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Mentoring and Latino College Students

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Mentoring and Latino College Students

Abstract
This session will provide an overview of mentoring and how it relates to Latino college students. Session participants will be provided with information about Latino demographics, a successful program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln called NU Connections Mentoring Program, and an opportunity to hear from a student panel made up of current Latino college students.

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This presentation/panel discussion will focus on issues related to mentoring and Latino college students. The Latino population has risen significantly in recent years; Latinos now comprise 12.5 percent of the total U.S. population (Nevarez 2001). When college demographics changed in the late 1960's and 1970's, retaining students of color in predominantly white colleges and universities has been and persists as a problem (Laden 1999). Despite the growth of the Latino population, their postsecondary participation and graduation rates have not increased. According to the 2000 Census, Latino students have the highest school dropout rates followed by African American students (Roy 2002). Statistics show that Latino students are less likely to attend college and of those that do attend, they have only a 34% retention rate (Brown, Santiago, & Lopez 2003). Latino students are dropping out, feeling aliened, distressed and not part of the college community. Research suggests that peer mentoring programs significantly affect retention efforts in a positive manner. Faculty, students and the institution benefit from the strong sense of community, the connection to experienced students, and the partnerships created through peer mentoring. Mentoring is essential for all individuals, it is especially critical to the success of underrepresented individuals.

This session will provide an opportunity for participants to get an overview of mentoring and how it relates to Latino college students. Participants will be provided with information about Latino demographics, a successful program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln called NU Connections Mentoring Program, and an opportunity to hear from a student panel made up of current Latino college students.

Presenter
Cameya Ramírez is a Program Coordinator with the Office of Academic Support and Intercultural Services at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Cameya received her Masters in Education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Currently she coordinates the NU connections mentoring program.