



EDITORIAL REMARKS

Rachel McGee and Joyce Tardáguila Harth
Southeastern University, USA

This special issue, focusing on the experiences of Hispanic students in higher education, aims to explore the challenges and opportunities faced by Hispanic/Latina/o students in predominantly White institutions (PWIs), Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs), and beyond. The articles' thematic cohesion presents an integrated perspective on structural barriers, cultural dynamics, and institutional practices affecting the educational outcomes of Hispanic/Latina/o students in the United States.

The United States Census Bureau defines being Hispanic or Latina/o as a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture, regardless of race. During the year 2023, approximately 65.2 million people, or 19.1% of the total population of the United States, identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023; Pew Research Center, 2024). Such data would make Hispanics/Latinos the second largest ethnic group in the country after non-Hispanic Whites.

The educational attainment of Hispanics/Latinos in the United States remains a topic of great interest. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2023), 56% of Hispanics/Latinos hold a high school diploma, while only 20% report having a bachelor's degree or higher. Furthermore, in 2022, 21% of students enrolled in higher education institutions in the U.S., and 6% of the faculty members identified as Hispanic/Latino (NCES, 2023). Despite an increase in the number of Hispanic/Latina/o students enrolled in American universities, this group of

students often encounters barriers and practices that have a profound impact on their educational accomplishments.

The call for papers for this special issue was designed to invite manuscripts from scholars who were interested in exploring the diverse experiences of Hispanic/Latina/o students in institutions of higher education in the United States. The response to the call for papers was overwhelmingly positive as we received a myriad of article proposals addressing different aspects of the Hispanic experience in higher education. With the guidance of the editorial board, we proceeded to invite authors to submit their full article manuscripts and to identify potential reviewers for the special issue.

Special Thanks

It is important to note that this issue is only possible with the unwavering guidance and support of a visionary named Dr. Sharif Uddin, our editor at JUMP. We are also very grateful to our outstanding editorial board. We appreciate their vision and support as we progressed with this project.

We were also privileged to work with Gauri Khanna, who is completing her Ph.D. at Jindal Global University in India. Gauri kept our data up to date and was an integral part of our team. We thank her for all her contributions to this special edition.

Finally, but most importantly, we want to thank our wonderful authors, reviewers, and copy editors. Our authors submitted outstanding and thought-provoking articles on Hispanics in higher education. Our reviewers understood and reviewed the manuscripts with great detail and provided valuable recommendations. We are also grateful to our excellent copy editors. They all knew what was needed to keep in line with APA 7th edition and the requirements of the journal while maintaining the integrity of each manuscript.

Thematic Highlights and Contributions

The articles included in this issue point to systemic inequities that continue to marginalize Hispanic/Latina/o students in institutions of higher education. Crucial to the discussion is the role played by institutional frameworks which perpetuate exclusion through implicit biases, insufficient mentorship opportunities, and a lack of culturally responsive practices.

The lack of cultural validation which often translates into missed opportunities by institutions of higher education to integrate cultural values that are pivotal in most Hispanic cultures is another emerging theme. The cultural value of Familismo, which emphasizes familial loyalty and interconnectedness, is identified as a potential source of resilience,

particularly for first-generation college students. Familismo’s dual role—motivating while sometimes amplifying familial responsibilities—points to the need for institutions to design support systems that align with the familial structures of Hispanic students.

Mentorship, particularly from faculty of color, is prominently featured as a vital mechanism for fostering academic success and emotional well-being among Hispanic/Latina/o students. Several articles point out that culturally competent mentors can bridge gaps in institutional knowledge, counter isolation, and validate students’ identities. This kind of mentorship goes beyond academic guidance and builds the psychological and emotional resilience necessary for Hispanic/Latina/o students to navigate unwelcoming institutional environments.

This special issue is particularly significant for its methodological diversity and interdisciplinary approach. From phenomenological studies to regression analyses and thematic content analysis, the articles employ robust methodologies to explore various experiences and challenges faced by Hispanic/Latino(a) students. The insights are grounded in empirical data and lived experiences, making them highly relevant for researchers, educators, and policymakers.

Moreover, the focus on the critical role that culture plays on our daily lives adds depth to understanding how Hispanic/Latina/o students navigate higher education. The emphasis on first-generation students, doctoral candidates, and the role of Hispanic Serving Institutions provides a comprehensive view of the educational pipeline. By focusing on the Hispanic/Latina/o voices and experiences in the world of higher education, this issue makes an invaluable contribution to the broader discourse on educational equity and social justice.

Recommendations and Future Directions

The collective findings from this issue offer several insights. Among them, the need for institutions of higher education to prioritize recruiting and training mentors who can provide culturally informed guidance to Hispanic/Latina(o) students. This includes recognizing and addressing challenges such as imposter syndrome, academic burnout, and cultural dissonance, adequately funding affinity groups, and embedding Hispanic values into curricula and pedagogy.

Academic policies and practices should leverage familismo as a strength rather than a hindrance. Implementing flexible deadlines, family-oriented outreach, and community-building initiatives can better align institutional goals with students’ cultural realities.

Conclusion

This special issue of the *Journal of Underrepresented & Minority Progress* emphasizes the importance of centering marginalized voices in academic discourse. Exploring the interplay between systemic barriers and cultural assets deepens our understanding of the educational experiences of Hispanic/Latina/o students and outlines a path toward more equitable and inclusive higher education practices.

We are honored to be the guest editors of this special issue. It is our sincere hope that this issue serves as encouragement for more research, advocacy and a thoughtful dialogue on the experiences of Hispanic/Latina/a students in the educational system of the United States.

References

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About Guest Editors

RACHEL MCGEE, Ed.D. teaches English language studies cross-culturally and is affiliated with Southeastern University. Her interests are English language learning for students who do not speak English or very little English. She has taught cross-culturally for over 10 years. Her email address is rleona82@gmail.com.

JOYCE TARDÁGUILA HARTH, Ph.D. is an associate professor at Southeastern University, U.S.A. Her research interests include the education of multilingual learners in the U.S., special education services for students from culturally diverse backgrounds and effective practices in teacher education. Email: jtharth@seu.edu