholarships, grants, sports) play in your decision to attend this institution?

D. Influences (Family/Community) (0.15)

16. How do you define family?

17. How do you define community?

18. Does your community support your decision?

19. If so, in what ways is this support shown?

20. If not, why do you feel you are not supported?

E. Institutional Programs/ People (0.20)

7. Are there programs at this institution that have impact your desire to remain? How have they impacted you?

8. Are there people at this institution that have impacted your desire to remain? Between programs and people, which of the two would you consider to have the greatest impact?

9. What other factors have helped you remain at this institution?

10. Are you involved with any extracurricular activities sports, clubs etc.? 

11. Do you have positive relationships with your classmates?

12. How do these relationships influence your decision to remain?
Appendix D: Guided Questions for Faculty, Staff, and Administration

Introduction

Thank you for participating in our study. We are interested in identifying the perceived best practices and programs utilized by colleges to recruit and retain Latino students. Hi my name Darwin Mason, and with me are my fellow researchers Carrie Abood and Chris White. We will be using the questions that were sent to members of the faculty, staff and administration in a previous questionnaire to guide this interview. Please answer each question to the best of your knowledge.

First, I would like you to introduce yourself. Please tell me:

1. What is your name?

2. What is your official role or job title?

3. My institution has partnerships with “feeder schools (high school or community college) or community organizations specifically to increase Latino student access.

4. My institution has outreach programs to better inform Latino parents, students and community members regarding college opportunities.

5. My institution has financial aid packages and/or scholarships specific to the needs of Latino of Latino students.

6. My institution has “pre-freshmen” immersion programs specific to Latino students or other minority students.

7. My institution has culturally competent faculty and staff (e.g., bi-cultural; bilingual; trained to work with a diverse student population).
8. My institution has a Latino or Multicultural student services office/department.

9. My institution has formal faculty-student mentoring program.

10. My institution has a formal peer-to-peer mentoring program.

11. My institution has instructional programs for English Language Learners,

12. My institution has university programs to promote small groups, cohorts, or a
    sense of community among Latino students.

13. My institution has a specific events or activities to engage Latino students in
    campus life.

14. My institution has affirmative action/percentage plan goals for the recruitment of
    Latino students.

15. My institution has policies that lead to hiring/retention of diverse faculty and
    staff.

Please tell us any additional programs, policies, or practices, your institution uses to
specifically recruit and retain Latino students. Please include the perception of
effectiveness, using the following scale: Very ineffective, Somewhat ineffective,
Unsure, Somewhat effective, and Very effective.
Appendix E: Informational Flyer

Latino Student Focus Group

Date

Time

Location

Additional Info: Each participant will receive a gift card to Starbucks

Join Us! You are invited to participate in a discussion about the experiences of Latino students in higher education. Your personal experience is very valuable to this discussion.

You’re Valued! Your experiences and input will help shape the higher education experiences for future generations of Latino students.

Facilitators This discussion will be facilitated by Carrie Abood, Darwin Mason, and Chris White, doctoral candidates in the College of Education at Lipscomb University.

Approval This study is being conducted for the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA) and has been approved by the Lipscomb University Institutional Review Board.

Please confirm your attendance to _______ by emailing _______.

Questions? Call _______.

Your Experience Matters
Appendix F: Informed Consent for Students (Focus Group)

To the participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study regarding Latino students in the higher education setting. The purpose of this study is to identify the perceived best practices and programs utilized by colleges to recruit and retain Latino students.

This research study will be conducted by Carrie Abood, Darwin Mason, and Chris White, doctoral candidates in the College of Education at Lipscomb University.

By participating in this study, you agree to the following:

I, ____________________________, understand that...

- ✓ I will be asked questions about my experiences related to my college application process, the role of my family and community in the enrollment process, and my perceptions of the programs and policies at my current university.

- ✓ The researchers may contact me to ensure accuracy of the focus group discussion.

- ✓ My part of the study involves participating in a one-hour focus group at my institution; this focus group will contain discussion with other students from my institution. This one hour interview will be audio-taped for research purposes only.

- ✓ With the exception of one $5.00 gift card, I will not receive any direct benefit from my participation in this study.

- ✓ My participation is completely voluntary, and I may withdraw at any time from this study. I also understand I may decline to participate in any portion of the focus group with which I feel uncomfortable.

- ✓ My identity is completely confidential and will not be used in reports or presentations of the findings of this research. The information provided to the researchers will be kept confidential with the exception of the following, which must be reported under Tennessee Law: suspected cases of child or elder abuse and information where individuals intend to harm themselves or others.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign and date your name on the signature line below. Your signature indicates that you have read the above and agree to participate in this study.

Participant’s Signature ____________________________ Date __________________

Researcher’s Signature ____________________________ Date __________________

For questions on research content, please contact Carrie Abood at carrie.abood@lipscomb.edu; Chris White at cjwhite@fhu.edu; or Darwin Mason at masond@ensworth.com

For questions or concerns on research ethics, please contact Dr. Bill Tallon, Chair of Lipscomb IRB, at Bill.Tallon@lipscomb.edu or 615-966-5825.
Appendix G: Informed Consent for Students (Individual Interview)

To the participant:

You are invited to participate in a research study regarding Latino students in the higher education setting. The purpose of this study is to identify the perceived best practices and programs utilized by colleges to recruit and retain Latino students.

This research study will be conducted by Carrie Abood, Darwin Mason, and Chris White, doctoral candidates in the College of Education at Lipscomb University.

By participating in this study, you agree to the following:

I, ____________________________, understand that…

✓ I will be asked questions about my experiences related to my college application process, the role of my family and community in the enrollment process, and my perceptions of the programs and policies at my current university.

✓ The researchers may contact me to ensure accuracy of my interview.

✓ My part of the study involves participating in a one-hour, in-depth interview; this interview will be audio-taped for research purposes only.

✓ With the exception of one $5.00 gift card, I will not receive any direct benefit from my participation in this study.

✓ My participation is completely voluntary, and I may withdraw at any time from this study. I also understand I may decline to participate in any portion of the interview with which I feel uncomfortable.

✓ My identity is completely confidential and will not be used in reports or presentations of the findings of this research. The information provided to the researchers will be kept confidential with the exception of the following, which must be reported under Tennessee Law: suspected cases of child or elder abuse and information where individuals intend to harm themselves or others.

If you agree to participate in this study, please sign and date your name on the signature line below. Your signature indicates that you have read the above and agree to participate in this study.

Participant’s Signature__________________________ Date________________

Researcher’s Signature__________________________ Date________________

For questions on research content, please contact Carrie Abood at carrie.abood@lipscomb.edu; Chris White at cjwhite@fhu.edu; or Darwin Mason at masond@ensworth.com

For questions or concerns on research ethics, please contact Dr. Bill Tallon, Chair of Lipscomb IRB, at Bill.Tallon@lipscomb.edu or 615-966-5825.
Appendix H: Informed Consent for Faculty, Staff, and Administration

You are invited to participate in a research study regarding Latino students in the higher education setting. The purpose of this study is to identify the perceived best practices and programs utilized by colleges to recruit and retain Latino students.

This research study will be conducted by Carrie Abood, Darwin Mason, and Chris White, doctoral candidates in the College of Education at Lipscomb University.

By participating in this study, you agree to the following:

I, ____________________________, understand that…

✓ The researchers may contact me to ensure accuracy of my interview.

✓ My part of the study involves participating in conversation and discussion and will be audio-taped for research purposes only.

✓ I will not receive any direct benefit from my participation in this study.

✓ My participation is completely voluntary, and I may withdraw and/or decline to participate at any time during this study.

✓ My identity is completely confidential and will not be used in reports or presentations of the findings of this research.

Your signature indicates that you have read the above and agree to participate in this study.

Participant’s Signature ___________________________ Date _________________

Researcher’s Signature ___________________________ Date _________________

For questions on research content, please contact Carrie Abood at carrie.abood@lipscomb.edu; Chris White at cjwhite@fhu.edu; or Darwin Mason at masond@ensworth.com

For questions or concerns on research ethics, please contact Dr. Bill Tallon, Chair of Lipscomb IRB, at Bill.Tallon@lipscomb.edu or 615-966-5825.
It is a pleasure to tell you that the Lipscomb University IRB has reviewed your research proposal and found it to comply with requirements for research involving human subjects. We wish you the very best.

For the IRB,

[Signature]

William A. Tallon, Ph.D. Professor of Chemistry
Lipscomb University
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Chemistry
615.966.5825
Team Member Biographies

**Carrie Ross Abood** was born in Tennessee on November 3, 1982. Growing up in the small town of Sparta, Tennessee, Carrie left her family in 2001 to attend Lipscomb University in Nashville. During her four and a half years of undergraduate studies, she found both her love for education and her future husband. Carrie graduated in December 2005 with degrees in English Teaching and English as a Second Language Teaching.

After a one-year teaching stint in Metro Nashville Schools, Carrie returned to the Lipscomb campus to teach high school English. In addition to teaching 9th, 11th, and 12th grade English, she sponsored the school newspaper, coached girls’ soccer, and established *Notions*, a literary journal for the high school’s students, faculty, and staff. During this time, she also earned her Master’s degree in Education for Administration and Supervision.

In 2011, Carrie made yet another transition within the Lipscomb University community; this time, the move was from high school to higher education. She received an offer to teach at the Instructor level for Lipscomb’s College of Education and began teaching courses in fall 2011. Carrie currently teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses for the College. In the future, she would love to continue teaching in higher education, with a focus on preparing secondary teachers for the trials and tribulations of teaching high school.

Carrie has a love for travel, even though she detests flying. Her adventures began with a college backtracking trip to Europe, and she has continued to travel whenever time permits. Her other joys in life include reading and spending time with her family, friends, and pet cat Grimalkin.
Darwin Levi Mason Jr. was born August 7, 1981 to Darwin and Norma Mason in Chicago, Ill. Darwin, after spending his first 8 years in the Chicago area, was raised in Nashville, TN. Darwin attended Metro Nashville Public Schools until he graduated from Beech High School, Sumner County School, in 1999.

After graduation, Darwin went on to attend Southwestern Christian College where in 2001 he received an Associates of Arts in religion. He later attended Fisk University where he became a member of the Fisk Jubilee Singers. It was during his travel abroad while being a Fisk Jubilee Singer that Darwin’s passion for learning about the world and its people was ignited. Darwin received a Bachelor of Arts in music vocal performance and psychology from Fisk University in 2004. Darwin received a Master of Education in Administration and Supervision from Tennessee State University in 2006.

Since graduating from Fisk University in 2004, Darwin has pursued a career as an educator and mentor of young people. However, Darwin’s experience did not start there; in fact, he has served young people for many years, starting when just a youth himself. He took wholeheartedly to serving young people both inside the classroom and in their personal lives. His vita will reveal that he has served as a volunteer, counselor, coach, missionary, youth leader, organizer, and mentor.

Darwin began his professional teaching career in the Metro Nashville Public School System at Haynes Middle where he taught music and history. During his tenure at Haynes Darwin’s chorus gained notoriety and competed in the “Music in the Park” competition in Atlanta, GA. There the chorus won two national championships. Darwin currently works as a history teacher at The Ensworth School in Nashville, TN. His
 passion for teaching and caring for children is difficult to hide. Darwin sincerely loves positively impacting the lives of young people.

Christopher James White was born in Key West, Florida on November 12, 1966. He is the son of Pauline Riel and James White. Upon graduation from Woonsocket Senior High School, Woonsocket, Rhode Island, in 1985, he entered military service in the United States Army. He continued to serve on active duty, Reserves, and National Guard until his retirement at the rank of Major in October 2008.

He earned his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Union University, Jackson, Tennessee in 1994. Determining that his future lay in healthcare, he pursued and completed his Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Union University, Jackson, Tennessee in 2000. While working as a staff Registered Nurse in a local emergency department, he earned his Master of Science in Nursing with an emphasis on nursing education from Union University in 2001. He was employed in a variety of leadership roles at Jackson-Madison County General Hospital for the next several years. During this time he also participated in numerous mission trips to Honduras and Peru.

In 2009, he gained employment at Freed-Hardeman University, Henderson, Tennessee as a Nursing Instructor. He entered Lipscomb University College of Education, Nashville, Tennessee, in 2010 to pursue the Doctorate of Education in Learning Organizations and Strategic Change. In June 2011 he became the Director of the Nursing Department at Freed-Hardeman University, Henderson, Tennessee.
Team Member Contributions to the Project

This work was a collective effort; however, each member demonstrated his or her talents in a variety of ways. The primary goal of each major step in the process was to divide the load in such a way that each member contributed to an area that he or she had talent for and interest in. Despite this effort, there were times that members would willingly “take one for the team” and do work that needed to be done.

Every group needs leadership, and in this group, Carrie embraced this responsibility. Much like a compass, she provided guidance and direction. She kept the project moving along at an appropriate pace and was diligent in exercising her strong background in grammar and English language usage. She was instrumental in communicating with our client, the Lipscomb faculty supporting this effort, and the case study sites.

Darwin demonstrated an interest in those things related to the Latino family experience. He was instrumental in arranging for transcribing and the creation of our code books. Additionally, Darwin served as the lead interviewer in the focus group sessions. He had an easy way of relating to the students and putting them at ease.

Chris found his interest in the financial and political subject areas. Additionally, he served as lead interviewer during some of the faculty-staff interviews. He also demonstrated a talent for table manipulation. He provided the transportation and musical entertainment for the distant site visits.

All in all, this study was a collaborative effort that still allowed individual members to shine at various times.