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Promoting Higher Education: The Latino Achievement Mentoring Program (LAMP)

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Promoting Higher Education: The Latino Achievement Mentoring Program (LAMP)

Abstract

Statistics suggest that Latino youths are at risk for academic underachievement and withdrawal. Culturally sensitive approaches to supporting school achievement based on the needs of Latino youth and their families must be developed. In response to these needs, the Latino Research Initiative (LRI), a collaborative group with members from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and the Hispanic Community Center (HCC) created the Latino Achievement Mentoring Program (LAMP). LAMP is a culturally appropriate mentoring program designed to promote school success and post-secondary opportunities for Latino youths. This program provides Latino youths with positive role models and information and guidance about academic life and future school success. Finally, because of the cultural significance of family members among many Latinos, LAMP activities are developed and implemented such that the mentees' family members are involved. This presentation will report the first-year activities of the initial mentor and mentee pairs, with particular emphasis on educational outreach and academic development of the program. Evaluation data will be presented for the first cohort of mentees, including academic information, teacher reports and self-measure findings. LAMP activities aimed at promoting academic success will also be presented. Finally, the experiences of the mentors will briefly be reported.

Panelists:

Byron L. Zamboanga

Doctoral Student, Developmental Psychology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Lisa Knoche

Doctoral Student, Developmental Psychology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Gloria Gonzalez-Kruger, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences and Marriage and Family Therapy Program, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Marcela Raffaelli, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Psychology and Ethnic Studies, Coordinator of Latino and Latin American Studies, University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Latino Research Initiative

Statistics suggest that Latino youths are at risk for academic underachievement and withdrawal. Culturally sensitive approaches to supporting school achievement that are based on the needs of Latino youth and their families must be developed. In response to these needs, the Latino Research Initiative (LRI), a collaborative group with members from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and the Hispanic Community Center (HCC) created the Latino Achievement Mentoring Program (LAMP). LAMP is a culturally-appropriate mentoring program designed to promote school success and post-secondary opportunities for Latino youths. This program provides Latino youths with positive role models and information and guidance about academic life and future school success. Finally, because of the cultural significance of family among many Latinos, LAMP activities are developed and implemented such that the mentees' family members are involved.

Four members of the LRI are currently evaluating LAMP. Qualitative and quantitative methods are continually being used to evaluate mentors' and mentees' experiences in the program. This presentation will report the first-year activities of the initial mentor and mentee pairs, with particular emphasis on the educational outreach and academic development aspect of the program. Evaluation data will be presented for the first cohort of mentees, including academic information, teacher reports and self-measure findings. LAMP activities (e.g., Family Education Weekend) aimed at promoting academic success will also be presented. Finally, the experiences of the mentors will briefly be reported.

Presenters

Byron L. Zamboanga is a Ph.D. student in developmental psychology (minor in psychometrics) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He received his bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of California-Berkeley and a master's degree in clinical psychology from UNL. His scholarly interests include acculturation, risky behaviors and drinking expectancies and alcohol use among Latino youths. He also has strong research interests with ethnic minority issues in higher education. He is currently a member of an interdisciplinary scholarship / outreach (Latino Research Initiative - LRI) initiative that seeks to address the critical needs and issues of Latinos in Lincoln. As a member of the LRI, Mr. Zamboanga has been actively involved in the development and implementation of the Latino Achievement Mentoring Program (LAMP), a community-university based program designed to help reduce school dropout rates among Latino youths in Lincoln.

Lisa Knoche is a Ph.D. student in developmental psychology (minor in psychometrics) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She received her bachelor's degree in biology and psychology from Creighton University. Ms. Knoche currently serves as the Evaluation Coordinator for the Latino Achievement Mentoring Program (LAMP). Her research interests include the social-emotional development of children and adolescents from at-risk or underserved populations.

Gloria-Gonzalez-Kruger is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences and Marriage and Family Therapy Program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in the State of Nebraska and a Clinical Member and a Supervisor-in-Training with the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT). She is also a member of the Latino Research Initiative (LRI), a multidisciplinary group of faculty and the director of the Hispanic Community Center that focuses on conducting programming and research for the Latino population. Dr. Gonzalez-Kruger's other community outreach activities, programming and research involves a wide range of diverse populations and issues. She has developed and implemented educational, social support, psycho-educational and mental health programs for elementary school youth and their families in the Latino, African American and Native American populations. Dr. Gonzalez-Kruger is currently conducting research to evaluate the Latino Achievement Mentoring Program (LAMP). In summary, Dr. Gonzalez-Kruger's goal is to identify and develop culturally competent teaching, research and outreach programs (e.g., youth programming and mental health services).

Marcela Raffaelli joined the University of Nebraska-Lincoln faculty in 1995 and has a joint appointment in the Department of Psychology and the Institute for Ethnic Studies. After receiving her Ph.D. in Psychology/Human Development from the University of Chicago in 1990, she was a post-doctoral researcher at Johns Hopkins University and Rutgers University. Her main research interest is in understanding and preventing risk-taking behavior among adolescents and young adults, with a particular focus on gender and cultural issues. Current projects include studying parent-child communication about sexual topics, developmental trajectories of Latin American street youth and cultural influences on the sexual behavior of Latinas. She teaches introductory courses in psychology, developmental psychology and ethnic studies as well as advanced undergraduate courses in the psychology of gender and psychology of immigration.