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Latinos in Higher Education: Illinois Latino Council on Higher Education

Elizabeth F. Ortiz

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INTRODUCTION

Research has shown the importance of Latino faculty in higher education and is considered the single most important key to any hope for increasing Latino access (Olivas, 1986). However Latino faculty are increasing very slowly in colleges and universities throughout the nation and state.

Lack of Latino faculty and staff in higher education is reflected in the numbers and under-representation of Latinos and people of color in faculty positions. In 1995-1996, the Higher Education Research Institute reported that faculty of color account for 10 percent of the professorate, up 1 percent from the 9 percent of 1989 (p.21). Minorities are also placed in non-tenure track positions. Latinos represent less than 3 percent of all full time faculty and it appears as though tenure rate among Latino faculty is on the decline, with HACU (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities) reporting a 4 percent decline in Latino faculty tenure from 1983 to 1993 (1996, p.46).

Statewide the figures are comparable to nationwide statistics. The following table illustrates this point and the under-representation of Latino faculty and staff in Illinois Colleges and Universities.

FACULTY AND EXECUTIVE/ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF REPRESENTATION IN ILLINOIS 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Full-Time Faculty</th>
<th>Executive/Admin. Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Universities</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Institutions</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Colleges</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is ample evidence of substantial under-representation of blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians along virtually every part of the pipeline toward faculty positions: under-representation among college graduates in science and engineering fields and in non-professional fields; under-representation in graduate school enrollment; and under-representation in Ph.D.'s received. There is no doubt that increasing supply of minority faculty will require increasing stocks and flows along the pipeline” (Turner & Myers, 2000 p.185).

These leaks and cracks in the pipeline have a cumulative effect and must be viewed from the very beginning of the process of formal education. Latino and minority students are already being marginalized in the public school systems. With over 50% of Latinos dropping out of High School, 10% never enrolling in High School, and only 4% receiving bachelors' degrees, one can assume that the pipeline is in serious need of repair. The pool that successfully makes it to college and through graduate school is slim and minimal. This trend has serious implications for the hiring of Latino and minority faculty, as pools become smaller and competition for qualified minority faculty becomes greater.

SEARCH PROCEDURES

Increasing Latino faculty representation in higher education begins with the recruitment and hiring of Latino faculty. Recruitment in higher education is done the way it has historically been done with procedures and bias that perpetuates the status quo. “Hiring strategies may contribute more to the under-representation of faculty of color than the leaving of faculty of color” (Turner&Myers, 2000, p.28). Search committees do not go beyond traditional avenues of
projects that have a minority focus. This "organizational logic
Latino and minority faculty serve and work on committees and
channels Latino faculty into limited roles and results in limited
that their peers devalued their research, 44 percent felt that
cited denial of tenure for Latino faculty were departmental
research by Latinos was seen as inferior. These same respondents
conducted of 238 Latino faculty, 40 percent of Latino faculty felt
Latino faculty scholarship within academe. In 1993 a survey was
Eurocentric view. Latino history, voice and heroes are absent in
The curriculum within higher education is based on the
many factors can contribute to this. The environment also plays a
role and can be unwelcoming, creating a chilly climate for Latino
and minority faculty. Latino faculty may move on because they do
not make tenure or are passed over for promotion and become
dissatisfied. It is possible that they never quite really fit in and
eventually move on looking for a better fit and where they feel
their scholarship and work is of value. And lastly, the market drives
the turnover. Qualified Latino faculty are in such demand that they
can move on to better higher paying jobs in higher education or in
the private sector (Turner & Myers, 2000).

RETENTION OF LATINO FACULTY
Turnover of Latino and minority faculty continue to be a challenge
for many universities. The "revolving door syndrome" is common
and retention of Latino and minority faculty is of great concern.
Many factors can contribute to this. The environment also plays a
role and can be unwelcoming, creating a chilly climate for Latino
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the private sector (Turner & Myers, 2000).

CULTURAL BIAS
The curriculum within higher education is based on the
Eurocentric view. Latino history, voice and heroes are absent in
the curriculum. This negating of the culture continues on to
Latino faculty scholarship within academe. In 1993 a survey was
conducted of 238 Latino faculty, 40 percent of Latino faculty felt
that their peers devalued their research, 44 percent felt that
research by Latinos was seen as inferior. These same respondents
cited denial of tenure for Latino faculty were departmental
politics, racism and insensitivity to their research interests
(Garza, 1993, p.27).

Cultural stereotyping is manifested in the academy by having
Latino and minority faculty serve and work on committees and
projects that have a minority focus. This "organizational logic
channels Latino faculty into limited roles and results in limited
opportunities for networking and possible advancement.

"The institutional relationship between Chicano faculty
and administrators in academia places them in a
situation of relative isolation referred to as
"barrioization". Chicano faculty feel constrained by
institutional demands that prevent them from
participating in institutional sectors that are closer to
mainstream decision making... As peripheral
participants in academia, Chicano faculty are unable to
develop networks that could alter the perceptions whites
hold of them (Garza, 1993, p.49).

ILACHE HISTORY
On October 30, 1986 a meeting was held at Roberto Clemente
Community Academy by University of Illinois administrators to
explain and justify the new admission requirements for
undergraduate admissions. Over 1000 concerned parents,
students and community members confronted University of
Illinois officials chanting "Open the Doors of U of I".
The community was trying to drive home the message that
their communities were systematically being denied access to
higher education. Resultant of this meeting was a series of
meetings held by UIC officials, parents and community
members on the issues of Hispanic student access and
retention at the university of Illinois at Chicago. This activity
led to the creation of the report "Declining Minority Access to
Higher Education".

Spurned on by the recent community outcry and the
findings of the report, on June 30, 1987 the Senate Joint
Resolution 72 created a Joint Committee on Minority Access to
Higher Education, Co-Chaired by Senator Miguel del Valle.
One of the committee's main functions was to analyze the
Chicago public schools' college preparation programs and
course offerings and their relationship to the proposed
undergraduate admissions changes that the IBHE sought to
implement by 1993. A series of public hearings were held
throughout Illinois beginning in November of 1987 through
December 1988. A final report was generated and a series of
recommendations were made.

A direct result of this activity was the creation of CACHE
(Community Advisory Committee on Higher Education) which
was the forerunner of what would become the groundwork
for ILACHE. CACHE members were appointed by Senator
Miguel del Valle and included concerned Latino Educators in
Higher Education. CACHE held its first conference on April 30,
1988 and the theme was "Developing a Legislative Agenda for
the 1990's". In 1993 the organization changed its name to
ILACHE (Illinois Latino Council on Higher Education) to more
closely reflect the collective concerns of Latinos in higher
Education in the state of Illinois.

Today ILACHE continues this important work of addressing
the needs of the Latino community and serves as an action
oriented, independent advocacy group for Latinos in higher
education in the areas of access and equity as it relates to
employment, admissions, and legislation in the state of Illinois.
Through their annual conference they provide public forums
to provide networking opportunities to Latino higher
education professionals, and to create advocacy agendas,
share best practices, and to explore new ways of affecting
legislative and university policies. Striving for inclusion and
voice ILACHE continues to advocate for the needs of the
Latino community and provides a statewide forum for
dialogue on issues in higher education.
CHILLY CLIMATE
In Turner’s and Myers (2000) research several interviews were conducted with minority faculty. Minority faculty perceptions of common themes that led to a chilly environment were: denial of tenure and/or promotion due to race and ethnicity, being expected to work harder than white counterparts, having color/ethnicity given more attention than credentials, being treated as a token, lack of support or validation of research on minority issues being expected to handle minority affairs, and lastly, having too few minorities on campus (Turner & Myers, 2000, p49).

Latino faculty of color cited by Turner and Meyers (2000) felt that their scholarship was not taken seriously, that they did not have the same opportunities to publish and even had their work devalued by their colleagues as “minority issues” and not genuine intellectual pursuit/research. They felt in many cases as if they were treated like the token of the department and were only hired because of their ethnic/race status. They also felt that their workload was greater than that of their colleagues. Not only did they have to go above and beyond and give stellar performances in their work, but they were also expected to serve on committees, represent the minority view, and mentor and counsel minority/ Latino students. Burnout was common because new aspiring faculty did not feel they could say no and felt guilty if they did. This extra burden gave them little time for research and writing (Turner & Myers, 2000, pp.90-94).

“I am expected to teach and do research as well as represent a whole ethnic group, something that is not expected of white faculty members” Latina Tenured Social Sciences (p.102)

“There is a lot of service, committees where I’m representing the whole institution at various things...not just my department... This year’s service is eating away at my time. At every level, they don’t realize that each is asking a lot.... It is hard to say no, especially on minority issues, when there are so few people to address these issues...I sit on 53 doctoral committees. Doctoral students take a lot of time...I turned down being a chair of one doctoral student’s committee and she nearly cried. She was a good student..... but I can’t chair these committees. I’ll wind up spending all my time correcting dissertations and not doing my own research.” Latina untenured instructor (p.103)

“You’re going to have to be better than everybody else and, whatever you, do, you have to take great care, you’re going to have to be sure that you’re very meticulous, that you do your best, that there are no questions about anything that you do... Latino tenure Professor (p.103)

A special consideration for Latino faculty is language and cultural isolation. Latino faculty are given the subtle message that they are inferior, that their ideas are not valid, and their scholarship is confined to the “barrio”. Feelings of isolation and being different, alone, and isolated are common for Latino faculty. Being in a new environment without a sense of community and the comfort of familiar cultural references and images, can be a very intimidating experience.

“One situation that is a challenge for me is the language. You are hesitant to participate. Some colleagues become impatient with you. Sometimes I just keep quiet...lack of a perfect command of English can be seen as if you were not good enough for your field... They don’t have any Latinos here. You feel isolated in terms of your culture. You don’t have other people that listen to your music, eat your food....” Female untenured instructor (Turner & Myers, 2000, p102)

ILACHE MISSION STATEMENT
To promote understanding and to advocate on behalf of the needs of the Illinois Latino population as they pertain to higher education.
To provide a statewide forum for Latino and non-Latino educators and community persons with a professional and/or personal commitment to Latino issues in higher education.

ILACHE VISION
To set forth a Latino action agenda in the state of Illinois that acts as the catalyst for change in higher education in areas of access, educational attainment, professional development and promotion of Latino academic professionals, as well as providing a forum for issues and policies that impact the progress of Latinos in Higher Education.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES
Detailed in the next section are strategies and recommendations to address the issue of Latino Faculty under-representation.

Strengthening the Pipeline
- Increase cohort master’s, doctoral programs to Latino community through programs such as El Valor educational Cohorts.
- Work with universities, Chicago Public Schools and educators to provide teacher licensure and certification.
- Strengthen the pipeline and encourage Latino students to pursue education as a viable career.
- Work with programs such as IMGIP/ICEOP to attract more Latino graduate students to complete terminal degrees and to go on as faculty in the academy.
- Work collaboratively with Latinos and people of color throughout the institution and other recognized formal organizations to give voice, provide credibility, and to demonstrate true commitment to this issue.

Recruitment Strategies
- Offer competitive salary packages and minority incentive program. Market forces result in competition. Salaries/benefits must be competitive with market and be comparable to other universities. Also look at other incentives to draw faculty to campus to include: research and scholarship incentives, travel, professional development opportunities, and dual career programs for spouses.
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