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The Experiences of Latina/o Executives in Higher Education

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THE EXPERIENCES OF LATIN/A/O EXECUTIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

by

Leonard A. Savala III

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Educational Leadership, Research and Technology
Western Michigan University
June 2014

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THE EXPERIENCES OF LATINA/O EXECUTIVES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Leonard A. Savala III, Ph.D.
Western Michigan University, 2014

This study will examine the experiences of Latina/o executives (President, Chancellor, Chief of Staff, Executive Vice President, Chief Academic Officer (CAO)/Provost, Central Senior Academic Affairs Officer, Dean of Academic College, Senior Administrative Officer, Senior External Affairs Officer and Chief Enrollment Management Officer, or any administrator with Vice President in their title) in higher education. Throughout the United States there are very few Latina/o executives at either community colleges or four-year universities. Of those Latina/o executives, most serve at community colleges instead of four-year universities. Those Latinos who have served in executive positions have acquired a wealth of knowledge through their experiences in higher education. It is critically important to understand how these Latinos describe their experiences in hopes of providing insight to those who aspire to lead in higher education.

The primary purpose of this study is to highlight the stories of these leaders in order to provide an accurate description of their experiences. The key concepts within the study that will be addressed are: 1) the changing demographics and the need for Hispanic/Latino executives in higher education; 2) the impact of ethnicity on decision making; 3) the experiences leading within a predominantly White institution (PWI) versus other institutions; and 4) the impact Hispanic/Latino executives within PWIs.
In addition, this study seeks to add to the limited literature on Hispanic leadership within higher education.

As indicated in the literature, Latino representation within leadership positions in higher education is dismal. This study will be qualitative in nature and I plan to utilize in-depth personal phenomenological interviews with 15 Latino leaders. I plan to interview these leaders at four-year doctoral degree-granting universities in the United States.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee for the tremendous amount of support they have provided along the way. The road to completing my dissertation would not have been possible without the support of many family and friends. If it were not for their motivation and encouragement, I may not have completed this dissertation.

I especially would like to thank my parents Christina and Leonard Savala, my sisters Marisa, Andrea, Felicia and my brother Sergio; each of them has reminded me of why it was important to complete my degree. I would like to thank my wife Marcelina for believing in me when I had doubts. Lastly, I want to acknowledge my daughter Mireya X. Savala for keeping me grounded. I want to remind her to keep dancing when things get difficult in life.

Leonard A. Savala III
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The current demographic trends indicate that the Hispanic population continues to increase within the United States. The growth of the Hispanic population will have a tremendous impact within our society. The United States Census reports that the Hispanic population growth between 2000 and 2010 increased by 43%. As of 2010 there were an estimated 50.5 million Hispanics residing in the United States, which represents 16% of the total population (Humes, Jones & Ramirez, 2011).

The bulk of this group is in the west and south in central cities within metropolitan areas (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002). A majority of the Hispanic population growth between 1990 and 2000 (66%) occurred in key states: California, Texas, Florida, New York, Illinois, and Arizona (Anderson, 2003).

Anderson (2003) stated, “The racial composition of the under-eighteen population represents the pipeline of potential students. It is important for higher education administrators and faculty to understand that the youth of America are more racially diverse than the rest of the population” (p. 10). Anderson’s call challenges higher education personnel to think critically regarding the educational needs of this diverse student population (Anderson, 2003).
The growth within the Hispanic population has led to an increased prevalence of social inequities among this group. In 2010 there were 6.1 million Latino children living in poverty, more than any other racial or ethnic group (Lopez & Velasco, 2011). The poverty rate of Hispanic married couples is at 14%, greater than that of Whites (3%) or Blacks (4%) (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). In 2002, a larger percentage of Hispanics were living in poverty (21.4%) compared to Whites (7.8%) (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002). The likelihood of a Hispanic child younger than 18 to live in poverty is higher than that of Whites. Hispanic children in poverty represent 17.7% of the entire United States population (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002). In addition to being born into poverty, Hispanic children 18 and under (25%) are less likely to have health insurance as compared to Whites (7%) or Blacks (13%) (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). Given the projected growth of Hispanics in the United States these disparities could potentially increase.

Serving the educational needs of many of these Hispanic children will necessitate educational leadership at all levels in the K-12 system. The enrollment of Hispanics in public schools has increased primarily in the west (Arizona, California, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas) (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). In these states Hispanics encompass more than a quarter of the enrollment in the public schools (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). The school districts with the largest numbers of Hispanics enrolled include: New York, NY, Los Angeles Unified, CA, Dade County, FL, and Houston Independent School districts (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). Hispanics with less than a ninth-grade education number 27% compared to 4% for Whites (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002). The Hispanic high school dropout rate for those 16 to 24 years old in 2000 was at 28% compared to 7% for Whites and 13% for Blacks (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). In fact, the dropout rates for Hispanics
between the ages of 16 and 24 years old between 1972 and 2009 were higher than those of Blacks and Whites (Chapman, Laird, Ifill and KewalRamani, 2011). Hispanics (69%) still represent the lowest rate of high school completion compared to their counterparts (Asian Americans [92%], Whites [88%], African Americans [77%], and American Indians [71%]) (Ryu, 2009). The violence taking place within many of these schools may only exacerbate the problem of dropping out of high school. Hispanic and Black children report feeling unsafe while attending school (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). Only 64% of Hispanics 18 to 24 years of age complete secondary education compared to 84% of Blacks and 92% of Whites (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). Of the Hispanics aged 25 and older only two in five have graduated from high school (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002).

Educational attainment varies among Latinos who are 25 years and older who have at least a high school education (Cubans [70.8%], Puerto Ricans [66.8%], Central and South Americans [64.7%] Mexicans [50.6%], and other Hispanics [74.0%]) (Ramirez & de la Cruz, 2002). This under-attainment in education among Hispanics within the United State is so pervasive that it impacts all levels of the educational system. Llagas and Snyder (2003) stated, “In 1999-2000 academic year, Hispanics earned 9% of all associate degrees, 6% of bachelor’s degrees, 4% of master’s degrees, 3% of doctoral degrees, and 5% of first-professional degrees” (p. 98). Latinos are more likely to be tracked into less rigorous academic classes while in secondary school, which negatively affects their college preparation (Santiago, 2011).

Community colleges tend to be access points to higher education for Hispanics (Santiago, 2011). Between 1996 and 2006, the percentage of Hispanic women obtaining associate degrees had increased by 117.2% compared to their Hispanic male counterparts.
at 84.7% (Ryu, 2009). There are more Hispanics attending community colleges (46%) than four-year colleges (54%) (Fry, 2011). Hispanics between the ages of 18 and 24 years old attend community college (44%) at higher rates compared to their counterparts (30% for Blacks and 30% for Whites) (Fry, 2002). As a result of this enrollment pattern, more Hispanics earn associate degrees (Ryu, 2009) than bachelor’s degrees (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). While community colleges may be the access point to higher education, Hispanics have an increased propensity of dropping out of two-year colleges. Of those Hispanics who start at a two-year college, more than half will never obtain a postsecondary degree (Fry, 2002). Among the Hispanic undergraduates who attend community college, the largest majority is of Mexican origin (Fry, 2002).

As Latinos move further along the education pipeline, a smaller proportion obtain advanced degrees. In fact, Fry (2002) stated, “Latinos have the lowest rates of graduate school enrollment of any major racial/ethnic group and this is true regardless of whether they come from an immigrant family or not” (p. 8). Of the Latino population between the ages of 25 and 34, only 1.9% earned a graduate degree compared to 3.8% for Whites and 3% for African Americans (Fry, 2002). Hispanic women obtained master’s degrees at higher rates than Hispanic males. Between 1996 and 2006 the percentage of Hispanic women obtaining a master’s degree grew by 130.9% (Ryu, 2009). At the master’s level, Latinos are most likely to be conferred a degree in education and public administration/services (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). In 2006 there were 816 Hispanic men and 1,057 Hispanic women who earned doctoral degrees compared to their counterparts (White men, 14,001; White women, 17,387; Black men, 3,645; Black women, 5,172).
(Ryu, 2009). Of Latinos who do pursue doctoral degrees, many do so within the fields of education and psychology (Llagas & Snyder, 2003).

At the faculty level in 1999, Hispanics represented only 3% of faculty who held a full-time instructional position in a degree granting institution. Of the Hispanic faculty in higher education, a majority serve as instructors (5%) and lecturers (45%). Only 2% served as full professors, 5% as assistant professors and 4% as associate professors (Llagas & Snyder, 2003). The relatively small portion of Hispanic faculty serving in higher education limits the pool of eligible candidates for advanced leadership positions. Research has shown that about 70% of university presidents have served as faculty in some capacity (King & Gomez, 2008). Fry (2002), stated “Simply put, in American society today attainment of an advanced degree markedly enhances the likelihood of entry into positions of leadership and status” (p 8).

Throughout the United States there are very few Latina/o executives at universities and colleges. Fry (2002) stated, “Lacking advanced degrees, Latinos will be underrepresented in the nation’s most prestigious jobs” (p. 9). Of the small number of Latinos who serve in leadership roles in higher education, more serve at community colleges than at four-year universities. Those Latinos who have served in executive positions have acquired a wealth of knowledge through their experiences in higher education. It is important to understand how these Latinos describe their lived experiences as leaders in higher education.

Ballesteros (2008), a Latino former leader in higher education, describes the complex situation Latinos leaders experience within their leadership roles. Ballesteros points to the challenge of Latino leaders maintaining their ethnic identities while leading
their institutions. Latino leaders are challenged with supporting the Latino communities within their institutions without being perceived as too aggressive on minority concerns. There are often dual expectations from the Latino community and the broader institutional community. Ballesteros challenges Latinos to look beyond the walls of “Brown” institutions when looking to lead in higher education.

Gonzalez (2007) stated that in order for Latinos to have a greater representation in higher education, there needs to be a multi-pronged effort between institutions of higher learning, Hispanic communities, and Latino faculty who aspire to become academic administrators. Gonzalez first asserts that institutions must have a master plan for attaining Latino representation in administrative positions. Secondly, Hispanic communities must use their power to encourage academic leaders within the institutions. Lastly, the Latino faculty members who aspire to lead in higher education must stay in touch with the Hispanic community.

The issues of access and equity are problematic among the administrative ranks in higher education. According to Leon and Nevarez (2007), “Despite the fast-rising numbers of Latinos in our society and schools, there are few Latino top administrators in higher education. As of 2006, they constituted only 5% of college or university presidents, compared to 6% of Blacks and 86% of Whites” (p. 358).

In addition, Leon and Nevarez (2007) highlighted the increased prevalence of Hispanic executives at public two-year institutions compared to public four-year institutions. It is evident that there are disparities in terms of leadership opportunities between Whites and Hispanics. Among those Hispanics who beat the odds and become administrators in higher education, some are confronted with additional challenges.
The Latino leaders in higher education institutions are overwhelmed and undervalued. They are often seen as expendable, and their actions are constantly misinterpreted (Valverde, 2003).

Haro (1995) provided a call to action over 19 years ago when he stated, “It is essential for Latinos to begin questioning their limited numbers in leadership roles in higher education. Why are so few in senior-level academic executive jobs?” (p. 189). Unfortunately, Haro’s call for Latino leadership over a decade ago is still relevant today. Santiago (1996) stated,

In failing to successfully incorporate all groups into the ranks of their students, faculty, and leadership, institutions put at risk not only their ability to successfully serve all groups but also the future of our pluralistic democracy. Institutions of higher education charged with preparing students for citizenship have an obligation both to teach about diversity and to serve as models of diversity. (p. 25)

Ballesteros (2008) stated, “Hispanics can lead ‘White’ as well as ‘Brown’ institutions of postsecondary education. Our bilingual-bicultural background and our humanistic legacy will be an asset to all campus personnel and students” (p. 202).

This study examines the experiences of Latina/o executives in higher education. The primary purpose of this study is to shed light on the stories of these leaders in order to help others understand the challenges and rewards of leadership.

Key Concepts

The key concepts within the study that will be addressed are: 1) the changing demographics and the need for Hispanic/Latino executives in higher education; 2) exploring the impact of ethnicity on decision making; 3) the experiences leading within a predominantly White institution (PWI) versus other institutions; and 4) the impact of
Hispanic/Latino executive within PWIs. In addition, this study seeks to add to the limited literature on Hispanic/Latino leadership within higher education.

Examining the experiences of Hispanic/Latino leaders is an issue that has not been fully addressed in the higher education literature. Many of the studies that have been conducted are now out of date (Esquibel, 1977 & 1992; Haro, 1990 & 1995). As a society, we place a value on equity and inclusion for all. In spite of the population growth of Hispanics/Latinos in the United States, there is little being done to address the lack of Hispanic/Latino leadership in higher education. There is limited literature on the recruitment and development of the next generation of Hispanic/Latino executive leaders who are currently graduate students.

There is a need to further develop the theoretical framework on leadership, one that accounts for the cultural experiences of Latinos. Martinez (1999) asserted that although aspects of leadership in higher education are beginning to receive systemic attention, a coherent theoretical framework remains to be developed. Haro (1990) stated, “The study of Hispanic leadership in higher education delimits the field even further, but it is important that it be regarded as a constitutive component of a more general theory of leadership in higher education” (p. 3).

It is unfortunate that Latinos and other minorities continue to be underrepresented in some of the most influential administrative leadership positions in higher education. Hispanics are more likely to hold leadership positions within non-academic roles in higher education. Of those Hispanics who hold administrative positions in higher education, most do so in diversity related areas (Melendez, 2004).
This study seeks to examine the experiences of those very few Latinos who hold executive positions in higher education. The experiences of those Latinos in executive positions could provide important insights on strategies to increase the prevalence of Latinos in administrative roles. By examining the lived experiences of Latino leaders, I seek to demystify what it means to be a Latino leader in higher education.

Critical Race Theory

The study will utilize Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the lens through which to examine the experiences of Hispanic/Latino executives working within PWIs. CRT in qualitative research highlights how racism is embedded within the fabric of American society (Parker & Lynn, 2002; Creswell, 2007). Solorzano and Yosso (2002) stated,

Critical race theory advances a strategy to foreground and account for the role of race and racism in education and works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of opposing or eliminating other forms of subordination based on gender, class, sexual orientation, language, and national origin. (p. 25)

Parker and Lynn (2002) pointed out the three main goals of CRT: 1) the utilization of storytelling and narratives to examine race and racism in society, 2) to advocate for the eradication of racial subjugation while pointing out that race is a social construct, and 3) to draw a clear delineation between races and other axes of domination. This study will also employ Latina/o critical race theory (LatCrit), which seeks to examine and rectify the shortcomings of Latinas/Latinos in the United States (Valdes, 1998; Fernandez, 2002). LatCrit is used to point out and address the racialized subordination of Chicanas/os and Latinas/os (Yosso, 2006). As Delgado-Bernal (2002) stated, “LatCrit is a theory that elucidates Latinas/Latinos’ multidimensional identities and can address the intersectionality of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of
oppression” (p. 108). LatCrit has four primary functions; 1) the production of knowledge, 2) the advancement of transformation, 3) the expansion and connection of struggle(s), and 4) the cultivation of community (Valdes, 1997; Fernandez, 2002).

There are five main tenets of CRT: 1) The intercentricity of race and racism, which focuses on how race and racism are endemic and permanent, 2) the challenge to dominant ideology which challenges educational institutional claims of objectivity meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity; 3) the commitment to social justice which seeks to eliminate racism, sexism and poverty while empowering minority groups; 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and 5) the interdisciplinary perspective (Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Fernandez, 2002; Parker & Villalpando, 2007; Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005; Yosso, 2006).

The method utilized by critical race theorists to shed light on many of the inequities within our society is primarily through counterstories (Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Fernandez, 2002). The counterstories are used to combat the “master narratives” which are stories perceived through the eyes of White privilege and used to perpetuate racism.

As Solorzano and Yosso (2002) pointed out, it is within these “monovocal” master narratives that stereotypes are reinforced. It is through the use of counterstories that an alternative voice is heard that challenges our preconceived notions racism and other forms of “isms.” There are three different types of counterstories, which include autobiographical, biographical, and composite stories or narratives. Through autobiographical stories an individual recounts their experiences with various forms of racism and sexism. Through biographical stories the author examines another person’s encounter with racism and sexism in third person voice. In composite stories or narratives
the experiences of people of color describe instances of racism, sexism and classism. Solorzano and Yosso (2002) further explained that composite stories or narratives, “may offer both biographical and autobiographical because the authors create composite characters and place them in social historical, political situations to discuss racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of subordination” (p. 33). Composite stories also utilize four data sources: 1) empirical research data (survey and focus group interviews); 2) existing social science, humanities, legal, or literature; 3) judicial records; and 4) the authors’ professional and personal experiences (Yosso, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

In comparison to our knowledge of Latinos in leadership positions, we know a lot about the experiences of African American and women leaders in higher education as they have worked to increase their ranks (e.g., their career ladders, supports and barriers to their success, the meaning they make of themselves in their roles). Although Latinos and Latinas are the fastest-growing minority group in the U.S. and in higher education, their percentages in positions of leadership in higher education have not kept pace with the growth in their presence as students.

There is a paucity of research on the experience of Latino/a leaders in higher education, and the research that exists is either out of date or focused on the community college level. What little research exists seems to indicate that Latino/a leaders may face many of the same challenges as African American and women leaders, but may have unique challenges and concerns regarding culture (their own identification within their institution and their relationship with the Latino community outside their institution) that are important to understand if institutions want to support the growth of Latino/a leaders.
Therefore, this research will focus on the lived experiences of Latino/a executive-level leaders in four-year PWIs, exploring issues (career pathways, preparation, and perceptions that prior literature indicated may affect them and that have affected other groups), but also probing issues of cultural navigation and identity.

The need for Latino leaders within American colleges is even more important today than it was in previous years. Haro (2005) has cited several critical reasons for the need of Latino leaders in higher education. Haro pointed to increasing the Latino population and the impact these Latino leaders could potentially have within those communities. Haro then pointed to the Latino high school population and college-going gap of Latinos as additional reasons for the increased need of Latino leaders. Haro (2005) stated “There is much to be done in identifying and preparing Latinos to become professors, senior staff, and executives at American colleges and universities. And even more is needed to provide a hospitable campus environment for Hispanics, particularly in academic leadership roles” (p. 59).

The lived experiences of Latino leaders in higher education are not well documented. The research on Latino leaders within predominately White institutions is sparse due to the limited representation of Latinos within those institutions. While the literature continues to highlight the lack of representation of Latinos within all levels of higher education, their lived experiences have not been thoroughly examined within predominately White institutions. Latino leaders must navigate between the needs of their institutions and those external to the institution.

According to Ballesteros (2008),

Hispanic leaders in higher education are placed in a tenuous position in
carrying out their administrative duties. First, they must be the leaders of all constituents. Second, as Latinos, they are also the leaders of la Raza on campus. They are held accountable for their job assignments either by the board of trustees, the president, or the vice president. Latino constituents hold them accountable to promote and protect their interests. (p. 212)

A thorough examination of the lived experiences of current Latino leaders within higher education could provide key insights into how these individuals have dealt with leading in higher education. Martinez (1999) stated, “Since our scholarship, which focuses on social phenomena, reflects the evolution of the phenomenon itself, our understanding of Hispanic leadership in American higher education is extremely limited and requires systematic scholarly attention if substantial gains in knowledge are to occur in the near future” (p. 2).

Statement of the Purpose

This study seeks to shed light on the experience of Latinos leading within doctoral-granting, predominately White institutions. This study provides needed insight on the limited number of Latino/as leading within some of the most highly selected institutions in the nation.

The representation of Latinos in executive positions in higher education continues to be minimal. The upper echelons of administrative positions in higher education continue to be dominated by White males. The majority of Latinos leading in higher education are positioned at community colleges. In spite of the strides that have been made at community colleges in providing access and inclusion to Latinos in higher education, issues of equality continue to be paramount within predominately White institutions. This study seeks to examine how Latino leaders at PWIs describe their experiences. What perceptions do they have about the institutions they work in and how
have these perceptions impacted them as leaders? The experiences of minority leaders can best be described by Valverde (2003):

Leaders of color for sure and maybe women as well have to find suitable ways to maneuver two separate networks, White and non-White. Even though these two networks have the same goals (democratic principles and service to specified set of constituents), their expectations and interest are contradictory. (p. 130)

If the expectations and interest between the two separate networks are contradictory, to what degree has networking between networks impacted Latino leaders?

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

1. How do Hispanic/Latino executives in higher education describe their leadership experiences at PWIs?

2. Why are so few Hispanic/Latinos leading within PWIs?

3. In what ways does ethnicity impact the decisions made at their institutions?

4. What strategies are beneficial to institutions looking to recruit and retain Hispanics/Latinos executives within PWIs?

Rationale for the Study

As indicated in the literature, Latino representation within leadership positions in higher education is dismal. Of the more than 3,500 colleges and universities in the United States, only 102 have Chicano/a or Latino/a presidents (Rodriguez, 1998). In addition, de los Santos and Vega (2007) found “In 2001, a total of 90 Latina/o CEOs served in institutions of higher education in the continental United States. By 2006, the number had increased to 112, an increase of 22. In effect, this is only a 12.4% increase” (p. 171). This study accounts for Latinos at community colleges and four-year institutions. While the
representation of Latinos at community colleges is important, Latino leadership within PWIs remains stagnant.

Those Latinos who do pursue leadership positions in higher education are held to higher standards than Whites (Haro, 2001; Haro, 1995). There is a need to train more Latino leaders, so they can take the lead in addressing many of the challenges Latinos face in higher education. In order to address the shortage of Latinos in leadership positions, it is important to acknowledge the challenges they experience on their way to the “top.” Haro (2007) stated, “The limited numbers of Latinos in leadership roles at American colleges and universities require the attention and assistance of those responsible for appointing them, and for organizations that should be providing them with information, guidance, and training” (p. 82).

Methodology

This study will be qualitative in nature and will employ a phenomenological approach as a means to understand and capture the experiences of Latino executives in higher education. As Tesch (1984) stated, “Phenomenological research accumulates knowledge on the range of the individual, the specific, the unique. Its purpose is to probe in the richness of human experience and to illuminate the complexity of the individual perception and action against the background of our knowledge of the general laws or regularities in human nature” (p. 5).

The phenomenological approach is being used to gather a deeper understanding of the experiences of Latino executives at predominately White, doctoral-granting institutions. This study seeks to understand what it means to be a Latino/a executive in higher education. The participants for this study were identified through snowball, or
chain sampling, in which subjects are identified through people who know individuals working in executive positions in higher education. The data for this study were collected through a 60 to 90-minute semi-structured, in-depth interview. The participants were contacted a second time to member check the transcripts.

Summary

The lack of Latinos in higher education has a tremendous impact on the number of available future leaders in higher education. This research study seeks to examine the lived experiences of Latino/a leaders working within predominately White institutions. Through the use of interviews, the researcher investigated the experiences of Latino/a leaders who are serving or have served in an executive level capacity in higher education. The experiences of these Latino/a leaders can provide important information on how these individuals perceive their roles, and to what extent they feel that being Latino has impacted them in their roles as institutional leaders.

The information gathered in this study will assist aspiring Latino/a administrators in understanding whether their desire to lead is worth the cost in time and effort. The information gathered from this study could provide universities with insight on how to utilize the talents of Latino administrators to address the lack of educational attainment of Latinos within their institutional walls. Through studying the lived experiences of Latino administrators, universities may also begin to understand how they can recruit, retain, and promote the next generation of leaders.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was limited to a minimum of five Latino administrators or once data saturation is achieved. The information gathered for this study was limited by the small
number of administrators who participated in the interview process. The views represented in this study are those of Latinos holding executive positions at four-year PWIs within the United States. This study was limited to those holding either a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.), or other terminal degrees. An additional limitation is that many of those Latinos who hold executive positions in doctoral-granting institutions are located in the southwest. There are also more males then females serving in executive positions in higher education, which may have limited the diversity of the pool (King & Gomez, 2008).

Across all institutional types (doctorate-granting, master’s, baccalaureate and associate) Latinos are most likely to hold senior administrative positions in diversity offices (King & Gomez, 2008). In addition, due to the busy nature of those participants serving in executive roles, it was difficult to find a time to meet with each of them. Since there are so few Latinos serving in executive positions, many may have been hesitant to participate because they may perceive themselves as easily identified within their institution.

The author of this dissertation is of Mexican American and Puerto Rican heritage who aspires to lead in higher education. The author has spent over seven years working within a predominately White institution, and objectivity may be hindered by the extent of his experience. The author is aware of his biases and has gone to great measures to ensure that personal biases do not skew the results.

Definition of Terms

**Executives:** Chief of Staff, Executive Vice President, Chief Academic Officer (CAO)/Provost, Central Senior Academic Affairs Officer, Dean of Academic College, Senior
Administrative Officer, Senior External Affairs Officer, Chief Student Affairs or Enrollment Management Officer and Chief Diversity Officer (King, & Gomez, 2008).

**Latino/a:** someone who is Spanish-speaking or has Latin-American heritage.

**Mexican American:** someone of Mexican descent who is a citizen of the United States.

**Chicano:** a Mexican American who does not live in Mexico.

**Hispanic:** a United States Census category used to group all individuals who have Latin American heritage.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The lack of minority administrators within predominately White institutions (PWIs) has been a long-standing issue within higher education. As Perrakis, Campbell and Antonaros (2009) stated, “There is no silver bullet to the problem of poor minority representation at the highest levels of academic administration” (p.10). Moore’s (1982) study of 2,896 senior college administrators in the early 1980s depicted a troubling reality.

Moore further stated that, “Minorities can be found who hold virtually every administrative title, but they are not found in any significant numbers in predominately White colleges and universities which still comprise the majority of institutions” (p. 56). Williams (1985) discussed the rarity of a career path model that minorities and White women can utilize when looking to advance in a predominately White institution. The career paths of Mexican Americans in higher education have been documented, but not extensively (Ledesma-Rivera, 1987). While minorities have made advances within administrative positions in higher education, their representation within PWIs has been limited.

There is an abundance of literature on leadership in higher education. Yet, many of the studies examining Latino leadership in higher education are outdated (Esquibel, 1977 & 1992; Haro, 1990 &1995; Martinez-Aleman & Renn, 2002).
The problem is further exacerbated by the limited number of studies on Latino leadership within predominately White institutions (Moore, 1982; Esquibel, 1977 & 1992; Haro, 1995). This study seeks to examine the lived experiences of those Latinos who serve within PWIs. The literature on the lived experiences of Latinos within higher education is relegated to those who work within community colleges (Gutierrez, Castaneda & Katsinas, 2002; Leon & Nevarez, 2007; Castellanos & Jones, 2003; Santiago, 1996). The literature review conducted for this study indicates that there is a need for further research on the lived experiences of Latino leaders in higher education. Perrakis, Campbell, and Antonaros (2009) stated, “More research is needed to understand the experiences of minority CEOs at both the two and four-year levels” (p. 15).

The following sections will discuss the challenges and obstacles to creating an educational pipeline for women and minorities within higher education. This section will provide insight into the experiences of Latino/a, African American and women faculty and administrators within two-year and four-year institutions. A critical review of the research on African Americans and women serving as faculty and administrators in higher education will provide needed insight on the challenges these groups have experienced and commonalities among the different groups.

K-12 and College Educational Attainment

In order to understand why the disparities exist within the upper echelons of academe, we first must address the educational attainment of Hispanics within the secondary educational system. It was reported in 2000 that the Hispanic population had increased substantially over the last several years (Fry, 2002). While the number of Hispanics in the United States increases, there continues to be a disconnect in these
individuals attaining an education at any level. In fact, more than two in five Hispanics who are 25 years old and older have not graduated from high school (U.S. Census, 2002). If we continue on this same course we will have a larger portion of Hispanics lacking a high school and baccalaureate education.

As Rodriguez, Guido-DiBrito, Torres, & Talbot (2000) stated, “The challenge for institutions of higher education as they enter the 21st century will be to prepare for and effectively serve larger numbers of Latino students by examining the university environment and making the necessary changes to promote success” (p. 524). While higher education institutions may need to prepare for a larger number of Latinos, it is important to note the challenges within the secondary education system. An important piece of the educational pipeline for Latinos lies within this system.

Leon and Nevarez (2007) highlighted a variety of educational hurdles that limit the future success of Latinos. These students are impacted by low-caliber schools, low high school graduation rates, less effective college preparation, channeling to two-year institutions, low college graduation rates, and reduced presence in graduate school. These students are also impacted by poverty.

The combination of all these factors seriously limits the possible pool of future scholars in higher education (Leon & Nevarez, 2007). According to Meier and Stewart (1991),

The historical patterns of exclusion from education that greatly handicapped Blacks also applied to Hispanics, even though the precise methods of exclusion differed. Hispanics were trapped in a legal limbo, at times being “White” and at other times being considered “non-White.” Regardless of how Hispanics were considered, however, the designation was used to limit Hispanic access to educational opportunities. (p. 201)
Lack of Latina/o Faculty Representation

Once Latinos have successfully navigated through the undergraduate and graduate pipeline, they are exposed to an entirely new set of obstacles and challenges. Harvey (2003) highlighted the lack of a pipeline for African Americans and Latinos. While the Hispanic populations continue to increase, their representation as faculty fails to increase. Harvey (2003) further stated, “Hispanics account for only 2.9% and African Americans account for 5.1% of faculty, although Hispanics now represent 12% of the total population and African Americans represent 11%” (p. 7).

A major challenge to the recruitment and retention of Latinos into faculty positions is the work environment in higher education. Latinos, women and other minorities who work in higher education experience more discrimination in the workplace than their White male counterparts (Valverde, 2003; Valian, 1998; Moody, 2004; Padilla, 1995; Turner & Myers, 2000; Reyes & Halcon, 1988). In spite of the discrimination, those Latinos who aspire to lead beyond the faculty ranks must first establish themselves as scholars.

In order to be considered for an executive level position within higher education, a faculty member must have exemplary scholarly writing, mentorship, networking, and involvement in leadership training programs (Gonzalez, 2007). Even if a faculty member engages in all of those activities, that does not guarantee them access to executive level positions.

Latino/a Administrators in Higher Education

A seminal study on Latinos in administrative positions was conducted by Esquibel in 1977, when he examined Chicano administrators in colleges and universities
in the southwest. His study identified four situational factors that Chicano administrators believed influenced their administrative appointments within higher education. These four situational factors were 1) contacts and political involvement of the Chicano administrator, 2) affirmative action plans and requirements, 3) Chicano concentration or the ethnic composition of the institution and the community in which it is located, and 4) Chicano pressures and contacts in the Chicano community. This study was the first of its kind and set the framework for much of the work that would follow on Latino leadership in higher education.

Fifteen years later, Esquibel replicated his study and in doing so he identified three additional situational factors that Chicano administrators believed influenced their appointments within higher education. The three additional factors are as follows: 1) New initiatives, such as training programs, workshops, incentive programs, lawsuits, and networking; 2) the emphasis the administrator places on maintaining Chicano roots; and 3) advocates on the governing board, screening committees, and search firms (Esquibel, 1992). Both of Esquibel’s studies provided key insights into the experiences of Latinos in higher education. These two studies are influential works; however, both studies only examined Chicano administrators in the southwest U.S. These two studies failed to take into account the other Hispanics who may have been working in higher education during this time period in other areas of the country such as Puerto Ricans, Cubans, or others.

Gorena’s (1996) study of 68 Hispanic women within four ethnic groups (Central/South American, Cuban, Mexican American, Puerto Rican) who held senior-level administrative positions in post-secondary institutions provides insight into the perceived experiences of Hispanic administrators. This study examined the perceptions of
these women toward factors that positively influenced or hindered their advancement into a leadership position. Gorena provided four areas to categorize the perceived experiences of these women leaders. The four categories are 1) Personal/Professional, 2) Family, 3) Support, and 4) Institutional.

Within the Personal/Professional category, these women indicated that education and training, goal setting, networking, knowledge of mainstream systems, and knowledge of the advancement process were all themes that they perceived as positively impacting their advancement. Within the Family category the participants indicated personal economic status, parental economic status, and children as all positive influences on advancement. In the Support category, family/friends, other colleagues/peers, spouses/significant others, and non-Hispanic administrators all positively influenced their advancement. In the Institutional category the participants indicated internal recognition, internal personal contacts, appointments/responsibilities, and external personal contacts as positive perceived influences. In the Other category the participants indicated non-Hispanic male and female mentors and affirmative action as factors that positively influenced their advancement.

Among the four subgroups, household/child care responsibilities and other family responsibilities were perceived as factors hindering advancement within the Family category. In the Institutional category, assignment/responsibilities in minority-related areas were perceived as hindrances to advancement.

Morales’ (2000) dissertation studied the experiences of four Hispanic administrators in Minnesota’s colleges and universities. Morales utilized in-depth
phenomenological interviews to understand the experiences of these administrators.

Morales identified four research questions:

1. What are the personal stories and experiences of Hispanic administrators in Minnesota colleges and universities as elicited though the qualitative, phenomenological interviewing process?

2. How has being Hispanic affected the administrators in their administrative posts?

3. How do the experiences of these Hispanic administrators differ? How are they similar?

4. How can the experiences of Hispanic administrators in Minnesota colleges and universities inform or affect future Hispanic administrators? What can the next generation learn from the experiences of these Hispanic administrators?

Morales identified four major and two minor themes in this study. The first theme identified the importance of support systems. The second theme identified cross-cultural familiarity as a strength. The third theme focused on the idea of being locked into a diversity-related career path. The fourth theme highlighted personal strategies for professional survival. The participants indicated that being flexible, preferring cooperation and inclusion, focusing on positive aspects of a situation, practicing emotional self-discipline, and maintaining a strong student service orientation in their dealings are all personal strategies they utilized for professional survival. The two minor themes included discrimination and sources of job satisfaction (duty or obligation to give back to their community by helping others).

Silva’s (2007) dissertation examined the career development of successful Hispanic administrators in higher education. The Delphi study utilized a panel of
administrators who served as vice-presidents, presidents, and chancellors from across the United States. There were four research questions that guided the study:

1. What are positive experiences encountered by Hispanic higher education administrators that enabled them to be successful administrators?

2. What strategies did Hispanic higher education administrators utilize that enabled them to be a successful administrators in higher education?

3. What recommendations do Hispanic higher education administrators make for future Hispanic administrators to be successful in higher education?

4. What strategies will be critical for future Hispanic administrators to utilize in order to be successful in higher education?

In response to research question one, the panel of experts indicated sustaining personal motivation, having the ability to work with others, learning from your mistakes, developing interpersonal skills, and earning multiple degrees as experiences one needs to be a successful administrator. When the participants were asked what strategies they utilized to be successful they indicated obtaining personal skills, focusing on students and completing appropriate credentials such as a doctorate. In order for future Hispanics in higher education administration to be successful the participants recommended obtaining a doctorate, developing personal skills, maintaining integrity, always following through with commitments, and paying your dues/gaining experience. The panel provided a list of strategies needed for future Hispanic administrators to be successful such as developing people skills (emotional intelligence), getting a doctorate, gaining experience, forming a strong team, learning the trade, and being prepared for opportunities.
Aschenbrenner’s (2006) dissertation examined Hispanic women who held leadership positions (three presidents and one director) in higher education. There were five research questions that guided the study:

1. What childhood or family background experiences and academic preparation did they have?
2. What career paths and patterns they have?
3. What were their perceived professional barriers?
4. Who were influential persons in their lives?
5. What advice might they offer other Hispanic women wishing to become leaders in education?

In response to the first research question the researcher found that all three presidents had been raised in a Spanish-speaking environment where achieving a college degree was an expectation. All were married, had children, and entered the workforce before completing their advanced graduate degrees. In response to the second research question regarding career path and patterns, Aschenbrenner found that the three presidents started their careers as faculty members and all four Hispanic women held doctoral degrees. When the participants were asked to identify any perceived professional barriers, the participants indicated sexism and prejudice, and trying to balance family and career.

The participants also indicated that they had their credibility and experience questioned by their peers. When the participants were asked to identify influential people in their lives three of the four women indicated their female elementary teachers. Lastly, the participants were asked to provide advice to other Hispanic women wishing to become leaders in higher education. The participants indicated the importance of inviting
talented people to be with you and around you, take risks, learn how to play to the game, remain really flexible, be able to work well with men, develop professional networks, be ethical, be consistent, welcome challenges, follow through, and do not let the negativity of others be discouraging.

Leading at Community Colleges

Community colleges serve a vital role in recruiting, retaining, and graduating students of color and women in higher education. A large proportion of students of color are attending public two-year colleges. Women make up more than half of the students enrolled in community colleges. Since community colleges are access points for female and minority students (Llagas & Snyder, 2003), they may influence the number of women and minorities eventually serving in leadership positions. Minority community college leaders serve a vital position as role models for faculty and students (Vaughan & Weisman, 1998).

Community colleges not only serve as access points, they also provide a diverse learning environment for its constituents. Those institutions that embrace diversity within all levels of their organization reap added benefits. As Jackson and Phelps (2004) pointed out, the students, staff, and faculty of a truly diverse institution are exposed to diversity in three distinct ways; through structural diversity, informal interaction diversity, and classroom diversity.

Through structural diversity, students are exposed to a variety of different racial/ethnic groups on a campus. Hurtado, Milam, Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen (1999) stated, “…structural diversity is considered the first important step in the process of improving the climate for diversity” (p. 19). Secondly, through interactions in residence
halls, clubs, organizations, and other sorts of activities, students are involved in informal interactional diversity. This sort of interaction takes place primarily outside of a classroom. Equally as important as the other two types of diversity is classroom diversity. Through classroom diversity, students, staff, and faculty learn about cultural differences, which enhance the learning experience for everyone (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002; Jackson & Phelps, 2004).

Community colleges have been the training ground for women and minorities who have made the greatest gains in attaining administrative leadership positions. There have been many advances in achieving and sustaining institutional diversity within community colleges (Santiago, 1996).

Yet Boggs (2003) stated, “Community colleges have not been as effective as they need to be in diversifying their leadership by ethnicity” (p. 16). A comprehensive commitment to increasing and maintaining adequate diversity among the faculty, staff, and administration personnel within a community college must be an ongoing process. In order to increase administrative diversity within community colleges it is important to identify and target gatekeepers, implement facilitative practices, and reward desired behaviors (Phelps and Taber, 1996).

Boggs (2003) has pointed out that now may be the best time to increase administrative diversity within community colleges, as mass retirements are expected in the coming years. He further mentioned that those next in line for leadership positions are also near retirement. The numbers of community college faculty members are dwindling as well. Boggs noted that this presents a key opportunity for increasing diversity and renewed energy to community college faculty and administration.
Challenges of Leadership Diversity in Community Colleges

Once minorities and women have gained access to leadership positions within community colleges they are presented with an entirely new set of challenges. Women and minority community college leaders face numerous obstacles stemming from a lack of understanding about the importance of institutional diversity. Women in particular are negatively impacted by the perceptions of role responsibility within a traditional institutional culture (Vaughan, 1990). Women also lack adequate mentors and role models who could serve as advocates. As if this was not enough, women are subjected to the manipulation of the “good old boy network” (Vaughan, 1990).

Among the Black community college leaders, racism and tokenism have impacted their ability to lead (Vaughan, 1990). The Hispanics within community colleges have expressed concerns with faculty racism and institution-wide stereotyping (Vaughan, 1990). Yet, Hispanic faculty and administrators are a key component to recruiting and retaining Hispanic students, who are the largest ethnic minority in the United States.

In Vaughan’s (1990) study of women and minorities in leadership positions, participants reported being exposed to negative role models. Women reported being asked gender-related questions during an interview. A dean in Vaughan’s study reported being asked a question regarding who would care for her children when they became ill. Another female dean was asked if she was tough enough to deal with other administrators. These women also reported a lack of role models and higher expectations as obstacles to leading (Vaughan, 1990). If community colleges are to achieve their full potential in the future, leadership will need to come from these diverse groups (Vaughan,
In order to attain this diverse leadership, community colleges may need to address the racism and stereotyping that exists within these institutions.

Moving beyond the racism, tokenism, and stereotypes, the impact of a minority leader within a community college can be immense. Their presence alone can inspire many within an institution. As Phelps, Taber, and Smith (1997) stated,

Presidents of a minority racial, ethnic, or gender group may also provide inspiring role models for students, employees, and community residents; add important voices to dialogues concerning personnel issues, including staff development, curriculum changes, teaching excellence, and student success; and promote community relationships and commitments, enriching all associated with the college and its community. (p. 3)

The small numbers of minorities serving in executive roles within community colleges could potentially be increased if these organizations accepted accountability for their institutional practices. As Perrakis, Campbell and Antonaros (2009) stated, “Rates of diversity among community college CEOs will only increase once institutions accept responsibility for creating a culture of inclusion and promotion for minority candidates who gather the appropriate credentials to warrant consideration for hire” (p. 8).

Jackson and Phelps’ (2004) study compares the proportion of faculty, academic, and executive leaders from different races and ethnicities with the number of students of color in two-year colleges between 1993 and 1999. They found that while the enrollment of diverse students has increased within two-year colleges between 1993 and 1999, there have been limited gains within the academic workforce. Jackson and Phelps point out that while there have been gains within the executive leadership levels for African Americans and Hispanics within two-year colleges, these groups are still significantly underrepresented (Jackson & Phelps, 2004).
Latinos Serving at Community Colleges

An increasing number of Latinos who lead in higher education do so within community colleges. Those Latinos who have attained the presidency within community colleges did so with a background in student affairs (Leon & Nevarez, 2007). There are fewer Latinos groomed for the presidency within the academic side of a community college (Leon & Nevarez, 2007; Santiago, 1996; Martinez, 1999). While positions within student affairs have been the primary artery through which Latinos have attained executive positions at community colleges, this has not been the case within four-year universities. It is rare for a student affairs professional to serve as president of a four-year university (Leon & Nevarez, 2007).

Gutierrez, Castaneda, and Katsinas (2002) conducted a qualitative survey of 16 Hispanics in senior-level administrative roles at community colleges. The participants in their study were asked questions regarding their career paths. The participants were asked, “Was there a key experience in your career path that prepared you for your current position, and if so, what was that?” There were three themes that emerged from this question. The first theme revolved around quality mentoring. The second theme indicated the importance of participating in leadership development programs. The third theme discussed the importance of gaining a wide variety experiences at different levels of responsibility. One respondent indicated that through working in a variety of institutions one becomes acquainted with the various cultural and political styles. When the participants were asked, “What could be done to assist more Hispanics to attain leadership positions in community colleges?,” they indicated the need for leadership training opportunities. The participants also mentioned earning a doctorate as critical.
Munoz (2010) conducted a mixed-method study that captured the experiences of Latinas on their pathway to the presidency at community colleges. Through surveys and face-to-face interviews, Munoz gathered the experiences of Latinas in administrative positions at community colleges. The survey findings of this study indicate that professional development, professional affiliations, and mentoring are critical to Latinas leading in higher education. In the area of professional development, 20 of the 22 participants indicated being involved in more than one leadership development program prior to holding their presidency. There were 10 participants who attended the National Community College Hispanic Council (NCCHC) leadership fellow programs. There were 20 participants who reported membership in one professional organization. An overwhelming majority (75%) of the participants reported having a mentor prior to the presidency.

Four research questions guided the researcher through the interview aspect of the study. The first research question asked what variables Latina community college presidents identify as having the most impact on their career successes. The participants identified experiences in their childhoods that required them to take responsibility. The participants also mentioned the importance of supervisors and mentors who provide meaningful experience that allowed them to develop professionally. Emotional support from family members was also equally important. When the participants were asked, “How do Latinas overcome barriers (if any) and challenges in their path to the presidency?,” they spoke of earning academic credentials to gain credibility. The participants mentioned the importance of participating in professional development
opportunities, earning a doctorate and mentoring were important for assuming a leadership position.

Hensen’s (1997) dissertation examined 17 Latina administrators who were presidents and vice presidents at California community colleges. When the participants were asked what persistence factors have contributed to their career successes they indicated 1) support of family, 2) focus objectives and goals, 3) confidence, 4) working harder, and 5) personal values. When the participants were asked to discuss the obstacles they faced and overcame the participants mentioned sexism, racism, and tension resulting from differences with college culture. The participants also indicated the difficulty in trying to find balance between work and other interests. When the participants were asked to provide advice for Latinas who seek administrative positions in higher education they mentioned the importance of gaining a broad array of experiences, establishing a support network, being self-confident, and having “thick skin.”

Latina administrators in higher education have made their greatest strides within Hispanic serving institutions (HSI) and community colleges. The studies of Latina administrators have primarily taken place within community colleges (Munoz, 2010; Gutierrez, Castaneda & Katsinas, 2002). A major limitation to studying Latina leadership is the lack of a comprehensive research reporting mechanism on the numbers of them in higher education (Opp & Gosetti, 2000). Leading in higher education for Latinas comes with its challenges. Grady (2002) stated, “Hispanic women have faced two overriding factors detrimental to their advancement—gender and race” (p. 481). As if gender and race were not enough, Hispanic women are also impacted by their children and extended families. The family heavily influences the career decisions of Latinas (Munoz, 2010).
African Americans Serving at Community Colleges

The representation of African Americans within administrative positions in community colleges continues to increase. Yet, Lewis and Middleton (2003) stated, “Community colleges still have plenty of room to grow when it comes to providing African Americans opportunities for equitable representation at different levels of the system” (p. 787). Phelps, Taber and Smith’s (1997) study of African American community college chancellors and presidents provides insight into the educational background, gender representation, career paths, community involvement, institutional demographics, and level of representation in each state in 1994.

This study found that between African American men and women, men have an increased likelihood of becoming a community college president. When comparing African American and White women, there was a larger number of African American presidents. African Americans in general were more likely to hold a doctorate compared to all presidents. African American presidents were less likely to come through the academic affairs career path. Their study called for more research to be conducted on identifying specific barriers to African Americans attaining the presidency within community colleges (Phelps, Taber & Smith, 1997).

Vaughan’s (1989) study of Black community college presidents found that governing boards within community colleges often perceive Blacks as only being suited to lead predominantly Black institutions in urban communities. In this study there were 12 Black presidents who felt that being Black was neither an asset nor a liability to the presidential selection process. In addition, 10 perceived being Black as an asset and four believed being Black was a liability. As Vaughan (1989) stated, “Blacks aspiring to the
majority of the community college presidencies may well face frustrations and even rejections resulting in part because of their race and, although race appears to be an asset in some situations, it may well be a limiting factor unless the Black candidate is interested in a particular type of institution” (p. 21).

Of the 26 participants in Vaughan’s study, 14 felt that affirmative action had aided Blacks in becoming presidents. Race continues to be a critical factor in the attainment of an administrative position for African Americans with community colleges (Bower, 1996; Rolle, Davies & Banning, 2000).

Women Serving at Community Colleges

Opp and Gosetti’s (2002) study of women administrators within two-year colleges depicts a narrowing of the gap between female and male administrators. However, White women have had the largest increase. Their study shows modest increases for Native American women administrators in proportional representation in some western states. Asian American women administrators have experienced modest growth at all colleges except rural colleges, large-size colleges, and Plains colleges. These administrators also experienced increases in proportional representation in the western states.

The Black women administrators experienced modest growth except at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), large-size colleges, rural colleges, Great Lakes colleges and Rocky Mountain colleges. At Hispanic serving institutions, Black women administrators had substantial increases in proportion to their representation. Hispanic women administrators showed modest growth except at suburban colleges, New England colleges, and Rocky Mountain colleges. HSIs were also where Hispanic women administrators experienced their largest growth in proportion to
their representation. As stated previously, White women administrators experienced growth in proportion to their representation at all types of institutions.

Women in Higher Education

Women are still underrepresented in top administrative levels within community colleges (Vaughan & Weisman, 1998). Ottinger and Sikula (1993) highlighted the marginal gains between 1975 to 1992 in the employment of women full-time administrators from non-White racial or ethnic groups within colleges and universities. The women of color who lead in higher education are confronted with racism and sexism (Chliwniak, 1997; Benjamin, 1997a; Benjamin, 1997b). Amey and Eddy (2002) stated, “Leaders who are women of color have additional constraints. These women have to address issues regarding not only their gender but also their race and ethnicity” (p. 485).

The conflicting viewpoints on women and leadership present a unique challenge when reviewing the literature. Rosser (2001) stated, “The literature and research on leadership continues to produce ambiguous and conflicting results regarding the relationship between gender and leadership” (p. 7). In spite of these ambiguities, the women who lead in higher education have been relegated to entry-level positions (Keohane, 2002). King and Gomez (2008) stated, “Across institution types, women are more likely to serve in central academic affairs roles (such as associate provosts or deans of graduate studies) that are most typically staff—rather than line—positions; 50% of all central senior academic affairs officers are women” (p. 5).

Women must also balance multiple roles from child rearing to caring for elder family members (Keohane, 2002). In spite of women being confronted by these competing priorities, they still have managed to lead at some of the most prestigious
universities. Yet when they do attain these high positions, their credentials are scrutinized. Dr. Drew Gilpin Faust, who was the first woman named president of Harvard University, was criticized for not measuring up to past Harvard presidents (Pluviose, 2006).

African American Leadership in Higher Education

The first African American to lead a White institution was Patrick Francis Healy at Georgetown University in 1874. In spite of Mr. Healy’s achievement, an African American president would not preside over any historically Black colleges and universities until decades later. The first African American president at Howard University was not until 1926, Fisk University in 1946, Hampton University in 1949, Spelman College in 1953, and Xavier University in 1968 (The JBHE Foundation, 2000).

The lack of representation of African Americans leading at HBCUs depicts an absence of any true pathway to leadership.

While there have been many advances in the recruitment, advancement, and retention of African American administrators in the 21st century, there continues to be a lack of representation of African Americans at predominantly White institutions. Fikes (2004) further highlighted the lack of African American presidents or chief executives at predominately White institutions in states such as Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Arkansas and Louisiana. Tyson (2002), stated, “Predominantly White institutions have not developed a comprehensive plan to recruit, hire, advance, and retain African American administrators” (p. 468).

In the 1960s and 1970s there was an increase in the number of African American administrators (Cunningham, 1992). Yet, many of them were relegated to staff positions or student support services positions with no power or authority at White institutions. In
addition, those working at predominately White institutions were not given well-defined positions nor told how they would be evaluated. During this time the only recourse these African American leaders had was to 1) keep a low profile, 2) express discomfort with their token roles, or 3) deal directly with superiors (Smith, 1980).

Thomas (2005) stated, “African Americans at PWIs face various racial challenges, whether brought about intentionally or not. Some individuals are not aware that they are inflicting racial challenges because they simply have little or no exposure to those who are different from themselves” (p. 97). African American administrators at predominately White institutions were often utilized as troubleshooters with Black students and Black communities. The roles African American administrators at historically Black colleges and universities were entirely different than those at PWIs. African American administrators at HBCUs served a variety of roles such as friend, mentor, counselor, and advisor (Cunningham, 1992).

Rolle, Davies & Banning (2000) examined the experiences of eight African American executive-level administrators at PWIs located in the southeastern United States. The institutions consisted of community colleges, private four-year institutions, and public state universities with 10% or less minority representation in their student populations. The following questions guided the study:

1. What experiences led you to a career in administrative work in predominately White institutions?

2. What is your experience today as an African American administrator working in a predominately White institution?

3. What advice would you give African Americans who may be seeking leadership positions at predominately White institutions?
When the African American administrators were asked what experiences led them to working at PWIs, several cited federally funded grant programs as their access points. When the participants were asked about their experiences with PWIs, they had a host of answers ranging from dealing with board members to legislative politics. When asked what advice would they give African Americans who may be seeking leadership positions at PWIs, the participants cited the importance of obtaining a doctoral degree. Three of the participants expressed the importance of pursuing a degree in the humanities. The participants mentioned the importance of having a work ethic and mastering communication skills as critical to career advancement.

The researchers identified four themes (race, self-assurance, importance of communication skills, and understanding the politics of higher education administration) based on the career experiences of these African American administrators. Rolle et al. stated,

Race appeared as a significant aspect of their administrative experience and was manifested in four sub-themes: Race as an issue of first position, race as a part of the ongoing administrative experience, race in relation to perceptions of roles on campus, and struggles race produces in negotiating the white campus environment (p. 87).

The second theme highlighted the importance of self-assurance as a needed trait for Blacks who aspire to lead. The third theme mentioned excellent communication skills as a prerequisite. The final theme discussed the importance of understanding the politics of higher education administrations. As one respondent stated, “Being political required negotiation skills, specifically when working in a majority environment. You have to be able to get along with White people. You have to possess these skills of success” (p. 92).
Jackson’s (2001) study highlighted professional growth factors that PWIs can utilize to retain African American administrators. Through a panel, experts consisting of 10 African American administrators at PWIs, Jackson’s study identified 42 steps to promote professional growth for African Americans. Among the 42 practical steps, nine steps were the most common. These nine steps are:

1. Ensure that the administrator is given the authority to make decisions within the stated job description;
2. Establish mentoring programs that focus on career and academic development with sincere and seasoned mentors;
3. Provide release time and funding for research and scholarship (academic administration) and professional development activities (student affairs administration);
4. Enable the administrator to develop knowledge about the college or university by broadening his or her participation beyond diversity-related committees and functions;
5. Provide a full range of leadership opportunities for the administrator within the department, unit, college, and university;
6. Provide financial support to join and attend national meetings and join professional organizations;
7. Provide in-service professional development opportunities where the administrator might grow and develop at the university;
8. Provide monthly release time for the administrator as substitute for additional hours worked (e.g., advising) with underrepresented student populations; and
9. Focus on strengthening the surrounding African American community by rewarding participation in local community organizations, businesses, and industries.

Rolle’s (1998) dissertation focused on the experiences of African American administrators in predominantly White two-year and four-year institutions in the
southeastern region of the United States. This study examined the experiences of eight
(seven males and one female) executive-level administrators (six presidents and two
assistant or associate vice chancellors). These administrators served at community
colleges, private institutions, and public state universities with 10% or less minority
representation in the study body. Three research questions guided the study:

1. What experiences led to your career in administrative work in a
   predominantly White institution?

2. What is your experience today as an African American administrator working
   in a predominantly White institution?

3. What advice would you give African Americans who may be seeking
   leadership positions in predominantly White institutions?

When the participants were asked what experiences led them to their careers at
PWIs the researcher found that over half of the participants began their careers in
historically Black colleges and universities. They stated that their first positions within
PWI were in federally funded campus programs. The participants were asked about their
experiences today as African American administrators at PWIs. They indicated that their
experiences were structured by race. Race was a major theme through which they viewed
their position.

Lastly, the participants were asked to give advice to African Americans who may
be seeking leadership positions in PWIs. The participants indicated the importance of a
strong academic background in the general humanities, having a strong work ethic, and
good verbal and written skills.
African American Women Administrators

There is a lack of African American women serving as chief executives at universities classified by Carnegie as Research One or Two institutions (Chilwniak, 1997). The representation of African American women administrators and faculty directly impacts enrollment and persistence toward degree for African American students at White campuses (Fleming, 1984; Gardiner, Enomoto & Grogan, 2000). African American administrators also have an impact on Black faculty and students (Gregory, 1995; Patitu and Hinton, 2003).

Nearly three decades ago, Tucker (1980) called for a theoretical and practical approach for the training and education of African American administrators. There continues to be a lack of research on African American women faculty and administrators in higher education (Patitu & Hinton, 2003). The representation of African American women administrators in higher education has been impacted by historical institutional barriers including racism, sexism, (Singh, Robinson & Williams-Green, 1995; Williams, 1989; Wilson, 1989) and homophobia (Hinton, 2001).

Lindsay (1999) examined the experiences of four African American women administrators (three presidents and one provost) through semi-structured interviews. The participants were asked a series of questions regarding their experiences as African American administrators in higher education. Lindsay found that the educational credentials or qualifications of these women administrators included obtaining doctoral degrees and being well respected nationally in their respective fields. The participants were also involved in post-doctoral programs, fellowships, or other leadership programs at top schools. When the participants were asked whether they had mentors, three of the
participants mentioned having their mother as a mentor. There were three participants who stated having African American women in leadership positions who mentored them.

Patitu and Hinton (2003) conducted research on the issues that affect senior-level African American women administrators and faculty. Their study was conducted on five faculty members and five administrators. The female administrators in the study were asked to describe their experiences in higher education as African American women. The three common experiences that these five administrators talked about included racism, sexism and homophobia. Each of the participants discussed how racism, sexism and homophobia impacted them in their roles. The participants discussed why having professional and personal support in their roles was important. As Patitu and Hinton (2003) stated, “Support is vital to African American women who work in hostile environments at PWIs” (p. 83).

Becks-Moody’s (2004) dissertation examined African American women administrators in higher education, shedding light on the challenges and experiences of these women within Louisiana public colleges and universities. This study highlighted the experiences of 10 African American women administrators (two presidents, four vice-presidents, and four deans). These women worked at community colleges, HBCUs, and PWIs. Three research questions guided the study:

1. What are the challenges and experiences confronting African American women administrators in higher education?

2. What coping strategies do African American women utilize to successfully manage the conflicts they encounter?

3. What are the differences between the experiences of African American women administrators at historically Black colleges and universities and those at predominantly White institutions?
Through qualitative research utilizing oral histories the researcher was able to identify 11 themes that emerged from the study. The themes revolved around spirituality, family support systems, balancing career and family, racism and sexism, lack of respect by colleagues and subordinates, mentoring and networking, isolation and underrepresentation, competency and confidence, professional satisfaction, and community consciousness.

In response to research question one “What are the challenges and experiences confronting African American women administrators in higher education?,” the participants indicated balancing career and family, racism and sexism, lack of respect by colleagues and subordinates, mentoring and networking, isolation and underrepresentation, competency and confidence, professional satisfaction, and community consciousness.

In response to the second research question, “What coping strategies do African American women utilize to successfully manage the conflicts they encounter?,” the participants indicated spirituality and prayer, family, friends, networks, the community and personal activities as coping strategies.

In response to research question three, “What are the differences between the experiences of African American women administrators at historically Black colleges and universities and those at predominantly White institutions,” one respondent indicated that PWI were less welcoming than were HBCUs. The women who worked at HBCUs did not experience racism from their counterparts. The women at PWIs felt that the staff gave them less respect than they did their non-African American men and women colleagues. The women who worked at PWIs were more likely to come in contact with White men
and women (students and faculty) who had never worked with an African American administrator. The women at PWIs mentioned that people were shocked when they found out that they were a dean or vice president because of the color of their skin. The women who worked at PWIs reported experiencing racism, whereas those who worked at HBCUs reported no racist incidents.

Johnson-Jones’ (2009) dissertation examined the perceived barriers and perceived support tools for African American women college presidents. Fourteen African American women representing public, private, historically Black, and predominantly White institutions were targeted. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the perceived barriers to African American women becoming college presidents?

2. What are the perceived supporting factors for African American women becoming college presidents?

3. Do current African American women presidents see race as an influential factor in their academic careers?

4. Do current African American women presidents see gender as an influential factor in their academic careers?

In response to research question one, the participants indicated hesitation, discrimination, gender, and race were all perceived barriers to becoming a college president. The participants indicated professional visibility, participation in professional development activities (ACE’s National Identification Program, ACE National Forum, and Leaders for Change) proper educational preparation, and years of experience as perceived supporting factors. Eight of the 14 women had participated in Harvard’s Institute for Educational Management. All the women had earned terminal degrees. In
response to the third research question, the participants perceived that race did impact job promotion and access to positions. The participants further indicated that racial discrimination was a perceived barrier to their academic careers. Lastly, in response to research question four, participants indicated that women administrators do experience discrimination in access to positions and promotions.

Williams’ (2007) dissertation examined three African American women at historically Black colleges and universities who had been president for more than five years. Three research questions guided this study:

1. What were the perceived challenges faced by the African American women in this study?
2. How were the perceived challenges overcome?
3. How did those perceived challenges and the women’s responses to them shape their leadership styles?

In response to the research questions, one of the participants indicated being raised during segregation, experiencing racism during her graduate studies, and racial and gender bias in the academic workplace as perceived challenges. When the participants were asked how they overcame their perceived challenges, the participants indicated a strong sense of self and the support of their families and extended family members. They credited their upbringings and role models; by attending Black schools they saw positive images of Black educators, and they credited community influences on their Black identity development (e.g., churches, mothers, and grandmothers) and for developing African American support networks, mentoring, and support systems. Lastly, through the perceived challenges the participants became transformative leaders.
Chatman’s (1991) dissertation examined the experiences of 14 senior-level Black women administrators in higher education, specifically in the Forsyth and Guilford counties of North Carolina. Three research questions guided the study:

1. What personal, educational, and professional experiences hindered or enhanced the career development of senior level Black women administrators in higher education?

2. What procedures did senior-level Black women administrators in higher education use in resolving hindrances in their personal, educational, and professional lives?

3. What common themes can be identified from the lives of senior-level Black women administrators in higher education that would have implications for future Black women administrators?

In response to the first research question, the participants mentioned personal experiences such as high expectations from parents and guardians for them to attend college, role models, and mentors. Fifty percent of participants indicated that their mothers were the most influential individuals in their lives. The participants also mentioned the importance of training, recognition for outstanding academic achievements, community service, chairing taskforces, shifting from the classroom to administration, managing successful programs, and involvement in professional organizations as experiences that enhanced the development of their careers. In terms of hindrances to career development, the participants indicated the lack of support for their career ambitions by a male companion or spouse, racial incidents that occurred in graduate school, and denied opportunities for advancement.

The participants utilized the building of a support structure, strong internal and external support groups, networks, role models, and mentors as ways to deal with
challenges in their lives. The common themes that emerged from the lives of the participants included nurturing and encouragement from strong family members, professionals, and church and community members.

Summary of Literature Review

While this study seeks to examine the experiences of Hispanic administrators in higher education, a review of the literature on African Americans and women administrators in higher education was conducted. In comparing the limited research on the experiences of Hispanics with that of African Americans and women there were a few recurring themes. The common themes revolved around the importance of networking, professional development, obtaining an advanced degree, support systems, and mentoring. When examining the perceived hindrances to upward career mobility the common themes were sexism, racism, being locked into diversity-related areas, and family obligations. Based on the literature, these common themes indicate that minorities and women are having similar experiences regardless if they are employed at two or four-year institutions in the United States.

The Chicano administrators in Esquibel’s (1992) study believed that networking and training programs directly influenced their appointments within higher education. Gorena’s (1996) study of the experiences of Hispanic women in senior level administrative positions reaffirmed the importance of mentoring and support systems as positively influencing advancement. Areas indicated as hindrances were responsibilities in diversity-related areas, family obligations (especially child care), and family responsibilities. Morales’s (2000) study of the experiences of four Hispanic administrators in Minnesota’s colleges and universities reiterated the importance of a
support system; the participants identified their heritage and/or upbringing, mentoring, and colleagues of color as important aspects of their support systems. The participants in Morales’s (2000) study also identified frustration in being locked into a diversity-related career path.

Silva (2007) conducted a Delphi study on the career development of successful Hispanic administrators in higher education. The participants in her study identified obtaining appropriate credentials such as a doctorate. Aschenbrenner (2006) specifically examined the experiences of four Hispanic women in higher education and all four women held doctoral degrees. The participants also discussed the importance of having professional networks. In terms of barriers to their upward mobility in higher education, participants identified sexism, prejudice, and trying to balance family and career.

Gutierrez, Castaneda, and Katsinas (2002) conducted a study on 16 Hispanics in senior-level administrative roles at community colleges. The participants identified mentoring, leadership development programs and earning a doctorate as ways that they prepared to work in their current positions. Munoz (2010) examined the experiences of Hispanic women community administrators on their pathways to the presidency. Through a mixed method study, Munoz administered surveys and conducted interviews. Of the participants surveyed, 75% indicated that they were mentored prior to the presidency. Through the interviews portion of her study, the participants mentioned mentoring, support from family, professional development opportunities, and earning a doctorate as essential to assuming a leadership position.

Hensen’s (1997) dissertation examined the experiences of 17 Hispanic women who were presidents and vice presidents. Hensen’s study looked at persistence factors
that have contributed to the women’s career successes. Among other factors, the participants in the study indicated that the support of family was important. When the participants were asked about obstacles they encountered along the way they mentioned sexism, racism, and trying to find a balance between work and other interests.

Rolle, Davis, and Banning’s (2000) study of eight African American executive-level administrators at PWIs mentions the importance of obtaining a doctoral degree if one is seeking a leadership position at a PWI. Jackson’s (2001) study of the professional growth factors in retaining African American administrators points to the importance of mentoring and professional development activities. Lindsay (1999) examined the experiences of four African American women administrators in higher education. In Lindsay’s study the participants mentioned the importance of obtaining an American doctoral degree and mentoring. Three of the four women in the study mentioned their mothers serving as mentors. Patitu and Hinton’s (2003) study on senior-level African American women administrators discuss how racism and sexism have impacted them in their roles. The participants in the study also mention the importance of professional and personal support as vital to their successes at PWIs.

Becks-Moody (2004) conducted a study on the experiences of 10 African American women administrators at HBCUs and PWIs. While this study indicated varying treatment of African American women between the two institution types, the participants in the study mentioned the challenges of racism, sexism, and balancing career and family. These are the same sorts of challenges that some Hispanic women have encountered. The study conducted by Johnson-Jones (2009) on the perceived barriers of African American women becoming college presidents indicates racism and sexism as a hindrance. In terms
of supportive factors in their ascension up the career ladder the participants indicated the importance of professional development programs and proper educational preparation. Williams’ (2007) study of three African American female presidents at HBCUs mentioned the importance of developing African American support networks and mentoring in overcoming challenges on their pathways to the presidency. Chatman’s (1991) study of 14 senior-level African American women administrators in North Carolina also pointed to the importance of support structures, networks, role models, and mentors when dealing with challenges in higher education.

Rosynsky’s (2003) dissertation examined the experiences of four women college presidents through oral histories. The participants in the study indicated that networking, understanding their institutions’ cultures, and mentor relationships were important components to them attaining the presidency. The participants in the study also mentioned the importance of finding balance in their lives.

Mendonca’s (1995) study utilized a survey and interviews to examine the experiences of women presidents and chancellors of American research, doctorate-granting and comprehensive public universities and colleges. Of the 35 administrators that completed the survey, more than half had participated in some sort of leadership development ranging from the MIT program for senior executives to management development at Pennsylvania State University and the University of California. When the participants were asked if they ever had a mentor(s), 30 presidents stated they did have a mentor. In terms of obstacles mentioned by the participants, they cited gender-related obstacles such as childbearing issues and family issues. Lagakis’ (2001) study of eight
female presidents and chancellors in public colleges and universities in the United States mentioned gender and racial discrimination as obstacles on their way to the presidency.

The experiences of African Americans and women administrators in higher education have been studied more comprehensively than have the experiences of Hispanics. The literature on African Americans and women has provided a base to further examine the experiences of Hispanic administrators. The data gathered from this study may shed light on slight differences between Hispanics and other groups, especially within highly selective institutions. The lack of Latino leaders continues to be a problem at highly selective universities where it is even more of a challenge for Latinos to secure a provost or president position (Haro & Lara, 2003).
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter highlights the research methodology and design. This study is qualitative in nature and employs a phenomenological approach as a means to understand and capture the lived experiences of Latino executives in higher education. As Tesch (1984) stated,

Phenomenological research accumulates knowledge on the range of the individual, the specific, the unique. Its purpose is to probe in the richness of human experience and to illuminate the complexity of the individual perception and action against the background of our knowledge of the general laws or regularities in human nature. (p. 5)

Research Questions

These research questions seek to explore how Latino executives working at predominately White institutions describe their experiences as leaders within a doctoral granting university, and to what extent their life experiences have impacted them as leaders within these institutions.

1. How do Hispanic/Latino executives in higher education describe their leadership experiences at PWIs?

2. Why are so few Hispanic/Latinos leading within PWIs?

3. In what ways does ethnicity impact the decisions made at their institutions?

4. What strategies are beneficial to institutions looking to recruit and retain Hispanics/Latinos executives within PWIs?
Role of the Researcher

As a Latino male working within a predominantly White four-year university in the Midwest as an academic specialist for nine years and serving on the Chicano/Latino Faculty and Staff Association within that institution, I have a point of entry to build rapport with the participants in the study. Through my experiences working within higher education as a director of undergraduate diversity, I have learned a great deal about the importance of listening and gaining understanding before rushing to make judgments regarding any situation a student or colleague may bring to my attention. I understand that my experiences, as a student and now as an employee within a PWI, are mine and may not be the same for others given their ethnic/racial backgrounds, ages, genders, or sexuality.

As the researcher, it will be important that I remain aware of my prejudices and predispositions as they relate to the experiences I have encountered while working within a PWI. As the researcher it is critical that I engage in “epoche.” As Moustakes (1994) stated, “In the Epoche, we set aside our prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things” (p. 85). It is only through setting aside predilections and preconceived notions that we are provided with a vantage point. (Moustakes, 1994). Moustakes further stated, “From the Epoche, we are challenged to create new ideas, new feelings, new awareness and understandings” (p. 86).

My connection to this research is deeply connected to who I am and what I have experienced as a Latino male in the secondary and postsecondary educational systems within the United States. As a Latino male in higher education I have been frustrated with the lack of Latino professional role models who are working in higher education. I have
worked in higher education for over nine years and during this time I have interacted with only a few Latino faculty, staff, and executives. As the number of Latinos increase in higher education, it will be critical for the next generation to assume leadership roles.

In the primary years of my education before the fourth grade, my family resided in a poor inner city community. During this time, our house was broken into on a regular basis. I also recall looking through the living room window within our house, seeing prostitution taking place daily. There was so much violence, including the beating death of my cousin in his own home. Another family member was hit and killed by a drunk driver while crossing the street. As a result of all the violence in that community, my parents moved the family to a middle class neighborhood. I went from attending a school with minorities being the majority to Whites being in the majority.

The core of who I am is strongly linked to the experiences I encountered during my youth. During this time I learned a great deal about individuals from different ethnic, racial, and socio-economic classes. It was not until high school that I realized racial barriers existed. Many of my peers formed cliques based on ethnic or racial background or socio-economic status. My peers would only communicate and associate with individuals who were like them. Fortunately, I was able to build rapport with students from a variety of backgrounds. This was not something that many of my peers were able to do. While many of my peers viewed ethnic or racial backgrounds or socio-economic status as a barrier to communicating, I built relationships based on common experiences, which enabled me to move beyond stereotypes and false assumptions.

Early in high school I intended to pursue a career in the military. It was not until my junior year in high school that many of my goals in life were put on hold. At that time
I was diagnosed with cancer. After many months of chemotherapy and radiation treatment, my prognosis improved. It was during this time that I learned a great deal about patience and listening to others. I spent a great deal of time in the hospital listening to how others dealt with their illness. Slowly I worked my way back to good health and was able to graduate high school. After high school I attended community college before moving on to a four-year institution and receiving my bachelor’s degree. While pursuing my undergraduate degree, I helped establish the first Latino-based fraternity at the university. While many of the White and African American fraternities and sororities had been established for nearly a century, there was a growing need for a Latino-based organization that met the needs of its constituents. As a result of the growth of ethnic fraternities within the Greek community at the institution, The Chronicle of Higher Education wrote an article on ethnic and multicultural fraternities.

As I think back to my undergraduate and graduate education, many of the staff, faculty, and administrators I met with were not ethnic or racial minorities. One of my closest friendships that I developed was with a White female doctoral student who I met while pursuing my master’s degree. She was near completion of her degree while I was just beginning. I have had many mentors and friendships; however, it was her encouragement that reinforced why I needed to complete my degree. It is important to note that had it not been for her encouragement I would not have pursued my doctorate. I believe that a mentor does not need to be an individual from your own racial or ethnic background.

I am the first in three generations to attend and graduate from college. My mother was born and raised in Puerto Rico and my father is Mexican American, born in the
United States. The expectation that my parents set was for my siblings and me to graduate from high school. The only information I received about college was from my high school guidance counselor. During this time period many of my family members had obtained stable employment with limited education beyond high school. In fact, my grandfather had less than an eighth grade education, but obtained a lucrative position within the automotive industry as a welder.

As a result of the limited knowledge my parents held about college and the lucrative opportunities within the automotive industry, my parents encouraged my siblings and me to pursue those opportunities and forego college. While I respected the work that my father and grandfather engaged in for over two generations, I knew that I had a passion for learning and felt that attending college provided the best environment for me to develop.

I am saddened to say that there are thousands of young Latinos like me who never received such positive reinforcement or mentorship, and as result either ended up in jail or doing what they could to raise a family on minimum wage. It is a story that I am reminded of whenever I venture back to the community in which I was raised. I recognize that I am one of the fortunate individuals who have made it this far in my education. It is for this reason that I feel obligated to advocate on the behalf of other young Latinos looking to better their lives and be productive citizens and leaders.

As a Latino male, I have had a variety of life experiences; however, I could not assume that the participants in this study would share similar experiences or recognize the needs as I do within the Latino population and community. It was important for me to refrain from opinions on the lack of educational attainment and other disparities within
the Latino population. The experience I have had while living in the Midwest could be very different from those of Latinos raised on either the East or West coast, given the increased representation of Latinos in New York to California among other states.

Research Design

**Participant identification and recruitment**
Identify Latino executives working within PWIs

**Cover letter sent to solicit participation**
- The American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education
- The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities

**Once participants are identified**
- Contact the participants to explain the research study and additional steps
- Send introductory letter and consent form via email or U.S. Postal Service

**Once HSIRB is signed and returned by either mail or fax**
- Contact via phone call to set up an interview (may have to schedule meeting with executive assistant)
- Send out interview confirmation letter
- Indicate three interview times for an hour each (one as a backup for the first meeting and the three as a follow-up time)
- Send copy of interview protocol

**Participation in study**

**Accepts**

**First meeting**
- Briefly discuss the study and provide a copy of the abstract
- Record and document the interaction with the participant using the phenomenological process

**Second meeting**
- Provide a copy of their story to them in advance of the meeting
- Inform the participant that they can retract and/or clarify any of the statements within the transcripts
- Take the time to write the stories and include them in Chapter IV
- Through the phenomenological process, identify themes and patterns within the stories in Chapter V
- Send participants a thank-you letter for participating in the study

**Declines**

If participants indicate that they do not wish to participate in the study, send an email thanking them for their correspondence

**Target population**
Latino executives working at PWIs

**Position title**
- President
- Chancellor
- Chief of Staff
- Executive Vice President
- Chief Academic Officer/Provost
- Central Senior Academic Affairs Officer
- Dean of Academic College
- Senior Administrative Officer
- Senior External Affairs Officer
- Chief Student Affairs or Enrollment Management Officer
- Any administrator with Vice President in their title

*Figure 1. Research process diagram.*
Sampling

This study employed snowball sampling to identify a minimum of five participants, and sampling concluded once a point of saturation was attained. A participant in the study was asked to forward the solicitation letter to other potential recruits. The solicitation letter included my contact information for individuals interested in participating in the study.

I contacted both the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE) and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) to obtain a directory of Latino executives serving within doctoral degree granting PWIs. If a directory was not provided, I would ask if the AAHHE or HACU representatives would send the participant solicitation letter on to their membership through an email listserv.

A study conducted by de los Santos and Vega (2008) on Hispanic presidents and chancellors of institutions of higher education in the United States in 2001 and 2006 was also utilized to identify a potential pool of participants.

Once a directory of possible participants was identified, they were contacted via email. Participants were selected based on a pre-determined set of criteria, such as having at least one year of experience as an executive (President, Chancellor, Chief of Staff, Executive Vice President, Chief Academic Officer (CAO)/Provost, Central Senior Academic Affairs Officer, Dean of Academic College, Senior Administrative Officer, Senior External Affairs Officer, Chief Enrollment Management Officer or any administrator with Vice President in their title) within a PWI. I would identify a cross section of individuals from various racial/ethnic backgrounds, genders, ages,
geographical locations, and experience levels across the United States. I also included individuals who had retired within the last year.

Phenomenological Research

As Creswell (2007) stated, “a phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon” (p. 57). This study seeks to gain meaning from the lived experiences of Latino executives serving within doctoral granting PWIs. Qualitative research seeks to gain a complex understanding of the issue (Creswell, 2007). The interviews conducted with Latino executives within their institutions were intended to assist me in gaining an increased understanding of the issue. The qualitative approach is being utilized to empower and encourage the participants to share their stories as Latinos working within these institutions. An important part of qualitative research is to encourage collaboration between the participants and the researcher. In regard to this study, participants had the opportunity to review transcripts of the interviews and make any necessary edits.

Research Sites

The research sites for this study consisted of institutions classified as Carnegie doctorate-granting universities such as Research Universities with very high research activity, Research Universities with high research activity, and Doctoral/Research Universities. In conjunction with the Carnegie classification, only those institutions that are also PWIs were included in this study. For the purpose of the study a PWI was defined as an institution in which a majority of the student population identifies as White.

The reason for the focus on PWI doctoral granting institutions is because of the limited numbers of studies that have been conducted on Latino executives within these
institutions. As de los Santos and Vega (2008) pointed out, there is limited or no scholarly research on Hispanic leaders in higher education. The literature on the lived experiences of Latinos within higher education is relegated to those who work within community colleges (Gutierrez, Castaneda & Katsinas, 2002; Leon & Nevarez, 2007; Castellanos & Jones, 2003; Santiago, 1996).

Participants

The sample population for my study consisted of five participants. As Creswell (2007) pointed out, a sample range in a phenomenology can be limited to one or up to 325 participants. The criteria used to select participants for this study consisted of those Hispanic/Latino administrators serving within doctoral granting PWIs. The participants needed to have worked a minimum of one year as an administrator within a doctoral granting PWI. Participants who have recently, within one year, retired or no longer hold a position were included in the study.

Participants holding a title of President, Chancellor, Chief of Staff, Executive Vice President, Chief Academic Officer (CAO)/Provost, Central Senior Academic Affairs Officer, Dean of Academic College, Senior Administrative Officer, Senior External Affairs Officer, Chief Enrollment Management Officer or any administrator with Vice President in their title were included in the study.

The participants must also have earned a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) or a Doctor of Education (Ed.D) to participate in this study. Individuals holding positions within associate colleges, master’s colleges and universities, baccalaureate colleges and special focus institutions were not included in this study.
Recruitment

The potential participants for this study were identified by utilizing snowball sampling. The recruitment of participants began in the Midwest. If an adequate sample was not obtained I plan to gradually broaden my scope to include additional surrounding states until a minimum of five candidates were identified or data saturation was achieved.

The first step of the recruitment process entailed sending an inquiry email (appendix K) to the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education (AAHHE) and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) asking them if they have a directory of Latino executives serving in higher education. If provided with a directory, I plan to send a blanket request inviting individuals to participate in the study (appendix A).

The second step of the recruitment process included a plan to ask either organization—if one does not have a directory or will not provide a copy—if they would be willing to forward my cover letter to solicit participation (appendix A) on to any email listservs they have to communicate with their membership. In tandem with both steps one and two of the recruitment process I also plan to utilize the de los Santos and Vegas (2008) study, which includes a comprehensive database of Latino leaders serving in higher education as potential participants.

The database provided by Santos and Vegas (2008) only provided a name, title and institutions, and as a result I needed to visit each institutional website to determine if the participant was still employed. If contact information was listed on the website I sent the individual a copy of the cover letter (appendix A). The final step included snowball sampling. Once a potential participant was identified, the participant was asked if they
were willing to forward the solicitation letter to other potential recruits. The solicitation letter had my contact information should additional individuals be interested in participating in the study.

Once it was determined that a participant was qualified for the study and that they were interested in learning more they were contacted through email or phone to ascertain if they would like to participate in the study based on requirements mentioned in appendix A. The individuals were sent a copy of the consent form (appendices B and C). During this time each individual had the opportunity to ask any questions regarding the consent form.

Only after the consent form had been returned was the Interview Participant Questionnaire (appendix F) sent to the participant. The data collection did not begin until the individual returned a signed consent form. When the consent form was returned, a call was placed to the participant to confirm a meeting time and place. After confirming the interview time and place, the participant was sent a copy of the Interview Confirmation Letter (appendix D) along with a copy of the Interview Protocol (appendix E).

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected through one in-depth interview that ranged from 60 to 90 minutes in length. The participants were contacted a second time to provide them with a copy of the transcripts for member checking. The participant questionnaire (appendix F) and vitae were used to learn more about the participants’ past employment history as it relates to how they have arrived at their current positions. The participant questionnaires provided a historical context of information that was not always included in the vitae. The questionnaire and vitae were also used to ascertain if the participants met
the specific study requirements in terms of degree obtainment and status of current employment.

The interviews were audio taped and transcribed. The interview dates and times were based on the availability of the participants. The interviews were conducted in person at each participant’s institution or at a commonly agreed-upon location based on their preference. Phone or Skype (video) interviews were also conducted as necessary. Careful consideration was given to protect individuals’ confidentiality when selecting a meeting location. Prior to beginning this study I conducted a feelings audit that was utilized throughout the study. A journal was also kept in, which notes were taken directly after each interview.

During each interview I kept notes of the discussion in addition to recording the conversation on audiotape. The audiotapes were sent to a transcriptionist, who was required to sign a confidentiality agreement (appendix J). Once the audiotapes were transcribed the tapes were destroyed as an additional protection measure of the participants’ confidentiality. The materials will be kept in a locked cabinet and on a secure server in Dr. Andrea Beach’s office for at a minimum of three years after the study has ended.

Interview Protocol

Once an identified leader agreed to participate, they received an introductory letter and consent form via email or U.S. Postal Service. If the leader wishes to not participate in the study, they were sent a thank you letter. Once a potential participant returned a signed copy of the consent form, they were contacted via phone to set up an interview. Once the interview was confirmed, an email or mailed copy of the interview
confirmation letter (appendix D) and interview protocol (appendix E) were sent to the participant.

During the first interview with each participant, I briefly discussed the study and provided a copy of the abstract. The interview was recorded at this meeting. Prior to the second interview each participant was sent a copy of the transcripts in advance of our meeting along with a copy of the Request for Corroboration and Additional Comments (appendix G). During this time the participants were reminded that they could retract or clarify any of the statements made during the initial interview.

During each interview I utilized Interview Guide one (appendix H) and Interview Guide two (appendix I). Once both interviews were completed, the stories of each participant were written and included in chapter IV. Using the phenomenological process, I identified themes and patterns within their stories and included them in chapter V. Lastly, the participants were sent letters thanking them for their participation.

Human Subjects

Prior to beginning this study, I obtained Human Subject Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) approval through Western Michigan University. The participants in this study were notified that they were free to decide not to participate in this research or to withdraw at any time, without affecting their relationship with Western Michigan University or me. The individual, institutional, and state identity associated with the interviewees was protected.

Once the participants agreed to participate they were asked to sign a copy of the consent form. The participants were informed that the quotes obtained from the
interviews would be used to support general themes. The interview materials and tape recordings were stored in a safe place and destroyed after the data had been transcribed.

Data Analysis Processes and Procedures

The data analysis process entailed transcribing the tapes of each interview. Once in transcript form, each interview was categorized based on the respondent comments, perspectives, and stories from the five interviewees. As part of the data collection process I conducted a feelings audit. The feelings audit required me to write down any personal and professional experiences I have had with Hispanic/Latino executives within PWIs (Bednall, 2006). I limited the audit to those specific experiences that pertained to the scope of this research.

The audit list was taken to each interview and assisted in personal reflection prior and after each interview. The information within the audit was not shared with the respondents. The critical importance of this was to facilitate epoche by setting aside value and judgment the data from the respondents (Bednall, 2006).

During the data collection process I maintained a research journal. The journal is used to record important notes that emerged during the participant interviews. It is important to mention that the journal notes were not collected during the interviews. At the end of each interview the notes were captured. The journal was used to note where epoche may need to be referenced and where common themes were developing.

The data analysis began by balancing my past experiences with the units of meanings identified through the collection of data with the Hispanic/Latino executives (Bednall, 2006). This study followed the six stages of data analysis and interpretation set by Bednall (2006).
The first stage of analysis entailed reviewing each transcript repeatedly and flagging items that may have potential significance to interpretative conclusions (Ratner, 2001). During the second stage, the flagged items were grouped or coded into topics of importance. Bednall (2006) mentioned that during this stage epoche is still in place. In the third stage of the process I identified thematic linkages or common ideas and refer to my feelings audit to reframe from personal bias. It is during the fourth stage that I examined my past experiences, feelings audit and research journal for meaning.

In stage five, I began the process of what Bednall (2006) referred to as reintegration or debracketing epoche. In this stage the items I held in epoche were selectively placed into bracketed relationships with data obtained from the respondents. During this stage I also questioned if my past experiences either reduced or augmented the meaning of the data.

In the last stage I wrote a draft of how I interpreted the lived experiences of Hispanic/Latino executives within PWIs. In this stage, I utilized direct quotations from transcripts to highlight significance. I described the experiences from my perspective and used direct quotes to describe how the Hispanic/Latino executives felt and what they experienced while leading at PWIs (Bednall, 2006).

Validation of Data

To ensure validity of this study, I employed member checking and thick, rich description to address credibility within a qualitative lens. Once the data were collected from the participants, I validated the data through the process of member checking. During the second interview with the participants, I shared the transcripts of their first interview to ensure that their ideas and statements were accurately recorded. During this
time the participants had the opportunity to retract or add comments to clarify their statements (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Glesne, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Through thick, rich description of the data, credibility is addressed to those external to the study such as readers and reviewers. As Creswell & Miller (2000) stated, “The purpose of a thick description is that it creates verisimilitude, statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in a study” (p. 129).

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was limited to the five participants who were interviewed. This study does not intend to represent the views of the majority of Latinos leading in higher education. Furthermore, this study was only conducted with individuals leading at PWIs within four-year doctoral degree-granting institutions and does not provide insight into the experiences of those Latinos leading at community colleges.

Chapter Summary

This study seeks to understand the experiences of five Hispanic/Latino executives serving at PWIs that are four-year, doctoral degree-granting institutions. This study may be useful to Hispanics/Latinos who aspire to lead within an administrative role at a PWI. The information gathered may also benefit institutions of higher education looking to recruit and retain Latino administrators. The individual, institutional, and state identities associated with the participant interviews will not be used in any reports generated by the study.

The principal method of research for this study was in-depth interviews. The participants were asked to engage in an interview lasting between 60 and 90 minutes.
During the interview, notes were taken, and the interviews were audio taped. The audiotapes were used to increase the accuracy of the transcriptions. The participants were contacted a second time and given a copy of the interview transcripts and allowed to edit or modify any portion utilizing member checking. Using the phenomenological process, I identified themes and patterns within their stories.
CHAPTER IV

PARTICIPANT NARRATIVES

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the lived experiences of five Latino/a executive-level leaders serving within four-year PWIs. This section of the chapter provides an overview of the demographic data on the participants. The researcher provides an interpretation of the data collected through interviews with each participant.

The participant narratives that follow have sub-topics that highlight areas of discussion that the participants mentioned during their interviews. These sub-topics are used to assist in breaking up the text of the narratives. It is important note that a few of these sub-topics do rise to level of a general theme in the finding of chapter V.

In an effort to ensure that the participants in this study remain anonymous, a pseudonym was given to each participant. The researcher also refrained from mentioning the institutions at which the participants were employed. Any information that the researcher felt could potentially identify the participants has been omitted.

The recruitment of participants was initiated in the Midwest. As a result of a limited response, the researcher gradually broadened the scope to include additional surrounding states until at a minimum of five candidates were found. The researcher had initially planned to work with AAHHE and HACU, requesting each to provide a directory of Latino/Hispanic executives serving in higher education. Once the research study was approved and the researcher communicated with the organizations, AAHHE
mentioned a change in policy regarding email distribution; the organization was no longer sending out information to their membership that did not pertain directly to their organization. The HACU organization never responded to the researcher’s requests.

The researcher also utilized the de los Santos and Vegas (2008) study, which included a comprehensive database of Latino leaders serving in higher education, to identify potential participants. Participants in this database were contacted via email and phone. The research also utilized snowball sampling to gather information on potential participants. The participants in this study were diverse, representing a variety of geographic areas throughout the United States. Two females and three males participated in the study. The participants on average had been employed in their current positions for two years or more.

Sylvia has been employed in higher education for 38 years, longer than any of the other participants. Paulino had 18 years, the fewest number of years working in higher education. Three of the participants were born in the U.S. and two were born in Mexico. Of the five participants, three had parents born outside of the United States. In terms of ethnicity, two participants categorized themselves Chicano/a, two said they were Latino and one said she was Hispanic.

Table 1

Summary of Experience Leading in Higher Education by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Highest Degree Obtained</th>
<th>Total Yrs in Higher Ed.</th>
<th>Born in the U.S.</th>
<th>Parent Born in U.S.</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sylvia</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Chicana</td>
<td>Hispanic Lang. &amp; Lit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consuelo</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Curriculum &amp; Instr.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 — continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Highest Degree Obtained</th>
<th>Total Yrs in Higher Ed.</th>
<th>Born in the U.S.</th>
<th>Parent Born in U.S.</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hector</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paulino</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Chicano</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benito</td>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Higher Ed Policy Admin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sylvia’s Narrative

Sylvia and her parents were born in Mexico and upon moving to the United States, she became a citizen. She earned a bachelor’s degree with honors and also holds both a master’s and doctorate. She has worked in higher education for over 38 years and has been in her current position as an executive for 16 years. During her 38 years of employment in higher education, she held various faculty roles, moving up from lecturer to assistant, associate, and then to full professor. She has also served as a director, acting chair, and chair of a department. Sylvia has published over 130 articles and book chapters. She has given over 200 presentations at conferences, served on numerous committees and has been involved in a variety of community service projects.

Experience Leading in Higher Education

Sylvia was actively recruited for her current position, and her experience has been wonderful.

*We have a president that’s a minority with an immigrant background who is very sensitive to minority issues and has created the position I currently hold. *... I wasn’t looking for a job or wanting to move. So, they really wanted me to come because the department was in deep trouble. ...When I came, I really named my price, not so much in salary but in things that I wanted to do for the department. They all agreed to everything that I asked so my experience has been really positive.*
She mentioned having a positive experience in regard to leading at her current institution. Her staff and colleagues have embraced the changes she has implemented within her unit. This has not always been the case while leading at other institutions. Sylvia recalled working at other institutions years ago in which she interacted with colleagues who were negative when it came to addressing issues related to diversity, affirmative action, and the lack of minority representation within the institution. She talked about having colleagues who outright rejected targets of opportunity to increase diversity at their institution.

*I worked at another institution, which was in an earlier period that was a little bit more antagonistic towards affirmative action and towards opening up the university towards minorities. ...Some of the other faculty were very entrenched in the old ways of thinking and they don’t see affirmative action. Of course, the name has gone affirmative action...the words have been an anathema to a lot of people. I have seen a lot of discouraging things from other universities.*

Sylvia believes that Latinos working in higher education tend to be too humble when it comes to their accomplishments. She mentioned that others within the institution publish in their university press, making their achievements known to all.

*In our culture, sometimes we like to be humble and not beat our own drum, but I learned it’s not good because they don’t know. If they don’t know, they think that you’re just there because you’re brown or black or a woman.*

Sylvia has had her share of challenges in her role.

*We have been in crisis for so many years. I have a very small budget ... so I don’t have the staff. ...I share a staff in my office. I don’t attribute it to ill will. I attribute it more to the financial situation that the institution is in.*
Supportive University Environment

Sylvia believes that the president of her current institution is someone who has embraced diversity. Sylvia’s president is a minority and routinely mentions how racism has impacted him.

... He has suffered racism and so that’s why he’s very understanding and sensitive to the issues... That translates into a follow the leader type of thing. Other professors look up to him. ...We tend to hire professors that are positive about diversity. That’s a big question all the time when hiring.

She mentioned that when there is a president that understands diversity it has a trickledown effect within the institution. Sylvia believes that as a result of the president’s open dialogue about his experiences as a minority, her institution tends to hire professors who have a positive stance on diversity.

I worked at another institution which was in an earlier period which was a little bit more antagonistic towards affirmative action and towards opening up the university towards minorities...a lot of our professors weren’t too happy to have affirmative action, we used to have targets of opportunity and they were taken out... because people were rejecting or opposed to it.

Lack of Latino Leaders

While serving in different roles in higher education, Sylvia talked about seeing very few African Americans and even fewer Latino faculty and administrators. At her current institution, she mentioned seeing African American administrators.

There are African Americans but Latinos, not that many. We don’t know how to become a higher level administrator. ...We’re very few at top universities. ...There’s so many things that need to be done so that universities hire us and hire African Americans so they don’t think the only reason we’re candidates is because we’re brown or black or women.
She knows how difficult it is to find and retain minorities with appropriate credentials in very specialized areas to fill roles within the institution.

... We’re constantly recruiting people and they leave for better salaries. So the budget crisis has been very detrimental to us in the sense that in one year, we didn’t hire anybody.

She pointed out that there are plenty of individuals with doctorate degrees, yet, very few minorities with specialized experience.

... There are a lot of people out there with Ph.D.s but there are very few positions. ...They want to hire theoretical physics. The candidates in that, African American and Chicanos there are not as many as you would have the White physicists.

In terms of gaining access to leadership positions Sylvia believes it’s a process of starting at the bottom and working one’s way up.

... We’re still having a hard time getting into leadership positions. ...It starts from the bottom, like everything else. You need to first be the chair and in the past, it was really hard for a woman to be elected chair, let alone a Latina elected chair. So, then if you don’t get the experience of being chair... you don’t have the background when there’s a position.

Sylvia believes that her ethnicity has hindered her from advancing higher within her institutions.

I think my ethnicity and my gender hindered me from even going higher. And not only me, I think many women and minorities.

Importance of an Educational Pipeline

If Latinos want to lead within the academy Sylvia mentioned that they must obtain terminal degrees, specifically, doctorates. It’s clear to Sylvia that many of the issues related to Latinos not gaining access to the academy stem from a poor educational pipeline that begins at the kindergarten and elementary school level. She talked about the
importance of adequate funding of primary schools. Sylvia believes change will only happen if Latinos become more involved in the administration of funding for schools from preschool to the university.

Well, one thing is that we really need to get Ph.D.s; our people need to get Ph.D.s. And of course, that translates into having good schools, good elementary schools, good kindergartens; the whole works so there’s what we call a pipeline. So we really need to have the pipeline.

Gaining Leadership Experience and Mentoring

Sylvia talked about how important it is for Latinos to learn how universities operate if they want to advance. She mentioned that Latinos need to participate in professional development workshops as a way to gain experience and learn about the system.

Sylvia talked about how Latinos could benefit from workshops on how to be a department chair, dean, vice chancellor, or chancellor as a way to increase their understanding of how to lead in those roles. Sylvia mentioned how mentoring contributes to succeeding in a leadership role.

They really need to be mentored. But one of the negative things about, what’s going on is that a lot of times, the younger Latinos, Chicanas, Latinas and women I would imagine, too, I think they don’t like to be mentored because they feel it’s sort of like in high school.

Gaining a Reputation

Sylvia mentioned that if Latinos have a goal of pursuing a leadership position in higher education, they need to first work at becoming an assistant professor. Sylvia talked about how vitally important it is to be constantly working and serving on committees. She talked about how Latinos must prove themselves by serving on unimportant
committees first. She mentioned that once others see that they are sharp, responsible, and have a good work ethic, they will be asked to serve on more important committees.

> It’s a process you have to learn so then you have to prepare yourself doing volunteer work with the university as much as possible. It’s the early bird that gets the worm or you have to just work and be out there working and learning. ...You just have to be working there and being on committees because most people don’t like to work. I mean they have enough work at home and research and other things.

The Challenges of Dual Career Professionals

Sylvia mentioned that higher education institutions were initially designed for the husband to conduct research and teach while the wife took care of the other needs. Sylvia said there are some people who are not willing to make the sacrifices to be an executive administrator.

> ... It’s really hard because they’re really busy. You know, a lot of young professors have children, like have babies, you know, which is really hard. So I understand. ...They teach, they have their office hours. ...Lots of people are not willing to pay that price. They want to be home with their kids or they want to be at home with their husbands.

She mentioned seeing executives working until midnight or 1 a.m. If Latinos want to lead, they really need to know what their priorities are before assuming a high-profile position. She mentioned that prospective leaders might need to give their life to the university if they want to be successful. She said most people do not want to give their lives to their positions.

Internal Motivation to Lead

Sylvia reflected on what it meant to be a Latino administrator in higher education.

> Well, I’m very proud to make an impact. I was a migrant worker and since I was a kid, I wanted to grow up and change the world and to me, it’s very
satisfying to work hard and to change things. ...So it’s just kind of like I had that missionary spirit. You give up yourself for a cause and that’s how I felt all my life since I was a kid.

She recalls seeing her family wake up at 4 a.m. to make lunch and get ready to travel to the fields as migrant laborers. She talked about them eating their lunch in the fields, arriving home at 6 p.m. to prepare supper, bathe, and repeat the routine again the next day. Sylvia’s family would work without vacation, pension, or any sort of health insurance. This was a horrific experience for Sylvia. She was very critical of the fact that there are still Mexicans working in the fields.

...Mexicans working out there doing backbreaking work and people are so mean and inhumane. They want to deport them. ...I don’t understand it because they see them ... traveling on the freeway with those people working on weekends and when it’s raining and, they’re out there hunched down in the fields. It breaks my heart.

Sylvia also mentioned how the women custodians at her university are another group of individuals that work hard for little pay.

... We need to get educated, we need to hold power. ...Education for me was a gateway to living a better life and not having to get up at four in the morning. I do but it’s because I want to not because I have to...writing articles and doing this and that in my field.

Sylvia talked about how well she is compensated versus what her grandparents were paid.

I get paid well, whereas my grandparents were paid $2 for working a whole day. They hardly got paid. This was in the 50s. It was terrible. In Texas $2 for working 12 hours or 14 hours a day. ...We hardly had anything to eat it was bad. We used to get the food from the field because they worked in the fields so if they were picking peppers, jalapenos they would bring back jalapenos. If they were picking onions, they would bring onions or potatoes.

In Arizona it was potatoes but in Texas it was tomatoes, carrots, cabbage,
lettuce ... all ... they grow in the Rio Grande Valley. ...We didn’t eat lots of meat we ate it once a week. ...We were very, very, very poor.

Recruiting and Retaining Latino Administrators

If institutions are looking to recruit and retain Latino administrators, Sylvia believes that they could start by implementing workshops aimed at developing leadership skills in young professors. She stated that since minorities do not have the luxury of mentoring they have to attend workshops. She talked about how difficult it is to engage Latinos in learning about leadership given their competing priorities. Sylvia mentioned that many young professors have children, which makes it difficult for them to take on leadership roles. She said that these young professionals teach, have their office hours and go home.

... The university has to put out welcome signs, metaphorically speaking to especially Latinos, minorities, and women. So, institutions could invest their money on training the future...giving them a lot of grants.

Words of Encouragement

Sylvia provided some encouraging words regarding this study.

I’m glad you’re doing this and that you are motivated and that, you know, you are also working towards your future. So keep it up and keep motivated.

Consuelo’s Narrative

Consuelo and her parents were born in the United States. She has obtained a terminal degree in her career field. Consuelo has been in her current position for 4.5 years and has been working in higher education for over 25 years. She has held positions such as associate professor, department chair, associate dean, and associate provost. Before serving in her current position, she held the title of associate provost.
She has served on boards and published journal articles and book chapters. She has served as an editor, obtained grants and assumed various leadership roles at the regional, state, and national level within various organizations. In terms of gaining leadership training, Consuelo has participated in leadership programs similar to those aligned with the ACE Leadership program. She encourages those who are interested in leadership to attend programs like the Harvard Leadership Development program. She mentioned the importance of taking advantage of these sorts of programs as a way to prepare for leadership roles.

**Experience Leading in Higher Education**

*I’m in a minority as a Latina. There’s more Latinos that are in leadership positions so I know how unique my situation is. I take my role very seriously. I’m very proud to be in the position to lead at an institutional level where I can make the kinds of changes that I feel our institutions need to be moving toward.*

*Not just my institution but higher education in general. And that is, to recognize that higher education is going to be serving a higher number of students of color and, and that Latinos are the emerging majority ... so institutions have to be in lockstep with that change. ...I have much to contribute to higher education at this point in time. It’s a pivotal time in our country and it’s a pivotal time in higher education.*

She mentioned being the only Latina around a table of White men who had very different perspectives. She has felt that at times her voice was not welcomed.

*Being the one and only Latina around the table, very often surrounded by White men who had very different perspectives and feeling that in some places, I may not have been wanted and my voice was not welcomed ... those are definitely barriers that White men don’t have to think about.*

In spite of feeling like she is not welcomed, Consuelo has a great sense of responsibility.

*I have a great responsibility to others like myself who have come through*
the system. ...I have a hard time with leaders who do things that are not from a place of making, wanting to make things better.

Reflecting on what it meant to be a Latina leader, Consuelo sees herself as a servant leader who enjoys working collaboratively.

...I’ve always considered myself a servant leader. My style is to be collaborative. I’m not a confrontational kind of person. I don’t appreciate confrontation. I believe in speaking to issues and speaking my mind when I need to but I’m not going to be an in your face kind of person. ...Sometimes my style doesn’t fit well with the expectations of what it means to be a leader in the eyes of other people. ...I feel that I’m constantly being judged for characteristics that may not fit the mold they’re used to.

Consuelo mentioned that there are differences in regards to the experiences of Latino and Latina administrators. She mentioned that men have it a lot easier than women because of the fact that there are more Latinos serving in administrative positions as presidents, provosts, and senior administrators. Consuelo mentioned that there are very few women executives engaged in her line of work. Consuelo stated that the leadership within higher education is still driven by White males.

I’m certainly a minority being not only a Latina but very often one of a few women. I mean, predominantly most of the leadership at predominantly White institutions are White males and that still continues, despite the fact that there are probably more people of color.

Consuelo knows that she is a minority being one of few Latinas at her institution. She mentioned that the demographics are changing in terms of students attending her university. She is seeing more students of color and Hispanics at her institution. The diversity within her institution was not present 10 to 15 years ago. Consuelo is the only Latina at her level of leadership within the institution. She often feels like she is the lone
voice when it comes to addressing issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. She mentioned how difficult it is to be the only one articulating these issues.

_**I always feel like I’m the only Latina and very often I am the only Latina at the level of leadership that I’m in. So it gets a little tiring, I think, to constantly be the only voice that will articulate issues around our diverse student population, issues of diversity and equity and inclusion in general. And so it’s a difficult position to be in, to be the only one._

She mentioned that often Latino leaders conform to a White way of viewing the world because that is what they see around them.

_**Very often you see Latino and Latina leaders who have conformed to a White way of viewing a world because that’s the way they see. Very much like when there were very few women in leadership positions, in administrative positions. White women predominantly, felt like they had to lead like White men in order to be acknowledged as good leaders.**_

She mentioned that some Latinos have adapted their leadership style to fit into an institution as opposed to getting the institution to understand them.

_**Latinos and Latinas have, in some predominantly White institutions, adapted their leadership style to fit into that institution as opposed to getting the institution to understand who they are. It’s just much easier if you are constantly hitting your head against the wall in terms of being the one person around the table who is different. There’s a greater propensity to adapt to that environment than to try to change the institution or to have the institution see you as being different. You bring something that’s unique and valuable and important to your role as a leader and to that institution as a whole.**_

**Supportive University Environment**

Consuelo talked about how her current university is different from others in which she had worked. At her previous institution, which was a land grant institution, she felt there were more opportunities for promotion. Consuelo mentioned that upon relocating to
her current university she noticed that there were people much more talented than her who did not have the professional development opportunities she had.

...When I came here I recognized that people who were much more talented did not have the opportunities to move into leadership roles. People that, I’m talking about Latinos and Latinas, with similar experiences ... very talented people. So, I think institutions can really nurture and establish those possibilities for people of color, Latinos and Latinas, to move into leadership roles.

Consuelo has noticed that institutions can really nurture and establish opportunities for Latinos to move into leadership roles.

...We come prepared once we have completed our doctorates to be able to assume any leadership role. ...A lot of it has to do with our mentoring opportunities and with people in leadership roles providing opportunities for professional development, leadership development and then building positions or developing positions for talented people to move into those positions. ...So I think institutions make all the difference in the world in terms of Latinos and Latinas being successful, feeling supported and being able to maintain their, or continue their leadership roles within those predominantly White institutions. ...In my former institution, I certainly had the possibility of not only becoming a department head very early but moving up. I left a position that I very much enjoyed, but I left that for an opportunity to do something that I had always wanted to do.

Consuelo mentioned that in her current role she has seen a lack of commitment from the institution in terms of supporting her as the only Latina on the executive cabinet.

I took the position and the second year that I was here, they were talking about eliminating my position. Of course, all universities had issues with budget. We had to cut our budget. But the very fact that there was no support for my role within the institution after the second year just floored me. ...I felt a lack of commitment from the institution in terms of supporting me as the only Latina on the executive cabinet.

I was one of two.... I’ve seen an exodus of women and people of color from leadership roles because they do not feel supported. I certainly felt
some of that during my second year of being here at this institution. I will tell you, it’s been an uphill battle because I continue to be one, the only Latina.

Navigating the Political Landscape

Consuelo mentioned that it takes a lot of energy as a Latina administrator to fight and constantly elbow your way into a system in order to be able to survive.

...There are environments that allow you to really feel engaged and be part of the leadership within that institution and there are institutions where you feel like you are still marginalized and you have to elbow your way into being part of what’s going on. So the latter being less desirable, less comfortable because not only are you having to do your work but you have to take, it takes additional energy to constantly feel like you have to elbow your way into a system or fight your way into a system in order to be able to survive.

Consuelo felt that the way an institution is run has a tremendous impact on the climate and ultimately on how differences are accepted or rejected within that system.

...A lot of it has to do with the way things are run within an institution, the climate within an institution, the trust ... if you look different, it doesn’t mean you can’t be a good leader. You look different, you act different, you may talk different, you interact differently but it doesn’t mean you can’t lead, be just as effective in terms of your leadership. It just means that you’re different and you’re going to approach things from a different perspective.

Consuelo stated that she understands the dynamics of institutional bias and institutional racism and how she has had to constantly evaluate her interactions in order to be effective in her role as a leader within her institution. She mentioned having to pick her battles carefully.

Consuelo has no recollections of ever wanting to move into an administrative role early in her career.
...I probably would’ve never been an administrator had I not had those opportunities and people that encouraged me to move into those roles.

She mentioned that some people come in with the ambition to be an administrator from day one. Consuelo’s first leadership role was serving as a department head.

*Once I had one administrative experience, there were further opportunities that opened up and then I really pushing myself to accept those opportunities as a way for me to grow professionally.*

She recalled the decision being difficult because she enjoyed teaching. She mentioned that she wanted to focus on the real work within academia. The real work to Consuelo meant serving as a faculty member and conducting research. She talked about having to mull over the decision with colleagues. Consuelo said she realized that in spite of not wanting her work to change it could change anyway if someone else assumed the role. To Consuelo it was important to preserve the autonomy and control she had in her work. She recalled having people around her that were supportive and encouraged her to move into the new role.

*Lack of Latino Leaders*

Consuelo mentioned that Latinos are still breaking ground in terms of assuming leadership positions in higher education. She believes that a critical mass of Latino leaders is needed in order for predominately White institutions to understand what Latino leaders bring in terms of perspective and experiences. Consuelo attributes the lack of Latino administrators to a lack of support and encouragement.

*So I think one of the reasons there might be fewer Latinos is because they may not have the same kind of encouragement, the same kind of people tapping them and saying you can do that, too. You should think about it seriously. You should put your hat in and see what happens. Because I do think that for faculty, it takes that kind of encouragement and for Latino*
faculty, even more so because we are so dedicated to creating a change within academia to serve Latino students, to serve our underserved populations within academia.

Consuelo stated that she lives in a state that has a large Hispanic demographic but the institution she works at does not reflect that within their leadership positions. She talked about a revolving door at the institution in regard to individuals serving in leadership roles.

There’s very few of us that have opportunities to get graduate degrees and doctoral degrees and fewer of us that go into the professoriate and can survive academia and then there are even fewer of us that move into leadership roles.

Once Latinos make it into leadership roles there is additional experience needed to ascend further.

...Being strong in your academic field, being highly regarded for scholarly work and your research, all those things that are important within an academic environment. ...Being regarded highly at a national level ... doing our own work and preparing ourselves professionally so that we can be viewed as credible within our profession ... taking the opportunity to learn about what that means and picking up the skills along the way that will make you a better administrator.

Harvard has a leadership development program...so taking advantage of those opportunities so that we can prepare ourselves to move into leadership roles. I took advantage of those opportunities...so that I would feel prepared.

Consuelo believes that once there is a larger number of Latino leaders in higher education changes will come.

I think that when we have a larger number of Latino administrators, it makes it easier for institutions to move towards that change that embraces that difference in leadership style, the difference in perspective.
So, making an earnest effort to have a larger mass of Latino leaders is important.

The Impact of Ethnicity on Decision-Making

I’m proud of the fact that I speak English and Spanish. I’m proud of the fact that I look Latina. I have dark hair and brown skin. I think that all those things impact not only how I’m seen but how I see myself within the institution and the importance of what it means for me to be in this role ... looking the way I do and having the experiences that I’ve had. ... I can’t differentiate my decisions from others. I just know that my decisions are directed in a certain way because of who I am.

She mentioned that in her roles she brings her background, experiences, and ethnicity to bear on the decisions she makes.

I mean, I bring all that stuff with me, my background, my experience, my ethnicity ... the fact that I grew up as poor in a very traditional Mexican American household. The fact that I went through an educational system that was riddled with biases and prejudice and that kind of thing. So all those experiences have impacted who I am and I bring that with me and so most definitely. I mean, there are certain sensitivities I have that other people may not have. There is a certain sense of responsibility and commitment that I have that other people don’t have.

Cultivating a Talent Pool

Consuelo mentioned that if institutions want to recruit more Latinos, to not say they are not a good fit for a role. She mentioned that once a Latino assumes a leadership position the institution must provide support. Consuelo mentioned that to retain Latino leaders in higher education an institution must be willing to re-evaluate how it serves this population given that White males have historically led higher education.

Consuelo believes that larger numbers of Latino administrators will make it easier for institutions to move toward that change of supporting the needs of Latinos in higher
education. She mentioned that this is why it is so important to make an earnest effort to have a larger mass of Latino leaders.

Differences Between Female and Male Administrators

Consuelo mentioned that the experiences of Latina female administrators are different from Latino males.

*I don’t know if your research will do this but there has to be a distinction made between Latino and Latina administrators because we’re very different. I will tell you that. The men have it a lot easier than the women. I think that’s an important distinction.*

*Our challenges are completely different. You know, and a lot of it has to do with the fact that there is larger numbers of Latinos in administrative positions, as presidents, as provosts, as, you know, senior administrators, than there are Latinas so ... the Latinas that I’ve seen that have ascended to those positions, it’s brutal.*

Hector’s Narrative

Hector was born in the United States. One of Hector’s parents was born in the U.S., and the other was born in Cuba. Hector obtained his formal education within the United States. He holds a master’s and doctorate and has 24 years of experience working within higher education. He has been in his current position for over two years and is currently serving within the executive level at his institution. Before holding this executive position, he served as a vice president of academic affairs. He has published articles, given presentations at conferences and served on numerous committees. He has also participated in numerous community service projects.

Hector mentioned that it is really an honor and privilege to lead in higher education. He felt a sense of responsibility in his role as a leader. He talked about when he was young and his father tried to assimilate. As result, his father did not speak much
Spanish in the house. He mentioned his father only speaking to his relatives on his side of the family in Spanish. He talked about his father only speaking to his kids and wife, who was Anglo, in English.

He mentioned his father having beautiful dark skin but he got his mother’s fair Irish skin and as result, he does not have the ethnographic marker. He mentioned not having the facility with the language and not having the ability to speak Spanish like his father with a beautiful accent. He talked about how he longed to be a part of the dominant culture when he was younger. There were even points that he was ashamed of his own ethnicity as a young man. He said that it was not until he matured that he saw the great value and richness of his heritage that his father brought to him. He talked about intentionally sharing his story so others do not see him as trying to enhance his credibility as a Hispanic because other people will judge him on those grounds.

...I could just as easily have Anglicized my name and assimilated fully into White culture if that had been my choice. ...My intentionality in not doing that, I think, is just part of what I believe to be a priority for me. So actually, I feel like it’s an honor for me to be able to reflect my culture and my Hispanic culture and so if I can provide others with some glimmer of a way forward, I think that’s always something that I find as honoring of my own past and hopefully paving the way for someone in the future.

Experience Leading in Higher Education

...It’s been an excellent experience in my most recent post here ... the institution, is fairly diverse ... while the Hispanic population is not all that large ... there’s a strong base of Latinos who are on faculty, staff, or in the student body. Frankly, it was one of the things that attracted me most to my position ... so it’s been a great transition and one which I’ve really felt welcomed by the entire community here at the university. ... I feel honored to be among the first people of Hispanic descent to lead an institution in the state, I’m hopeful that I’m leading in such a way that will provide opportunities for other Hispanics who come after me.
In spite of having a wonderful experience leading he acknowledges that there may have been barriers.

...I am certain there were a number of barriers that kept me from being more successful than I have been, I would be hard pressed to identify many of them. I really have had tremendous opportunity in my various roles at different institutions.

Hector mentioned that given the size of his institution he is able to be more relational to his staff and that allows him to express who he is as a Latino administrator. He talked about spending most of his morning visiting individuals the day before a holiday saying hello to students, staff, and faculty.

I think Latinos are very relational as a people and so I often apologize to my colleagues because I lack a sort of sensibility regarding personal space that non-Latinos have. I tend to be, not just relational but sort of warm and physical even. My mom was Irish, my father Cuban so neither of those really have a tradition of respecting personal space. But I really enjoy that. As a matter of fact, one of the things I try to do is really lead by walking, something I’m sure you’ve heard a lot about.

Lack of Latino Leaders

Hector believes institutions need to be intentional about cultivating and developing Latinos within their institutional walls. Hector talked about how disappointing it was to read the recent study by ACE, particularly on minorities serving in president roles in higher education.

The recent study by ACE, particularly of the presidency, was ... frankly disappointing to me, to see that in the last 10 years, while we’ve seen other minority numbers increase, we really have seen a very stagnant, even some regression for the Latinos in the presidency.

He talked about demography being destiny and that in time there will be a change in leadership. He mentioned this dissertation study is taking place at a very pivotal time.
This whole idea that demography is destiny ... so the destiny for that change in leadership will occur but you’re researching at a very pivotal time, I would suggest at a time where others will look back and ask lots of the same questions.

Hector mentioned the importance of being intentional about identifying and cultivating a Latinos talent pool.

...The research that’s out there shows that there’s not a single reason for that dearth, if you will, of Latinos. ...I think Latinos need to see more Latinos in administration. ...It’s one of those chicken and egg kinds of things. But I think that one of the things I’ve tried to be intentional about is identifying potential leaders within my organization who are Latino and look for ways to help them progress professionally. ...That’s one of the things I’d like to see, that the few of us who are in administrative experiences really be more intentional in identifying Latinos with potential to be administrators.

Hector talked about how minorities are tracked into certain field as an additional reason why there are few Latino administrators.

Latinos and other minorities are tracked. We tend to track young people into areas that we think they’ll be successful in and I think that’s another thing that has hindered Latinos.

Hector also mentioned the negative perception of administration as another reason why there are few Latino leaders.

I know that I love the classroom. I love the experience. I really enjoy the interaction. I think some of the research that I’ve read indicates that a lot of Latinos who get into the faculty ranks and are enticed into administration really don’t enjoy the experience. I think that part of that may be twofold. I think that if they were given further opportunity, they might flourish there and I think, again, maybe it’s tied to this other image as well, this idea that we just love the interaction and relational part of teaching.

So I think those are some of the things that come to mind, but I do believe that we’re going to see some very talented Latinos who are working in
administration and some of the middle management areas, if you will, who I think will be fine senior administrators in the days ahead.

Developing a Professional Network and Mentoring

Hector talked about the competition in higher education to find skilled people of any background. He mentioned that minority administrators, faculty, and others are in high demand. He tells his staff that they need to develop relationships with their peers at other institutions. He encourages them to build relationships where there is a high density of Latinos. Hector also mentioned the importance of mentoring.

I have been given great opportunity by others who really did try to nurture something in me. ...As you know, Latino males and African American males are really struggling in terms of college completion and so we’ve actually developed a mentorship program...

The intersection between culture and networking were discussed.

If you give Latinos an opportunity to meet one another ... we take advantage of that. ...This idea of fiesta is something engrained in our hearts and so we tell people we’re just going to get together and meet one another and have a great time and do some scholarly work but also enjoy some other aspects of Latino culture together as Latino academics. We’ve actually been able to attract Latinos not just from the area but from all over the state.

Hector mentioned that at his previous institution there were more Latinos within the community. Specifically, Hector talked about the involvement of the Latino chambers of commerce. Hector mentioned having more support from the Latino community at a previous institution. One of the reasons he believes that he had more support was because the chamber of commerce he was a part of was one of the largest and most successful in all of the country.

The chamber is very strong ... and there is a lot more leadership there. So,
I feel like there were more opportunities as a Latino administrator within the community. I certainly had a number of Latinos who wanted to step forward and help with scholarship initiatives and other things we had done to foster Latino leadership.

The Impact of Ethnicity on Decision-Making

I would suggest that one’s faith and one’s ethnicity and one’s cultural and historical background inherently play a role in the way you respond. ... There’s no question that my ethnicity has impacted my decision making and I’d like to believe it’s been in those positive ways. But I’m sure there are some negatives, too.

Hector references how his cultural background has impacted how he leads.

You know, people talk about the optimism that’s inherent in the Cuban culture and I’ve seen some studies suggest that it’s interesting because even within the church culture, I read recently that a lot of missionary organizations are recruiting missionaries from Cuba to do missionary work in Africa, for example, because they find that they are able to succeed where a lot of U.S. missionaries are unable to succeed. And part of it is maybe this inherent optimism that’s often spoken of regarding Cubans.

Cubans are so entrepreneurial; they find a way to eke out a living with very little because they have been rationed, if you will, for a number of years regarding their own personal resources. They’ve seemed to thrive more in that environment. ... From my perspective, while I can’t confirm that all these things are true regarding Cuban culture and whether or not that impacts the way I lead, I’d like to believe that that’s part of who I am. And so inherently, it affects those decisions.

Hector mentioned that there is no question that his ethnicity has impacted the decisions he has made and he likes to believe it has been in a positive way. Hector discussed how important it is to be intentional about encouraging a real respect for diversity.

... When it comes to hiring decisions, I am being intentional regarding instilling in the hiring officials, the deans, and the department chairs, a
real respect for diversity that goes beyond some kind of political correctness regarding diversity. Diversity to me means far more than just ethnic diversity but I can’t make a claim that we want to increase Hispanic enrollment, which we do … if I don’t also make a commitment to hiring faculty and staff who are supporting those students.

Hector also felt that through learning about the personal struggles of others, we can move beyond many of the stereotypes that may influence our decisions.

...I try to encourage people to tell their story. We’re such a narrative people, not just Latinos, I think as Americans, we love narrative. I think it’s something that’s inherent in humanity and so much of the stereotypical thoughts regarding Latinos, they vanish once you begin to humanize who you are. ...I would suggest that so many barriers are artificial ones and they’re simply a result of a lack of communication or lack of understanding.

...I think if there’s any single thing that I would continue to promote ... is really to be rather intentional about sharing your own story and struggle, if it involves a struggle, because there’s something about being vulnerable and telling your story that gives others license to do the same. ...It seems to tear down some of those walls. So while sometimes it was uncomfortable for me as a young administrator and moving through, I found it really liberating to be able to share ... not wearing my ethnicity on my sleeve but also being proud of the fact.

Hector talked about having a tremendous opportunity in various roles at different institutions. He recalled working as a graduate student on a small research project where the researchers submitted graduate-level, peer-reviewed papers, essays, and other papers to a number of journals, and the only thing that the researcher did was change the names from Hispanic names to Anglo names. He talked about changing the names and submitting the same essay under an alias that was more American sounding, like Peter Jones or Ralph Smith.
He recalled seeing the results of that study a number of years later, which indicated that there was a significant statistical advantage for students submitting under more Anglo sounding names. He mentioned that while there might have been impediments along the way he was frankly not aware of them. He talked about feeling very empowered during his entire career and that he continues to feel the same way now.

Paulino’s Narrative

Paulino was born in the United States along with both parents. Paulino obtained his formal education within the U.S. He considers himself a Chicano in terms of his ethnicity. Paulino obtained both his master’s and doctorate within the same institution. He has served in higher education for over 18 years and has been in his current position as an executive for five years. During his 18 years of employment in higher education, he has held positions such as visiting, assistant and associate professor, and associate dean. He also has served as an interim director and department chair within a PWI. He has published numerous articles and book chapters, given over 60 presentations at conferences, served on committees internal and external to his universities. He received awards, honors, fellowships, and grants.

Paulino mentioned that throughout his education he never received the benefit of a diversity scholarship; however, people often assumed he did.

_I’d say even going back to when I was a graduate student I had instructors and students at times who thought I’d only made it because I was a minority. ...I never received the benefit of diversity scholarship programs. People assumed I did._

_I think almost any minority scholar will tell you that in the classroom, there are often mainstream students who are going to think that somehow they have a, despite being White, they must be inherently smarter than you_
even though they don’t have the subject matter expertise and so they have a certain amount of White privilege they carry and will make assumptions about you and your intellectual capacities or your teaching style that lead them to be disrespectful.

Experience Leading in Higher Education

I think accepting an administrative role is always just a challenge. ...I’ve never really pursued them but have been asked ... which is different because I mean, somebody sees something in me that interested them in me taking on a leadership role. Secondly, I’ve used my best judgment to determine whether or not I can be effective in the role.

At my prior institution, I left there because I felt like I did not enjoy working with the leader who I saw more as a manager rather than a visionary. ...It was frustrating work because I couldn’t be effective, I no longer wanted to do that work. Whereas here, I think I’ve been given leadership roles that have allowed me to make a difference and to create new programs, to bring together people to look for solutions ... been given the resources to help implement programs, strategies.

I think there’s been lots of opportunities here for me to interact with ... faculty interests from the bottom up as well as to engage even higher-level senior administrators than me about what needs to be done and what their role should be in helping make my work easier.

He talked about having a positive experience leading within PWIs.

I’d say it’s been, overall, a very good experience with respect to the fact that I’m not a career administrator. I’m a faculty member and I think I’m not somebody who necessarily sought out administrative positions but I do have ... a background as a community activist ... and I think I’ve been able to garner a reputation for being a problem-solver and a doer and in that sense, I think I try to act with integrity in my work so that, you know, I work with others, not just imposing my own ideas.

I try and work in a collaborative way so that I’m including other people’s input and that’s always, I think, an important part of what I respect in a leader. So in that sense, I guess what I’m saying is that I feel like I’ve been given administrative opportunities and I’ve tried to make the most of them.
and feeling like, you know, being judged based on my work and not just who I am.

He mentioned that at his prior institution, he was an associate dean and he left there because he did not enjoy working with a leader who he saw as more of a manager than a visionary. He mentioned that this was a frustrating situation because he felt that he could not be effective under that type of leadership. His current role allows him to make a difference and to create new programs that bring people together to look for solutions. He has resources to help implement programs and strategies. He did not have access to those sorts of resources at his previous institutions.

I think the difference in working at a Research I university is the amount of resources available which ... can be hugely different in terms of whether it’s a faculty member, an administrator, just the funding mechanism usually favors Research I universities. So that’s a good thing in terms of trying to do this work because there’s nothing worse and more frustrating than trying to create new programs, new initiatives with no money. So that’s made a huge difference.

You know, what I give up though in some sense is demographic diversity based on geography, coming from another institution to this university. Obviously not every PWI is the same in the sense that you’re going to have PWIs in California or in the southwest or some parts of the East Coast are going to have very diverse demographics.

Paulino further talked about when an institution invests in a program it speaks to the value of that program.

I would say that the difference in leading is that because of the concern for the quality of programming, of efforts, of the reputation of a university at a tier one university ... once they decide to move forward on something, put resources behind it. So to me, that’s a big boost to how you lead because, again, leading without resources is very, very hard. ... You can be creative and there’s other things you can do ... it speaks to how the issue is valued.
Paulino also mentioned that through his hard work, he has gained the respect of colleagues but in the process it can be such an isolating experience leading as a Latino.

*I’ve been able to be respected by colleagues from all different types of backgrounds but I would say also that as part of that experience is that being an administrator, probably any sort of non-majority person, it’s going be difficult because it can be somewhat isolating.*

**Navigating the Political Landscape**

Paulino mentioned how a black-white paradigm regarding leadership in higher education still exists. He mentioned the importance of having Latino or American Indian leaders around the table. As a Latino leader, Paulino talked about having to be diplomatic and selective regarding which battles to fight.

*You know, you’re often the only person of color in the room. You certainly have to be diplomatic, which I think is an important quality anyway. So you have to be selective about what battles you choose when important topics are being discussed. You know, so while discretion is always important and using your own judgment about which battles to fight and which not to and how to strategize and representing the interests of diverse communities is really important because you have to keep in mind the goal, not just each battle. The larger goal. So everything is not a do-or-die situation so you know, it’s not for necessarily everybody’s character or disposition to sort of say I’m going to let this go.*

**Importance of an Educational Pipeline**

Paulino talked about the limited number of Latinos working within administration, specifically at PWIs. He pointed to the metrics used to gain access to PWIs as a factor that makes them very exclusive institutions at every level. Paulino mentioned the lack of an adequate educational pipeline at every level as a problem. Paulino talked about how university reputation is measured in terms of pedigree of teaching faculty or GPA, ACT, or SAT scores accepted by the admissions office.
He stated that all these things go into play regarding a university’s reputation and, as a result, make PWIs in very diverse geographic areas exclusive. He mentioned that this is exaggerated in regions of the country where the population is less diverse. He stated that if a given region has a reputation of not being very diverse, then it’s hard for some people of color to get past the burden of convincing themselves that they want to work or study at such an institution.

*Lack of Latino Leaders*

*I’m definitely the highest ranked Latino on this campus by far. There are no others … definitely no deans, no other vice provosts, or vice presidents. I could absolutely be wrong so I don’t want to say this is definitive, but I can’t even think of another department chair. So this is a problem.*

He believes the absence of Latino administrators may be attributed to a lack of willingness on the part of faculty to make the transition and a lack of mentoring if one does decide to make the career switch.

*I would say that the majority of faculty are reluctant to be administrators. …People invest in getting their Ph.D.s because they like teaching and they like the research, and administrative work makes it hard or impossible for them to do either one of those. …It’s almost like a career switch within, it’s still inside academia but it’s a … different kind of work. It’s much more like a typical job of 9-to-5 work…so your time is very structured. You’re in a lot of meetings.*

*I get along great with a lot of faculty but I think it’s not uncommon for them to say something like you’re going over to the dark side … because they often feel like their interests are at odds with administrators. ….You have a kind of general ambivalence about administrators. You have a small administrative pool. You have no mentors of your own background. You know, it doesn’t make it all that welcoming.*

He mentioned that even at the department level, many of the departments do not find it important enough to hire somebody to focus on Latino issues.
I think that even from the department level, many departments don’t find it important enough to hire somebody to do Latino focused work whether you’re talking about history, English, sociology, political science. I can go on and on. They have nobody doing work on Latino, U.S. Latinos … if you don’t have the faculty, you don’t have the courses, you don’t have something that’s going to draw Latino students to make this their preferred place to come to school. So that’s part of the problem.

He mentioned that despite the fact that Latinos have a history in the region he does not see enough Latino undergraduates, graduates and faculty.

You don’t see enough diversity of Latino undergraduates, graduate students and faculty and I think this is a real blind spot here … The American Indians are a much smaller number. The African Americans have done a great job... I’m sure it’s part of the legacy of the civil rights movement of thinking through race and racism around campus diversity and getting people to think about that. …I think Latinos, for some reason or another, even though we’re the fastest growing ethnic group in the state, we’re still only a small portion of the population.

He talked about his state having one of best reputations for K-12 education but one of the worse achievement gaps in the country.

So there’s clearly something going on in the K-12 system as well to screw up the pipeline. Now, we are a national university but rising tuition rates and especially out-of-state tuition rates and we don’t have a special program to grant in-state tuition or fellowships to out-of-state students … that makes it a very expensive place to come to school. So we have a limited local pool and we have limited resources to recruit from a national pool.

Diversifying the Academy

I think that I’ve been fortunate to be here to help make the case for how diversification of the institution vis-à-vis its people, curriculum, climate on campus is important and … being part of making the argument that diversity needs to be a core value of an institution.
Paulino talked about how merit of standards, of admission criteria, of hiring criteria in terms of faculty excellence, come into play and are taken very seriously and become barriers to his work. He mentioned that if diversity is not truly valued in the student body and in the faculty body, then you have to work harder because these standards often times exclude people and make diversifying an institution harder.

*It’s an old, common knowledge among people who study higher education that one of the challenges with diversifying the faculty is the fact that faculty, like a lot of people, tend to hire people who look like them, think like them. ...They renew the institution as they know it rather than taking a risk and hiring people whose research work is a lot different, whose backgrounds are different.*

So it’s kind of a reinforcement of the status quo ... sort of built in because faculty governance issues are challenges because faculty decide who their peers are going be. It’s not just a chair or a dean making the hire. ...It’s very difficult to get faculty peers to understand that diversifying the faculty is important and it’s their ... responsibility to drill all the way down to actually making the hires of diverse faculty. And it’s understanding that not having a very diverse faculty creates a culture on campus that often feels like its not a good match with faculty from diverse backgrounds.

Not having a diverse faculty creates a culture on campus that gives the feeling that individuals of diverse background are expected to assimilate to the mainstream. He talked about how big a difference it is going from a Hispanic-serving institution to his current university. He enjoyed the aspect of having background experiences and shared cultural values in common with peers and colleagues at this previous institution.

Paulino felt that leaders within the institution often have a hesitation to exert leadership in the area.

*A lot of leaders, deans, chairs, can nod at you and say, yes, we understand the importance of diversifying the faculty but they’re afraid to exercise that leadership. ...They’re afraid to sort of say, okay, I’m going to give*
out so many new positions this year but I’m going to put some conditions on those and the conditions can be out of these 20 hires, let’s hire five faculty from diverse backgrounds. Which I’ve seen people do that and I’ve seen it works. What the strategists call cluster hire.

But so very often, they’re afraid to do that because they’re concerned about resistance from the faculty. So I think it’s kind of a general laissez-faire attitude among faculty, the status quo is just fine because they’re made up of, the majority of faculty. ...I think there’s a hesitation to exert leadership in the area from leaders.

Paulino urges institutions to make positions within their institution attractive to Latinos by selling the positive aspects of their institution.

We do hear very often that people say, well, we struggle because the pool is not deep enough. ...And people won’t want to come here because of where we’re located, when they can work in places that have a higher-density Latino population. I say it’s not entirely true at all. Not just for administrators but for faculty, it’s what one does to create positions that are attractive to Latinos, how we go about recruiting and the emphasis we place on diversity, experience, as a value, as a quality of leadership, as a benefit to the institution. The way we sell the region ... the fact that Latinos are the highest, fastest growing ethnic group is a selling point. I think you have to talk about, it’s an opportunity, you know, for leadership. You have an opportunity to make a difference around something they care about.

...You also have to make them feel that they’re really good at what they do. That is, if they’re hiring somebody who has prior leadership experience, with anybody you want to hire, you need to acknowledge that experience and affirm it. People want to also be perceived as, you know, good scholars and good leaders just on their own merit, even as what diversity they bring to the institution could also be considered valuable.

The Impact of Ethnicity on Decision-Making

I think at some level, given that I work explicitly around issues of diversifying the academy, on the one hand, being a member of a minority group so to speak means that I’m thinking, and it’s okay, in my position and in my work, to think like a minority...to put myself in thinking what do I need to do to increase opportunities and success of diverse faculty.
In his leadership role Paulino sees himself tasked with the charge of representing the interests of American Indians, African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans.

*I see myself as sort of representing the interests of those groups. ...I think about severe underrepresentation and try to speak to that and let people know that there are some groups in particular that we tend to be more blind to than others so to speak.*

*I’m very diplomatic and talk about the well-being of the institution, about the value of diversity to our scholarship, to make sure we’re being accountable to the larger public and to the nation.*

He mentioned that there are always people that are going to roll their eyes at any consideration of race or ethnicity. He talked about how his own ethnicity undermines him in certain situations and may be an asset in other cases.

*I don’t think our ethnicity defines our personality. ...I’ve been at institutions where there have been Latino leaders who were disappointing, who were managers more than visionaries. ...Rather than creating opportunity for other people ... they wanted to be seen as the Latino leader but didn’t really want to let other Latino leaders emerge.*

*So I think that, it’s complicated, some of these are just about personality but certainly, even with issues of people who want to act as gate keepers, sometimes that is a function of their ethnicity. They want to be seen as the top dog. I mean, their ethnicity intersecting with their personality and intersecting with their personal history, intersecting with internalized racism maybe. I mean, there’s a lot of complicated factors.*

**Developing a Professional Network and Mentoring**

*...There’s many ways to benefit from the experience of others and get some of their experiences integrated into your sense of how to operate can make a big difference in your career. I would say at some point having some kind of mentor and it doesn’t always have to be a faculty.*

Paulino mentioned that if someone is looking to pursue an executive leadership position that they need to attend professional organization meetings. While at these
meetings, Latinos need to seek out diverse administrators and have conversations with them about their experience leading. He mentioned that he cannot think of a Latino administrator who would not be willing to share their experience leading. He mentioned that it is at these professional organization meetings where individuals will have a safe place to have an honest conversation about the challenges and benefits of leading. He mentioned that it is important to learn strategies on how to cope with these issues related to staff relations.

Staff relations are very important. ...You have a reputation to uphold and while I think that we can be strong advocates of something, I think that too often sometimes because we have a lifetime of maybe frustration or anger about certain issues, we’re not always discreet in how we and who we articulate these concerns to.

He talked about the importance of having networks to diverse academic organizations so that Latinos can learn coping skills and strategies. He believes that the networks allow the opportunity for Latinos to vent and relieve stress.

...There are strategies for dealing with that and I think you’re not taught how to cope with that stuff in graduate school but I think that’s why having diverse academic organizations and networks makes a difference because you learn coping skills and strategies as well as an opportunity to vent and relieve the stress of that.

Leading with Integrity

Paulino talked about having a certain sense of responsibility in his role as a leader. Paulino mentioned having the honor to represent others beyond the interests of himself or his ethnic group.

I mean, while I would never want to have other Latinos feel disappointed by me, I also feel like we have to become the leaders, taking off on the quote from Gandhi, becoming the change you wish to see. It’s that notion
that we become the leaders we wish were out there. You know, people who are thinking inclusively, who are thinking broadly, who are thinking not just narrowly about my own interests or even one group’s own interests but how can we make this, truly make institutions inclusive then there’s space for everybody. You know, and so I think it’s about being an ethical leader, about being somebody with a reputation of being fair. I think I want people to look at me and say, hey, that guy is a great leader, Latino. We need more of them.

Gaining a Reputation

Paulino mentioned the importance of taking on service opportunities to demonstrate leadership. He talked about how serving on a strategic planning committee and doing great work positioned him to be asked to serve on other committees.

...My first year here, I was asked to join a strategic planning committee in which there were 10 task forces and one of them was on diversity and I was asked to be a co-chair of that committee and I would say that the work we did, the really good work, you have to do quality work. ...You have to be very mindful of the fact that you’re representing yourself and the larger group of people and you need to do good work. ...Take your time, make sure it’s good. But I think the very good work that committee did positioned me to be asked to do other kinds of work.

Benito’s Narrative

Benito and his parents were born in Mexico. Benito is now a citizen of the United States and has received a terminal degree. Benito has been in his current position for 3.5 years. He has worked in higher education for 19 years and during that time he has held positions with the title of instructor, senior coordinator, associate director, director, and assistant vice chancellor. Benito has co-authored grants and received countless awards.

Experience Leading in Higher Education

I happen to be the only Latino on the executive committee of this university. ... That’s, actually for me, a very enjoyable role. My experience frankly has been very good. The reasons are primarily because
I’ve operated within and lived within both personally and professionally, in PWIs, my entire life ... after having emigrated from Mexico, I did not end up in communities that were predominantly Latino. I ended up in communities that were predominantly White and as my career has unfolded I went on to undergraduate and graduate schools, professional school, all of those took me to PWIs.

I think that as a result of that, both my personal life and the upbringing and my professional track and career so far, have allowed me and helped me to develop the skills that again allow me to be successful, to be comfortable, to not feel like the minority that I truly am in the environment. ...So my experience may be unique to a certain degree although it may share a lot of similarities with others who have had similar experiences. ...I’ve had a very positive experience.

For Benito, leading in higher education does come with its challenges, but he expects that with the territory. When Benito is confronted with issues dealing with ethnicity, he sees them as a learning opportunity. He mentioned that when he interacts with people that ask ignorant or stereotypical questions he ask them questions like, “tell me why you’re making that remark, or why you would reference this situation with respect to ethnicity or even with respect to myself as a Latino.” Benito has recognized that working within a PWI comes with its obstacles but he is not surprised nor does he feel uncomfortable. Benito reiterated how great an opportunity he has to educate and help his institution become more diverse.

Benito mentioned that while working at different institutions each university had its own its personality.

I like to think of a little phrase or descriptor that I coined, the universities have personalities. ...Even though they’ve all been PWIs, they have been within a context geographically, politically, socially and so forth that have made them different. So for example, at one institution it was a little more open, friendly, laid back and yet pretty dogmatic about certain tenets that
they’re going to hold to even though they’re fairly tolerant. I was at a very large university and while it was very tolerant and open there were still elements of its historical roots, how it came to be and the people, the immigrants from European countries that settled that area that brought with them certain ways of thinking, certain values, certain mindsets and that permeated into the institution. They were willing to accept others and yet, there was this hesitancy to go too far because that might mean having to abandon some of those core values and beliefs.

The institution on the East Coast was in a much more progressive, liberal environment and I saw that reflected in the university. I mean obviously the people of the university that make it up and give it its personality. I saw it reflected in the way they perceived their role as a PWI with respect to diversity and Latinos in particular. That particular school was close enough to some large metro areas although it was not in a large metro area, it was influenced directly by a large Latino populations. ...So there wasn’t a real sort of distinction of oh, you’re Latino, we’re not, even though it was a PWI. Just a sense that this is what it is. This is our ethnic makeup and, you know, that’s the way it is.

Adapting to the Environment

Benito believes that while working in different environments he has had to tailor his leadership approach.

In the other schools that I described, my approach was tailored to that environment and context. And I think that, you know, I describe myself and people like me who are cross-culturally competent, I would say highly cross culturally competent, I describe us as chameleons. We’re able to adapt to the environment. We recognize the landscape very quickly.

And in fact, we don’t accept appointments at those schools without recognizing what we’re going into. So again, there aren’t real surprises for people like me, coming into these environments. And so from the beginning, we realize that yes, it’s going to take a different approach as you come into a school.

In spite of being a confident individual, Benito said that there are times that he has dealt with self-doubt as a leader. Even with his track record of success at different
institutions, there are moments that a little voice speaks out for a fraction of a second filling him with self-doubt and that he has to quickly overcome that feeling. He said that he just marches forward in a very determined and purposeful way.

*Internal Motivation to Lead*

Benito talked about the limited number of Latinos working within administration, specifically at predominately White institutions. He stated that more could be done to motivate Latinos to pursue advanced degrees. Benito believes that Latinos must first have the internal motivation to lead. He talked about how history has shown us that people will persevere and even excel in spite of incredible odds. He refuses to believe that Latinos are any different.

Benito is the youngest of eight children. He talked about his motivation to lead connected to growing up in a very poor Mexican migrant family that emigrated from Mexico. His dad was a farm laborer in Missouri before his family moved to southern Idaho. He recalled his family living off his father’s meager farm labor income and once he was disabled by cancer, his mother worked at a local fish hatchery to support the family. He mentioned coming from a one-room dirt floor house in Mexico.

...I mean, you can’t get much closer to a rock bottom start than that, honestly. And yet if you look at the experience of my family, we have all gone on to school, college, advanced degrees, professionals in the family. Every one of us.

Benito asked the question, “What was unique about us?” He said there was not anything unique and yet many of his peers are still working the fields and have never broken out of that cycle. He does not attribute his success over his peers to intelligence or having more opportunities. He mentioned having an internal motivation within him
that said, “I am not satisfied.” He said it was his parents, who completed first grade and third grade in Mexico, who really set the foundation. If there were any differences between him and his peers, it would be that his parents recognized that the key to success was education. Benito’s parents made sure that he and his siblings did not lose those educational opportunities. He mentioned that many Latinos do not believe in themselves enough to say, “I do not care what the odds are I want this bad enough that I am going to do whatever it takes.”

*I’ll tell you, the road was not easy for me to get to where I am. I put in long hours and yes, I had to work against great odds, but I wanted that. So much so that I wasn’t willing to let anyone or anything tell me that I wasn’t going to be able to achieve this and I continue to look to that. Someday, I plan to be a president of a university somewhere. No one’s going to stop me. I’m going to do it, you know.*

Benito mentioned that the difference between him and his peers are that he did not allow the circumstances to keep him down.

*Navigating the Political Landscape*

While leading, Benito has seen how other Latino administrators have misread the political landscape and as a result were no longer working within the institution. Benito talked about a Latina colleague who was not able to adapt to the institutional environment and be that chameleon and as result is no longer at the institution.

*She misread the landscape and misread the importance of understanding the core values, understanding, again, the political landscape ... and tried to make the elephant stand up when it wasn’t ready to. Rather than coaxing with some treat on the other end. She didn’t last because of that.*

The president at Benito’s current institution has recognized that he was talented enough to handle projects beyond his level and as a result was mentoring and preparing
him for a presidential appointment. Benito mentioned that individuals have to be looking for those opportunities and show they are worth the investment.

Leadership Challenges

For Benito, leading does not come without its obstacles and challenges. He stated that not everyone in the faculty senate is confident in his abilities to lead. As result of the limited interaction with many of his colleagues, they do not understand his skill set.

I don’t think that everybody around the executive committee table or faculty senate and elsewhere is as confident in me and I think that’s because they don’t know what I’m capable of necessarily. They have limited experience with me. But, and I think that’s one of the reasons why the president gives me these opportunities. He wants them to see me as the person I am, the leader that I am. So the challenges, frankly, again, I turn them on their head and say they’re opportunities for me to continue to develop and grow and shape the institution and the people at the same time.

The Impact of Ethnicity on Decision-Making

Benito believes that his ethnicity has an impact on the decisions he has made at his current institution in a very positive way. He mentioned that the president and board want to diversify his institution.

...The president, board, and many others want to diversify this institution. We do want to see more diversity in all of its elements here. ...So my ethnicity, the fact that I’m a Latino gives me a lot of cache in that conversation.

He mentioned not feeling like he is a token minority in that sense. He stated that if he felt like a token he would not stay at the institution; he does not appreciate that role. He feels that he brings a unique viewpoint that needs to be taken in to consideration when he is invited to talk with the chair of the board of trustees.
I bring a lot of value to the conversation and the discussion so the chair of the board of trustees, as he’s thinking things through, he acknowledges that I have a viewpoint that needs to be incorporated and I need to be given an opportunity to provide some leadership as we move this forward. ...It is not just about ethnicity, it’s all the elements of diversity that matter to us.

It is during these important meetings that he leverages his Latino-ness to the hilt.

I take full opportunity, recognizing that I’ve got a card nobody else can play and I’m going to play it.

As result of his experiences as a Latino, he is able to have empathy for the first-generation students who are working hard, but continue to struggle. He mentioned that the students know he can relate to him because he was both a disadvantaged and a first-generation student. Benito feels proud of his background and will never hide the fact that he is Latino. He said that when people see self-confidence in him they ascribe to that and have a higher level of self-confidence as well.

I think that people, if they see that self-confidence, they then ascribe to that value, high value as opposed to the opposite, if someone doubts their own ethnicity or doesn’t value who they are ethnically, I think then it opens the door for others also to devalue it.

Benito feels that he has not encountered any barriers related to his ethnicity and upward mobility.

I don’t think I’ve encountered personally any barriers to my progression, my upward mobility that related to my ethnicity. ...Whether there were and I just didn’t see them, I don’t know but I’ve been very happy with the trajectory that my career has taken and all the opportunities. I’m not dissatisfied one bit. And again, whether there might’ve been, I think that being a Latino has just opened so many doors for me.
Cross-Culturally Competent Leadership

According to Benito, Latinos looking to be successful at PWIs need to appreciate who they are and be keenly aware of their environment and how elements of their identity operate within that environment.

The theme that I’ve been drawing here in our conversation is that Latinos have to appreciate who they are, they also have to recognize and be keenly aware of their environment and how that element of their identity operates within that environment. I’m choosing my words very carefully here because it ties into everything else I said so far. I’m not saying that they have to hide that element that’s critical to their identity. No, the opposite is what I’m saying.

But they also have to be careful if they’re going to thrive, they have to be careful about how people perceive that, how it fits in with the personality of the university. ...If a university isn’t ready, like I said, you can’t make the elephant stand when it’s not ready necessarily.

He feels that many of his Latino colleagues lack the skill of being cross-culturally competent. There are a few of them that can truly be those real chameleons who are able to adapt to the environment.

He talked about hearing criticism from individuals who say that you are not a Latino anymore when you work at a PWI.

I’d argue differently. I would argue that we have learned how to use that important part of our identity to the benefit of ourselves, to the benefit of our Latino community, to the benefit of the PWI. To me, I think that’s what we’ve done and are doing. So aspiring senior administrators, they need to come to terms with that and realize that, you know, it’s about being smart. It’s about being savvy. It’s about being, you know, kind of one up on people and sort of, I don’t know. What’s the right word? Sort of savoring the opportunity to do that.
Benito felt that he has been granted a unique opportunity to help shape the higher education landscape at the regional, state, and national level.

**Investment in Mentoring**

Benito believes that if institutions want to retain Latino administrators that they need to invest in mentoring.

*One thing I think they need to do, and this is something I’m looking at here, is that there has to be more mentoring and ... it doesn’t have to be a Latino administrator mentoring, although that is one of my responsibilities and I take it very seriously. I’m always looking out for young Latino students, first of all, and trying to help them, track them into ... administrative roles in the future. You know, talking to them about my experiences and helping them see that this is a, whether it’s student affairs, whether just university administration in general, this is a profession worth considering.*

He said that senior administrators also have a responsibility to help shape the next generation of leaders in a way that is different from what is currently around the table. He stated that there are an assortment of mechanisms to diversify the academy that could be implemented in the hiring process, policies and tenure review codes. However, all the policies and structures would not matter if people’s hearts were not invested in change. He believes that people’s hearts, without the policies, will actually diversify the academy more quickly. He mentioned that change starts with senior leadership.

*It starts with the presidents and the boards and the makeup of those boards to then begin to exert expectation and pressure on the senior team.*
CHAPTER V

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of Latino/a executives-level leaders serving within four-year PWIs. The data for this study were analyzed in two phases. The first phase primarily focused on the lived experience of the participants. During the data analysis process, five themes emerged that were then used to answer the main research questions for this study:

1. How do Hispanic/Latino executives in higher education describe their leadership experiences at PWIs?
2. Why are so few Hispanic/Latinos leading within PWIs?
3. In what ways does ethnicity impact the decisions made at their institutions?
4. What strategies are beneficial to institutions looking to recruit and retain Hispanics/Latinos executives within PWIs?

Themes

The five emergent themes described in the chapter are: 1) the impact of ethnicity on decision-making, 2) inadequate educational pipeline, 3) lack of Latino leaders, 4) importance of mentoring, and 5) diversity and building an inclusive university.

The Impact of Ethnicity on Decision-Making

As leaders at their respective institutions, all the participants discussed how their ethnicity had impacted them within their position. Of the five participants, four
mentioned that their ethnicity has impacted the decisions they have made in a positive way. As Sylvia mentions below, she has had to be very careful not to be perceived as favoring Latinos by giving one group more funds then another. Sylvia talked about her budget being so low that there was no room for favoritism.

*Well, I always look for out for all students because my job is supposed to be for diversity, I focus on Latinos and Latino faculty and women because that’s my charge. I’m a woman and I’m Latina but I try to be as even handed as possible. Given my very limited budget, there’s no problem there. They wouldn’t think that I’m giving more money to Latinos than anybody else.* (Sylvia)

Benito talked about sitting at the decision-making table with the board of trustees and how they acknowledged how his viewpoint needs to be incorporated into the decision making process. He has leveraged his Latino-ness to the hilt during these board meetings when the issues discussed pertain to minorities.

*I take full opportunity, recognizing that I’ve got a card nobody else can play and I’m going to play it.* (Benito)

Paulino said that given the scope of his role within his institution, he tries to advocate for African Americans, American Indians, and Latinos. He talked about using his position to point out the lack of diversity within the institution.

*I think at some level, given that I work exclusively, or explicitly, around issues of diversifying the academy, on the one hand, being a member of a minority group so to speak means that I’m thinking, and it’s okay, in my position and in my work, to think like a minority.* (Paulino)

Consuelo’s experiences growing up poor in a very traditional Mexican American household and going through an educational system riddled with biases and prejudice impacts her decisions. As a result of those experiences she feels she has certain sensitivities that people who have not been through those experiences would not have.
Well, of course. I think, I didn’t leave who I am, my ethnicity and everything about who I am at the door when I became an administrator. So, absolutely! I mean, I bring all that stuff with me, my background, my experience, my ethnicity.

…I think that all those things impact not only how I’m seen but how I see myself within the institution and the importance of what it means for me to be in this position, looking the way I do and having the experiences that I’ve had. So, I would say absolutely. …I can’t differentiate my decisions from others. I just know that my decisions are directed in a certain way because of who I am. (Consuelo)

Hector mentioned that his cultural background directly impacts the way he leads and ultimately the decisions he makes within his role.

I would suggest that one’s faith and one’s ethnicity and one’s cultural and historical background inherently play a role in the way you respond. (Hector)

Three participants also mentioned that their ethnicity impacted them in other ways in their position. Sylvia discussed how her ethnicity and gender have negatively impacted her. Amey and Eddy (2002) mentioned the added challenges of women leaders, stating, “Leaders who are women of color have additional constraints. These women have to address issues regarding not only their gender but also their race and ethnicity” (p. 485).

It was really hard for a woman to be elected department chair, let alone a Latina elected chair. So then if you don’t get the experience of being chair, or being in important committees, then you don’t have the background when there’s a position to be chancellor somewhere. So yeah, I think my ethnicity and my gender hindered me from even going higher. And not only me, I think many women and minorities. (Sylvia)

Benito discussed how he does not feel like the token Latino. He stated that if he did feel like the token Latino he would not stay. Benito also talked about never hiding the fact that he is Latino.
...I’m not the token minority in that sense. You will never find me hiding that I am a Latino first and foremost. And that matters immensely to me. And I think that people, when they see that self-confidence, they then ascribe to that value, high value as opposed to the opposite, if someone doubts their own ethnicity or doesn’t value who they are ethnically, I think then it opens the door for others also to devalue it. (Benito)

Benito also talked about how his ethnicity and being a disadvantaged, first generation student has enabled him to connect with the first generation college students at his institution.

...We have a lot of first-generation students and they are across the board in terms of ethnicity or gender. I’m able to connect with the student populations, both prospective students in the community or across the country that we visit with and those that are here working hard to make it through and struggling. I have complete empathy for them and they know that.

They know that I can relate because I’ve been there and I’ve succeeded. So there’s a lot of ways that being a Latino and being first-generation and being a disadvantaged student, all of those are part of my quiver of weapons, if you will, that allows me to be even that much more successful. (Benito)

Paulino felt that while his ethnicity has given him credibility when discussing issues on race and ethnicity, he recognizes there are times that it works against him.

I think, you know, there’s always people out there who are going to roll their eyes for any consideration of race or ethnicity. So I definitely think that, while on the one hand, it gives me credibility to speak to these issues, it also probably undermines me other times, in ways in which I don’t always know but I have no doubt happens. (Paulino)

Inadequate Educational Pipeline

All participants discussed issues pertaining to an inadequate educational pipeline for Latinos. While higher education institutions may need to prepare for a larger number
of Latinos, it is important to note the challenges within the secondary education system that will impact their success when they reach higher education. An important piece of the educational pipeline for Latinos lies within this system. As Santiago (2011) pointed out, Latinos are more likely to be placed into less rigorous classes while attending secondary school. As a result, these students are not academically prepared for college.

The participants were unanimous on the importance of Latinos having a formal education and the need to obtain an advanced degree. Fry (2002) stated, “Lacking advanced degrees, Latinos will be underrepresented in the nation’s most prestigious jobs” (p. 9). Two of the participants also mentioned a flawed educational pipeline. A study conducted by Silva (2007) supports the need for additional education for career advancement. Silva’s study mentioned that in order for Latinos to be successful in higher education they must obtain a doctorate. The importance of gaining proper educational preparation was also cited by Becks-Moody’s (2004) study of African American women at HBCUs and PWIs.

Benito talked about how his parents supported and encouraged education in the family household. Paulino mentioned the achievement gap and a problem with the educational pipeline. Consuelo discussed how she went through a school system that was deeply flawed.

The research by Leon and Nevarez (2007) mentioned how low-caliber schools, low high school graduation rates, less effective college preparation, channeling to two-year institutions, and low college graduation rates all negatively impact Latinos. They also mention how Latinos are severely impacted by poverty. Meier and Stewart (1991)
discussed how the historical patterns of exclusion from access to quality education have adversely impacted Latinos and African Americans.

Hector mentioned how minority males are struggling with completing college.

*Latino males and African American males are really struggling in terms of college completion.* (Hector)

Sylvia attributed the limited number of Latinos working within administration to the lack of them obtaining doctorates.

*...Our people need to get Ph.D.s. And of course, that translates into having good schools, good elementary schools, good kindergartens; the whole works so there’s what we call a pipeline.* (Sylvia)

The study by Fry (2002) mentioned that Latinos enroll in graduate school at a rate lower than any other major racial/ethnic group. The work by Gutierrez, Castaneda, and Katsinas (2002) and Munoz (2010) also support the importance of Hispanics obtaining a doctorate.

*...We really need to have the pipeline. But in addition, we really need to make sure, there’s so many things that need to be done so that universities hire us and hire African Americans so they don’t think the only reason we’re candidates is because we’re brown or black or women. So, to make sure that proper funding is given to our schools, we have to be, at every level, we have to be involved in the administration of funding for schools from kindergarten or even preschool, to universities.* (Sylvia)

Benito mentioned how his parents valued the importance of education and that made all the difference for him and his siblings.

*So if there’s any difference, it would’ve been that we had parents that recognized the keys to success and it was education. They knew that was the key in this country. And they made sure that we did not lose those opportunities.* (Benito)
Paulino attributed the dearth of Latino administrators to the lack of an adequate educational pipeline at every level within the educational system. He also referenced the lack of an adequate Latino faculty pool. A study by Harvey (2003) reiterated the lack of an adequate faculty pipeline. “Hispanics account for only 2.9% and African Americans account for 5.1% of faculty, although Hispanics now represent 12% of the total population and African Americans represent 11%” (p. 7).

This state has one of the best reputations in the country for K-12 education but they have one of the worst achievement gaps in the country. So there’s clearly something going on in the K-12 system as well to screw up the pipeline. (Paulino)

Consuelo mentioned how the school system she attended was rife with bias and prejudice and how those experiences impacted her deeply.

The fact that, you know, I went through an educational system that was riddled with biases and prejudice and that kind of thing. So all those experiences have impacted who I am and I bring that with me. ... There’s very few of us that have opportunities to get graduate degrees and doctoral degrees and fewer of us that go into the professoriate and can survive academia and then there are even fewer of us that move into leadership roles. (Consuelo)

Hector mentioned that both Latino and African American males are struggling to complete college. Hector also talked how his university is trying to work with a local church to provide resources to these young men.

As you know, Latino males and African American males are really struggling in terms of college completion and so we’ve actually developed a mentorship and money program where we train people within the church community to do mentoring and then the church and the university both sort of share resources so that we can provide the money needed for the student to complete their education. (Hector)
Anderson (2003) challenged higher education personnel to think critically regarding the educational needs of this diverse student population. As Rodriguez, Guido-DiBrito, Torres, and Talbot (2000) stated, “The challenge for institutions of higher education as they enter the 21st century will be to prepare for and effectively serve larger numbers of Latino students by examining the university environment and making the necessary changes to promote success” (p. 524).

*Lack of Latino Leaders*

All the participants discussed being among very few Latinos/as serving within their institutions. Haro (2005) cited several critical reasons for the need for more Latino leaders in higher education. He points to the increasing Latino population and the impact these Latino leaders could potentially have within those communities.

There is much to be done in identifying and preparing Latinos to become professors, senior staff, and executives at American colleges and universities. And even more is needed to provide a hospitable campus environment for Hispanics, particularly in academic leadership roles (p. 59).

Sylvia mentioned that there are very few Latinos employed in administrative roles within her institution. Aside from the lack of Latino leaders, Sylvia also talked about differences between men and women leading. She mentioned that, aside from the limited number of Latino leaders, women have it harder because there are even fewer of them.

*I don’t know if your research will do this but there has to be a distinction made between Latino and Latina administrators because we’re very different. I will tell you that. The men have it a lot easier than the women.*  
*(Sylvia)*

She made a point to mention that women have it harder when it comes to leading in higher education.
With women, they want to have a life. ...The other problem is the institutional, it’s a problem from the institution because the institution was designed for a two person career, like the husband and wife. So the husband did the research and the teaching and all that and the wife took care of everything else. (Sylvia)

Consuelo also reaffirmed the challenges of being a Latina leader.

*I mean, our challenges are completely different. ...A lot of it has to do with the fact that there is larger numbers of Latinos in administrative positions, as presidents, as provosts, as senior administrators, than there are Latinas so... the Latinas that I’ve seen that have ascended to those positions, it’s brutal. (Consuelo)*

Grady (2002) stated, “Hispanic women have faced two overriding factors detrimental to their advancement: gender and race” (p. 481). The career decisions of Latinas are impacted by the family demands. Latinas are often the primary care taker for their children or extended family (Munoz, 2010).

...*Being the one and the only Latina around the table, very often surrounded by White men who had very different perspectives ... feeling that in some places, I may not have been wanted and my voice was not welcomed. So I mean, those are definitely barriers that White men don’t have to think about. (Consuelo)*

Consuelo also mentioned how often she is one of very few women around the table at her institution in spite of the demographic changes taking place.

...*I’m certainly a minority being not only a Latina but very often one of a few women. I mean, predominantly most of the leadership at predominantly White institutions are White males and that still continues, despite the fact that, you know, there are probably more people of color, the demographic is changing in terms of students coming to the university and so on and so forth. (Consuelo)*

Benito is the only Latino serving on the executive committee at his institution. Hector discussed being the first Latino senior executive within his institution. Given the
opportunity Latinos could contribute greatly to an institution. They bring a unique set of experiences given their background.

*I’m able to connect with the student populations, both prospective students in the community or across the country that we visit with and those that are here working hard to make it through and struggling. ...I have complete empathy for them and they know that. They know that I can relate because I’ve been there and I’ve succeeded. So there’s a lot of ways that being a Latino and being first generation and being a disadvantaged student, all of those are part of my quiver of weapons, if you will, that allows me to be even that much more successful.* (Benito)

Ballesteros (2008) stated, “Hispanics can lead ‘White’ as well as ‘Brown’ institutions of postsecondary education. Our bilingual-bicultural background and our humanistic legacy will be an asset to all campus personnel and students” (p. 202).

Benito and Paulino both talked about how they are usually the only Latinos at the table.

*I happen to be the only Latino on the executive committee of this university. ...When I’m at the meeting where the president is considering this issue and how we’re going to get through the fiscal impact of this, I’m aware of these issues. I know that these are significant issues because I understand the institution and its context. Now, at the same time, as a Latino administrator ... he turns to me and says, we need you to lead us on how we’re going to deal with this issue. Now, I can sit there and I can say how are all my colleagues looking at me right now? I can say do they look at me as capable as a Latino? Or are they considering me as not quite capable?* (Benito)

*You know, you’re often the only person of color in the room.* (Paulino)

Hector discussed how he would like to see those few Latinos in administrative roles help other Latinos with the potential to lead.

*And I think that’s one of the things I’d like to see that the few of us who are in administrative experiences really be more intentional in identifying Latinos with potential to be administrators so that we can see that occurring.* (Hector)
Hector also talked about being one of the first Hispanics to lead at his level within his institution and how he wants to lead in a way that provides opportunities for other Hispanics.

_And while I feel honored to be among the first people of Hispanic descent to lead an institution in the state, I’m hopeful that I’m leading in such a way that will provide opportunities for other Hispanics who come after me._ (Hector)

Haro (1995) stated, “It is essential for Latinos to begin questioning their limited numbers in leadership roles in higher education. Why are so few in senior-level academic executive jobs?” (p. 189). This study by Haro was conducted almost two decades ago and we still are dealing with the same issues in 2014. As Perrakis, Campbell, and Antonaros (2009) stated, “There is no silver bullet to the problem of poor minority representation at the highest levels of academic administration” (p.10). The lack of Latino leaders continues to be a problem at highly selective universities where it is even more of a challenge for Latinos to secure a provost or president position (Haro & Lara, 2003).

**Importance of Mentoring**

All the participants within the study pointed out the importance of mentoring. The participants indicated that obtaining mentoring had been a key to success for them personally and that it is a critical element of success for other Latinos. The participants discussed mentoring and how important it is in the preparation of Latinos leaders. Benito also mentioned that his institution’s president sees his potential and has mentored him.

_I have a president who very early on recognized that there were things that I could do beyond my level and he has taken it on himself to be a mentor, to prepare me for a presidential appointment._ (Benito)
The importance of mentoring was also reported in a study by Gutierrez, Castaneda, and Katsinas (2002), in which they conducted a qualitative survey of 16 Hispanics in senior-level administrative roles at community colleges. In their study the participants reported quality mentoring as important to attaining leadership positions. Munoz (2010) conducted a mixed-method study that captured the experiences of Latina executives. The participants in the study indicated mentoring as essential to assuming a leadership position. The importance of mentoring was also critical to African Americans (Jackson, 2001; Becks-Moody, 2004; Williams, 2007; Lindsay, 1999) in gaining access to leadership positions.

Sylvia mentioned that if Latinos were to be successful at leading in higher education they need to learn how the systems worked. One of the best ways to learn the systems is to be mentored. Yet, many younger Latinos, Chicanas, Latinas and women have a negative perception of mentoring. Sylvia discussed the importance of mentoring at the high school level and how many of the kids that need mentoring get it the least because they are embarrassed. She said that what many fail to understand is that the really bright kids get a lot of mentoring.

...They really need to be mentored. But one of the negative things about, what’s going on is that a lot of times the younger Latinas, Chicanas and women I would imagine, too ... I think they don’t like to be mentored because they feel ... it’s sort of a high school thing. Kids that need the most mentoring are the ones that get the least. (Sylvia)

Gorena’s (1996) study of the experiences of Hispanic women in senior level administrative positions reaffirmed the importance of mentoring in career advancement. Benito talked about the importance of mentoring at the university level.

One thing I think they need to do and this is something I’m looking at here
"is that there has to be more mentoring and ... it doesn’t have to be a Latino administrator mentoring, although that is one of my responsibilities and I take it very seriously." (Benito)

Sylvia also mentioned how White males get mentoring to become administrators.

"...White males get mentored on the side. It’s like, that’s how it’s been done. It was established, but we don’t have that luxury." (Sylvia)

Consuelo also felt that gaining access to executive roles within institutions was largely dependent on mentoring. She felt that it was essential for institutions to provide professional development opportunities if they want to diversify their executive leadership teams.

"I think we come prepared once we have completed our doctorates to be able to assume any leadership role. And a lot of it has to do with our mentoring opportunities. A lot of it has to do with, people in leadership roles providing opportunities for professional development, leadership development and then building positions or developing positions for talented people to move into those positions." (Consuelo)

Paulino attributed the absence of Latino administrators to a lack of mentoring. He mentioned that Latino faculty invest a lot of time into getting their Ph.D.s because they like teaching and doing research, and administrative work makes it difficult for them to engage in either. He mentioned that Latino faculty who would consider making the career change do not have the mentors to help them navigate that change.

"You have no mentors of your own background. You know, it doesn’t make it all that welcoming." (Paulino)

As did Consuelo, Paulino felt that mentoring was important to gaining the experiences needed to lead in higher education.

"So there’s many ways to benefit from the experience of others and get some of their experiences integrated into your sense of how to operate."
can make a big difference in your career. I would say at some point ...

having some kind of mentor and it doesn’t always have to be a faculty. (Paulino)

Paulino mentioned that a person’s success ultimately resides within them. He mentioned growing up poor and sleeping on dirt floors. He talked about refusing to settle for just any position. He believes that it is this refusal to settle that will catapult him to success. Benito talked about becoming a university president someday. In my discussion with Benito it seems that Latinos need to possess an unrelenting inner drive to not settle paired with mentoring to access to high-level leadership positions within the academy.

Someday, I plan to be a president of a university somewhere. No one’s going to stop me. I’m going do it, you know. That’s the way it is. So, I really think beyond all of the great things that we can do, mentoring people and I do that. (Benito)

I want you to know that from the day I began in higher education, I’ve looked for ways to mentor young people, young Latinos, and I continue to do that. But aside from that, I support and volunteer at community programs geared towards literacy and all sorts of things for Latinos in my community and I will always do that. But in the end, it really boils down to the individual and whether they’re willing to not allow the circumstances to keep them down. (Benito)

Benito mentions that if an institution is looking to retain Latino administrators they need to find ways to mentor them. Benito believes that it’s the responsibility of senior administrators to help shape the next generation of leaders in a way that is very different than what is around the table.

Hector talked about the importance of mentoring youth. In my discussion with Hector, he stated that he believes there needs to be more mentoring of Latino and African American males.
As you know, Latino males and African American males are really struggling in terms of college completion and so we’ve actually developed a mentorship and money program where we train people within the church community to do mentoring and then the church and the university both sort of share resources so that we can provide the money needed for the student to complete their education. (Hector)

Diversity and Building an Inclusive University

A theme developed through the interviews on the institutional need for valuing diversity within higher education. It’s important to note that two of the participants in this study worked in diversity-related positions. As Melendez (2004) and King and Gomez (2008) pointed out, of those Hispanics who hold administrative positions in higher education, most do so in diversity-related areas.

As Jackson and Phelps (2004) pointed out, the students, staff, and faculty of a truly diverse institution are exposed to diversity in three distinct ways through structural diversity, informal interaction diversity, and classroom diversity. A university campus that supports diversity can have a positive impact on students, staff, and faculty (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado & Gurin, 2002). The findings of this study also support the findings of the research conducted by Vaughan (1990), in which women and minorities mention facing numerous obstacles stemming from a lack of understanding about the importance of institutional diversity.

All participants discussed the importance of diversity in their work environments. They touched on the value of diversity in hiring, using their own ethnic diversity as they lead, and having a diverse student body. Hurtado, Milam, Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen (1999) stated, “…structural diversity is considered the first important step in the process of improving the climate for diversity” (p. 19).
Sylvia and Hector both mentioned the importance of diversity in hiring practices within higher education. Paulino and Consuelo mentioned the importance of diversity and its impact on the student body. Sylvia talked about having a culture that valued diversity at her institution. In my discussion with Sylvia she talked about having a university president who actively talked how racism impacted him directly. She mentioned that the president’s willingness to talk about racism has created an environment within the institution that has a positive stance on diversity.

...*We tend to hire professors that are positive about diversity. That’s a big question all the time when hiring. So you know, it kind of snowballs.* (Sylvia)

Sylvia mentioned that she has worked at another institution that was negative toward creating an inclusive campus.

*I worked at another institution, which was in an earlier period, which was a little bit more antagonistic toward affirmative action and towards opening up the university ... we used to have targets of opportunity and they were taken out. ...People were rejecting and were so opposed to it.* (Sylvia)

Benito talked about how his institution wants to be more inclusive. He mentioned working with the president and board of trustees to increase diversity.

...*And so one of the objectives that I have and that the president, the board and many others share is that we want to diversify this institution. We do want to see more diversity in all of its elements here.* (Benito)

Paulino talked about how established merits of standards inversely impacted the institutional diversity.

*I think also the questions of what merit of standards, of admission criteria, of hiring criteria in terms of faculty excellence, all these things come into play and get taken very seriously and they also become barriers.* ...If
diversity’s not truly valued in the student body, in the faculty body, then you know, you have to really work a lot harder because these standards often times are, you know, exclude people and make diversifying an institution harder. (Paulino)

Paulino also mentioned that if institutions are looking to recruit and retain Latino administrators that they have to value diversity. He mentioned hearing people say how they struggle to find a diverse pool of applicants for a position.

*We do hear very often that people say, well, we struggle because the pool is not deep enough. And people won’t want to come here because of where we’re located, when they can work in places that have a higher density Latino population. I say it’s not entirely true at all. Not just for administrators but for faculty, it’s what one does to create positions that are attractive to Latinos, how we go about recruiting and the emphasis we place on diversity, experience, as a value, as a quality of leadership, as a benefit to the institution. (Paulino)*

In discussions with Consuelo she mentioned the difficulty of constantly advocating for issues around diversity and equity.

*So it gets a little tiring, I think, to constantly be the only voice that will articulate issues around our diverse student population, issues of diversity and equity and inclusion in general. And so it’s a difficult position to be in, to be the only one. (Consuelo)*

Hector talked how he tries to be intentional about creating a diverse environment that values diversity. He talked about valuing diversity in the hiring process.

*And again, when it comes to hiring decisions, I am being intentional regarding instilling in the hiring officials, the deans, and the department chairs, a real respect for diversity that goes beyond some kind of political correctness regarding diversity. (Hector)*

**Latina Leadership Gender Differences**

The two female participants in the study expressed concerns about the differences between Latina and Latino leaders. While this topic did not rise to the level of a theme,
the women in the study did reiterate that women face issues that men do not. The female participants mentioned that because there are more Latino leaders, many of the Latina leaders are still struggling to find support in their role as first a women and secondly a Latina.

*I will tell you that the men have it a lot easier than the women. I mean our challenges are completely different. A lot of it has to do with the fact that there is larger numbers of Latinos in administrative positions, as presidents, provosts and senior administrators than there are Latinas. The Latinas that I’ve seen that have ascended to the positions, it’s brutal.*

(Consuelo)

Research Questions

This section discusses the findings of the study in direct response to the research questions posed in chapter I.

*Question 1: How do Hispanic/Latino Executives in Higher Education Describe Their Leadership Experiences at PWIs?*

Two themes address this research question. The themes *importance of mentoring* and *diversity and building an inclusive university* describe how the participants viewed their experiences at PWIs. The importance of being mentored and serving as a mentor is an important part of how the participants described their experiences. They also talked about how important it is to them to advocate for diversity within the university. The participants described their experiences in terms of being one of very few Latino executives within their institutions. They also mentioned how much they enjoyed their positions as faculty before moving on to an administrative role. Giving back through mentoring is one way they described how they helped cultivate the next generation of Latino leaders.
Through the theme *inadequate education pipeline* the participants described how they have had to overcome tremendous odds. As a result of a troubled educational pipeline the participants have developed into very resilient individuals. They described their childhoods in terms of sleeping on dirt floors and having very little to eat while growing up. One participant recalled the experience of growing up in a migrant family that worked long hours in the fields for very little salary. Their motivation to lead was directly related to the suffering they experienced growing up and wanting to have a better life for their families.

The theme of *diversity and building an inclusive university* also assisted in answering this research question. In describing their experiences at PWIs, the participants mentioned the value of diversity in their work. Through the theme *diversity and building an inclusive university*, the participants described how being a Latino administrator has allowed them the opportunity to diversify the higher education landscape within their institutions. The participants discussed how important it is to have senior administrators that are supportive of diversity. Having a supportive senior administrator has a tremendous impact on the institutional climate and may lead to increased diversity within the university. Many of the participants recalled the negative experiences they have encountered while working at other universities.

Benito has had the most unique experiences with PWIs, given that he has lived and operated within PWIs his entire life. While he is the only Latino on the executive committee at his university he finds leading within his current role very enjoyable. I believe that as a result of his experience with PWIs his entire life he has an advantage over other Latinos who are not familiar with how PWIs operate.
The participants talked about their experiences leading as positive and mentioned that they have at times never looked for positions; rather, they have been asked to pursue them. The participants mentioned not being career administrators. They often have seen themselves as faculty first and foremost. Once they become administrators they mentioned being the only person of color in the room. They mentioned that this experience is isolating.

Consuelo mentioned her experience being unique given she is often one of very few Latina administrators at the executive level within her institution. Consuelo knows that PWIs are still led by White males in spite of the demographic shift-taking place within higher education.

A few of the participants described their experiences at their current institutions as being very different than others in which they have worked. Hector mentioned moving from an area densely populated by Latinos/Hispanics to an area that had a relatively small number of Hispanics. He felt like he has gone from feeling like a small fish in a big pond to feeling like a big fish in a small pond. Hector is one of the first Latinos to serve at such a high level within his institution. He has enjoyed his experience leading.

Given their challenges in leading, the participants in this study remained highly optimistic. They have focused on the opportunity to impact change that would ripple throughout their institutions. The studies conducted on Latino leaders have primarily focused on career trajectory and acquiring skills to be successful. This study shifts the discourse from discussion on career mobility and feelings of isolation to creating institutional change.
Question 2: Why Are So Few Hispanic/Latinos Leading Within PWIs?

The participants were asked to what they attributed the limited number of Latinos working within administrations at PWIs. There were three themes that answer this question. The three themes are inadequate educational pipeline, lack of Latino leaders, and importance of mentoring. These three themes adequately addressed this research question. The participants attributed the low numbers of Hispanic/Latinos leading to the need for them to earn doctorate degrees. The theme inadequate educational pipeline also describes how participants have had to maneuver through an educational system that was plagued with challenges.

Both Sylvia and Consuelo mentioned that it’s even more of a challenge for Latinas to lead given that there are even fewer of them. Consuelo talked about how the competing family priorities of Latinas make it even more of a challenge. Consuelo recalled how brutal it is for Latinas to ascend to senior administrative roles.

The theme importance of mentoring also assisted in answering the question of why there are so few Latinos serving within PWIs. All the participants in this study pointed to the importance of how mentoring helped them along some aspect of their career paths. Sylvia and Consuelo both mentioned that, for Latinos, the best way to learn about how the system works was through mentoring. The participants described how many younger Latinos and women have a negative perception of mentoring. Gaining a leadership role is largely dependent on mentoring. The absence of Latino administrators may be attributed to the negative perception of administrative roles by Latino faculty. The participants mentioned that faculty are generally ambivalent about leading because it is often limits their interaction with students. The reluctance to take administrative roles
may be attributed to the 8 to 5 work schedule. An administrator’s time is very structured and they attend plenty of meetings. Faculty may feel that their interests do not align with becoming an administrator. Aside from a general ambivalence about pursuing an administrative role, there are very few mentors, which does not make it a welcoming experience.

The theme of *inadequate educational pipelines* also addressed this research question. The dearth of Latino administrators is directly linked to the poor educational pipeline. Latinos need to obtain their doctorates. In order for Latinos to get their doctoral degrees there need to be good schools at the secondary education level. The importance of an educational pipeline is so critical that without it the numbers of Latino administrators will remain stagnant.

The courage to lead is cultivated within the individual as well as drawn out by colleagues and mentors. If Latinos want to lead, they need to believe they can succeed. The inability of Latino leaders to understand and maneuver the political landscape of their institutions will limit their numbers in executive leadership positions. Misreading the political climate and trying to make policy changes the institution is not ready for can have negative consequences. Latinos also must recognize and be aware of their environments and how elements of their identity have an impact on their work environments.

Consuelo attributed the few Latinos leading to obtaining preparation and developing leadership skills. She also felt that Latinos really need encouragement and support to lead.

*I think a lot of it has to do with preparation and opportunities to develop*
leadership skills. So I think one of the reasons there might be fewer Latinos, there may not have been the same kind of encouragement, the same kind of ... people tapping them and saying you can do that, too. You should think about it seriously. You should ... put your hat in and see what happens. Because I do think that for faculty, it takes that kind of encouragement and for Latino faculty, even more so because we are so dedicated to creating a change within academia to serve Latino students, to serve our underserved populations within academia. (Consuelo)

There is no single reason for the dearth of Latinos working within PWIs. It is critically important for upcoming Latino leaders to see others like them in leadership roles. If Latinos can see others thriving in their leadership roles they can relate and aspire to be leaders as well. We need to be more intentional about hiring Latinos. However, Latinos are often tracked into roles without considering an administrative position. The blind assumption that Latinos will be successful in a particular career path is a hindrance for many Latinos who could become successful administrators in higher education.

This study adds to the literature on how important it is to create an educational pipeline that leads to more Latinos matriculating into college, pursuing graduate studies, obtaining faculty positions, and ultimately gaining access to executive level roles in higher education. This study also affirms the importance of mentoring at all levels along the educational pipeline.

*Question 3: In What Ways Does Ethnicity Impact the Decisions Made at Their Institutions?*

One of the five themes that emerged from this study revolved around the *impact of ethnicity on decision-making*. It is clear that of the five participants, four believed that their ethnicity had an impact on the decisions they made. Sylvia mentioned that she needed to be particularly careful as not to be perceived as favoring Latinos over others by
give more funding to one organization over another. Benito talked about how he leverages his Latino-ness while in board of trustees meetings, when the discussion pertained to minorities. Given his role, Paulino felt that it was okay for him to use his experiences based on his ethnicity to make decisions. Consuelo mentioned that her decisions are directed in certain ways because of the experiences she has had as a Latina. Hector mentioned that his cultural background directly influenced the way he leads.

The participants were asked if their ethnicity had an impact on the decisions they made at their institution. All the participants felt that their ethnicity had influenced the decisions they have made within their institutions. Sylvia mentioned that her budget is so limited that others would not perceive her to be biased. While an important part of her position is to support diversity within the university, having such a small budget means there is no room for any sort of perceived preferential treatment.

Faith, ethnicity, and cultural and historical background all have an impact on the decisions Latinos make. As result of their cultural background, Latinos tend to be collaborative leaders. Hector referenced the inherent optimism within the Cuban culture. He mentioned that Cubans are very entrepreneurial and that they find a way to make a living on very little. Hector believes that Cubans tend to thrive on a less-is-more sort of mentality. He stated while he cannot confirm all of these things about the Cuban culture he believes that all of this inherently affects the decisions he makes. In his role he tries to be intentional about telling his staff about the importance of diversity.

Given their roles in higher education, Latinos assume that it’s okay for them to think like a minority. They often try to be intentional about serving the needs of severely underrepresented groups at their institutions. They see themselves as advocate for those
that are not well represented within the institution. It is clear that their ethnicity impacts the decisions they make as leaders. In their role as advocates for minorities, their decisions are inherently intertwined with their ethnicity.

Consuelo mentioned that her ethnicity and background play a role in the decisions she makes within the institution.

*Well, of course. I think, I didn’t leave who I am, my ethnicity and everything about who I am at the door when I became an administrator. So, absolutely! I mean, I bring all that stuff with me, my background, my experience, my ethnicity.* (Consuelo)

The theme of *impact of ethnicity on decision-making* with regard to Latinos is an area that has not been researched thoroughly. This study sheds light on the topic of ethnicity as it relates to decision-making. The participants in this study believed that their ethnicity had impacted their decision-making in positive ways. The participants talked about how they use their ethnicity as way to speak on behalf of minorities during board of trustees meetings. The experiences of these leaders growing up in a Mexican American household provide them with a certain level of sensitivity that people who haven’t had their experiences would not understand. This is an area of research that needs further investigation to ascertain if decisions that Latinos are making are positively influencing the experiences of Latinos in higher education. Are the decisions of Latinos positively influencing the campus environment or climate for Latinos and other minorities?

*Question 4: What Strategies Are Beneficial to Institutions Looking to Recruit and Retain Hispanics/Latinos Executives Within PWIs?*

The participants were asked about what strategies could be beneficial to institutions looking to recruit and retain Latino administrators within PWIs. Initiating a
mentoring program could assist in retaining Latinos within administrative roles. If institutions are looking to attract talent they need to find ways to sell the region to the candidate. The recruitment piece is often the easy part, but the retaining piece often requires a change in the way institutions look at leadership. The institution must be willing to hiring consultants who can point out the blind spots regarding issues that pertain to Latinos or other minority groups.

There is a need for workshops on the process of becoming a department chair, dean, vice chancellor, or chancellor. Universities could do more by making the environment more welcoming for Latinos, minorities, and women. The importance of investing money in training and grants could increase retention of talented Latinos.

Mentoring is also a tool that can be used to retain Latinos. Accomplished Latino leaders must be willing to look out for young Latinos trying to gain access to administrative positions. They must be willing to spend time talking to the next generation about their experiences and encouraging them to consider pursuing careers in student affairs or university administration. It is very important to encourage young Latinos to believe in themselves. This sort of encouragement can be initiated by deans, provosts, or any vice president. Senior administrators at PWIs have a responsibility to help shape the next generation of leaders. The true change that needs to happen must begin with the presidents and boards who must exert expectations and pressure on the senior team.

Paulino talked about the importance of institutions creating positions that are attractive to Latinos as a way to recruit. Paulino felt that institutions could do more by placing an emphasis on diversity and seeing it as a value to the institution. It’s about
selling the region and talking about how diverse the community is in the surrounding area. Once an institution has recruited, them its important to acknowledge and affirm the experience they bring.

Consuelo mentioned recruiting being the easy part. When looking to hire Latinos one cannot look at them and say they are not a good fit for a role. One has to be willing to give Latinos an opportunity and once they assume the role, support must be provided. As for the retention piece, Consuelo believes that will require a whole change within an institution that has been predominantly populated by White males. The retention and support requires a change in the way the institution views leadership. It is only when institutions have a larger number of Latino administrators that effect a change in leadership styles and perspectives that we will see real change.

Hector mentioned how hiring a consultant may help institutions find the blind spots regarding Latinos and other minority groups. Hector talked about how competitive it is to find skilled people of any background. In his role he sees how even more of a challenge it is to find minority administrators and faculty. At his institution he encourages his deans and other hiring managers to develop relationships with their peer institutions in hopes of finding someone to fill critical roles at his institution. He mentioned that he also encourages the marketing department to have photos of diverse groups in school publications as another way to attract diverse talent.

Discussion

This study affirms Haro’s (2005) finding in that participants believed that they could have an impact on the increasing number of Latinos in higher education because of their experiences as first-generation and disadvantaged college students. This study also
supports Haro’s (2005) study in that more needs to be done to provide a hospitable environment for Hispanics in leadership roles. The participants in this study discussed how they have had to pick their battles and learn how to navigate the political landscape of their institutions. Valverde (2003) also mentioned the challenge of leaders of color and women in maneuvering different networks.

The participants in this study also mentioned the problems with the education pipeline for Latinos. A theme of this study pertains to the issue of a problematic educational pipeline and the need for more Latinos to earn their doctorate. This study supports Leon and Nevarez’s (2007) and Harvey’s (2003) work on the educational hurdles of attending low-caliber schools and a lack of an adequate educational pipeline for African Americans and Latinos. Silva’s (2007) study also affirmed the importance of obtaining a doctorate as critical to being successful.

The findings of this study also support the seminal work of Esquibel (1977) in which he identified four situational factors that Chicano administrators believed influenced their administrative appointments in higher education. While only two participants in this study identified themselves as being Chicano, there were similarities in the findings. The first of the situational factors pertained to the importance of contacts and political involvement of the Chicano administrator. The participants in this study did not mention much about their political involvement at their institutions or any connection between their political involvement and obtaining their positions. Benito was the only participant who talked about how important it is for Latinos to be able to read the political climate and the need to adapt to be successful in their position. Beyond Benito’s points there was limited connection between this study and the first situational factor.
The second factor was linked to the affirmative action plans and requirements within the institution. While the participants in this study did not mention how affirmative action might have impacted their employment, they did talk about the importance of serving as an advocate for recruiting minority students, staff, faculty, and administrators within their institutions. Sylvia specifically mentioned how she has worked at an institution that was not supportive of affirmative action. Based on the findings of this study there are still plenty of challenges to diversifying four-year PWIs.

The third factor Chicano administrators believed influenced their administrative appointments pertained to the concentration of Chicano or the ethnic composition of the institution and the community. A majority of the participants in this study mentioned being one of very few Latinos at their university. Hector mentioned moving from a university that had a densely populated Latino community to an area with very few Latinos. The small and less prestigious universities and college that are surrounded by a heavy concentration of Latinos may serve as a training ground and support network for Latinos. It’s possible that they are finding the support within and externally to the university to assist them in making the transition to PWI’s. The participants also mentioned that there are very few of them within the executive ranks. This could be attributed to a lack of a high concentration of Latinos that could advocate for the need to hire others. Based on the participants’ responses, they felt that the Chicano or Latino concentration or the ethnic composition at their universities had little or no influence on their administrative appointment, which is counter to Esquibel’s study findings.

The fourth factor mentioned Chicano pressures and contacts in the Chicano community. Only one of the five participants talked about being hired as a direct result of
Latinos advocating for their position. The other four participants did not mention being hired as result of any Latino pressure or community contacts. This study did not find any links to Esquibel’s fourth factor.

In 1992, Esquibel replicated his study and found three additional factors that Chicano administrators believed influenced their administrative appointments in higher education. The first additional factor pertained to new initiatives, such as training programs, workshops, incentives programs, lawsuits, and networking. Sylvia reiterated the importance of providing training opportunities to gain access to executive roles. Consuelo mentioned that she had participated in two leadership training programs that prepared her for leadership roles. Gonzalez’s (2007) study also supported the need for training programs as essential to gaining access to executive level positions.

The second additional factor revolved around an emphasis that Chicano administrators placed on maintaining roots. While the participants in this study talked about coming from very humble beginnings, only one of the participants mentioned the importance of maintaining his cultural roots. The other participants seemed to have deep connections to their roots. Two of the participants talked about coming from very poor Mexican homes and how those experiences motivated them to work really hard to be successful.

The third and final additional factor dealt with having advocates on governing boards, screening committees, and search firms. A few of the participants talked about how they were encouraged by colleagues on screening committees to apply for positions. The participants also mentioned that Latinos need additional encouragement to apply for executive roles because many of them enjoy teaching and conducting research, and are
not willing to give that up. In spite of Esquibel’s first study being conducted over 30 years ago, the findings are still relevant today. In spite of his study focusing on only Chicano administrators, other Latinos are having similar experiences in their efforts to gain access to leadership roles.

This study utilized Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the lens through which to examine the experiences of Hispanic/Latino executives working within PWIs. CRT in qualitative research seeks to shed light on how racism is embedded within the fabric of American Society (Parker & Lynn, 2002; Creswell, 2007). The five tenets of CRT are:

1. The intercentricity of race and racism, which focuses on how race and racism are endemic and permanent;
2. The challenge to dominant ideology, which challenges educational institutional claims of objectivity, meritocracy, colorblindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity;
3. The commitment to social justice, which seeks to eliminate racism, sexism, and poverty while empowering minority groups;
4. The centrality of experiential knowledge; and
5. The interdisciplinary perspective (Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Fernandez, 2002; Parker & Villalpando, 2007; Solorzano, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, 2005; Yosso, 2006).

It is evident through this study that racism still exists in higher education. The participants in this study mentioned how they have had to lead with caution, given the racism and sexism that is prevalent at their institutions. Sylvia referenced how the president of her institution openly shares how racism has impacted him. Consuelo mentioned how she understands the dynamics of institutional bias and institutional racism, and how she has had to constantly evaluate her interactions in order to be
effective in her role. She talked about having to pick her battles carefully. Paulino talked about how his own ethnicity undermines him in certain situations and may be an asset in other cases. Paulino also challenged the institutional claims of objective meritocracy. He pointed to the metrics used to gain access to PWIs as a factor that makes them very exclusive institutions at every level. Paulino mentioned the lack of an adequate educational pipeline at every level as a problem for Latinos who seek to gain access to PWIs. He specifically talked about how merits of standards become barriers and how issues of university reputation are measured by pedigree of teaching faculty, GPA, ACT, or SAT scores accepted by the admissions office. He stated how all of these things come into play regarding a university reputation and make PWIs in very diverse geographic areas exclusive. Paulino further talked about how faculty tend to hire people who look like them and think like them. He mentioned how difficult it is to get faculty to understand why it is important to increase diversity within the faculty ranks.

While we might advocate for equal opportunity, there are still a variety of challenges that make it difficult for minorities and specifically Latinos to gain access to the highest echelons of the academy. This study challenges the claims that educational institutions are environments of equal opportunity. It is clear that many of the participants have had to overcome tremendous obstacles related to their ethnicity to be successful.

Limitations

This study was limited to Latino executives working within doctoral degree-granting, predominately White institutions. As a result of the limited number of Latino executives working within PWIs, it was a challenge to identify participants for this study. The lack of an adequate database on Latinos working within higher education presented a
unique challenge. The work schedules for many of the potential candidates made it difficult to find adequate time to talk with them.

Recommendations

The results of this study inform several recommendations; for aspiring Latino/a administrators, for institutions that wish to create more welcoming environments for Latino/a students, faculty, and administrators, and for further research in this area.

Recommendations for Latino Administrators

Latinos looking to obtain an executive leadership position within a PWI will need to find mentors who can help them navigate the challenges they could potentially encounter along their career paths. Mentoring should begin in the secondary education system and continue throughout one’s career. Through mentoring, Latinos will have the opportunity to learn from the experiences of their mentors who might have dealt with a similar experience. While it would be favorable to have a mentor of the same ethnic background, a mentor does not need to be from the same background.

Those Latinos working within PWIs need to be aware of their environment and how their identities might be perceived by those within the university. As Latino leaders, they should first gain a greater understanding of the culture of the university before rushing to make any substantial changes. Failing to assess the culture of an institution before making organizational changes could have devastating consequences on one’s career trajectory.

Developing skills in cross-cultural competency could serve Latino executives well as they navigate the political landscape of their institutions. Latinos must learn how to
adapt to their environments if they are to be successful in their roles. Failing to adequately adapt could have negative consequences on their career paths. Gaining a further understanding of cross-cultural competency through professional development workshops could enhance the likelihood of success in their roles.

Cultivating optimism and maintaining a belief that they will persevere given any obstacle will enable Latino executives to deal with difficult decisions. They must understand that their White colleagues were able to adapt and there should be no reason they could not do the same. It will be important for them to refrain from any self-doubt regarding their skills or capabilities of leading within an executive role.

Latinos must be willing to establish a track record as a problem solver. Establishing a successful track record will show others that they are willing to put in the work. Part of establishing a record of accomplishment entails volunteering to serve on university wide committees or participate in service opportunities. It is through volunteering and serving on committees that they can demonstrate their leadership skills to others. Developing a reputation for being strong in one’s academic field (i.e., in one’s scholarly work and research) at a national level is another part of establishing a successful track record.

Participating in professional organizations is one of the best ways Latino administrators can meet other seasoned Latino leaders and to learn how to deal with challenging aspects of their positions. Latinos need to also participate in leadership development programs like those at Harvard and other universities to gain the skills needed to be successful. By participating in professional development programs allows for meeting people and developing professional networks.
Recommendations for Institutions Looking to Recruit and Retain Latino Administrators

Institutions interested in retaining should consider establishing mentoring programs for faculty considering administrative positions. They should consider creating positions that are attractive to Latinos, showing an emphasis on institutional diversity as a value. The executive leadership within an institution should embrace the differences in perspectives within the institution, sending a message that what makes administrators unique is their differences.

The institution should consider providing workshops and training on how to navigate the challenges of being a young professional in higher education. Institutions should hire consultants to examine some of the blind spots regarding minority groups within their communities. Faculty and administrators should be encouraged to develop relationships with others at peer institutions so they can expand the scope of their networks. Institutions should be willing to examine the marketing aspects of their institutions and consider what they say about the university.

Recommendations for Additional Research

There is clearly a need to examine the differences in experiences between Latina and Latino executives in higher education. How do Latinas’ experiences differ from those of Latino males? Both Consuelo and Sylvia explicitly pointed out that they believe Latino males have an easier time in leadership positions. Digging deeper into why this might be true will help to identify additional ways in which institutions can be welcoming to all who wish to lead.

There is also a need to examine the leadership experiences of Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and other Latinos. Are there differences in their
leadership styles? Are Mexican Americans more successful in western and southern states? Are Puerto Ricans more successful in eastern states? The cultural experiences among Hispanics are different; do those experiences and connections lend great potential success to one group of Hispanics over others in regions that have populations reflecting their racial/ethnic identities?

There is also a need to study whether Latinos are impeding the progress of other Latinos within their institutions. Are there instances in which Latinos appear to be serving as gatekeepers of power? Given the limited access to contact information for Latino/a executives in higher education many future studies will need to utilize snowball sampling due to the lack of access to the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education email list or database.

Conclusion

This study adds to the limited literature on Latinos executives in higher education. The experiences of Latinos within this study are similar to other minorities working within community college and non-doctoral grant institutions. The participants in this study provided needed insight on how they have managed to gain access to PWIs. The participants talked about the importance of adapting to the environment and the importance of being cross-culturally competent in their roles.

While some of the participants have experienced some challenges, many of them have maintained a positive outlook. The participants found it particularly difficult to recall any obstacles they may have encountered. The participants in this study display astonishing acts of resiliency. The participants also actively advocated for diversifying
the academy. They mentioned how they are working to address some of the disparities within their universities.

Those looking to lead in executive roles will need to learn how to navigate the political landscape. They will need to seek out training programs and mentoring at every level to be successful. It is evident through this research that, given the opportunity, Latinos can be just as successful in higher education roles as their White counterparts.

While the participants mentioned that their ethnicity does impact their decision-making, they have a commitment to helping all students within their institutions. The participants also mentioned how their universities have created a supportive environment and how that has made all the difference in retaining them. Lastly, each participant talked about the importance of gaining a positive reputation by serving on committees. Those looking to gain access to leadership roles must be willing to do the work on these committees and, once their quality of work is seen, it will lead to further opportunities.

The participants in this study are beacons of hope who have shown that Latino/a can be successful at PWIs. Their stories provide a roadmap for others looking to gain access to some of the most prestigious positions in higher education. These participants do not see themselves as token minorities nor do they suffer from an imposter syndrome. They are accomplished scholars that are serving as change agents within their institutions. The participants are resilient and very confident in the work in which they are engaged.

I felt that, while many of the participants have achieved a high level of success, there was very little discussion on how to build a network of support beyond the scope of their own institutions. They all continue to operate within their silos. It is my belief that if
these individuals were able to work together they could initiate a national movement to address many of the disparities within the secondary and post-secondary educational systems for Latinos.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Cover Letter/Email to Solicit Participation
Dear_____,

I need your assistance to identify Hispanic/Latinos serving within executive leadership positions at Predominately White and doctoral degree granting institutions. My study seeks to increase our understanding of the experiences of Hispanic/Latinos working at Predominately White Institutions. I am a doctoral candidate at Western Michigan University studying Educational Leadership. I am conducting research for my dissertation. The title of my study is “The Experience of Latina/o Executives in Higher Education.” This study will not only be useful for Latina/o administrators but may be used as a tool to increase the representation of Latinas/os within Predominantly White Institutions.

The umbrella terms used throughout the literature, and therefore this study, are Latina/o or Hispanic. As a doctoral student who identifies as Mexican American and Puerto Rican (Mexi-Rican), I recognize that individuals may not relate to either of these terms, and may in fact, find them offensive. I express my sincere apology if the usage of these terms are offensive in any way. My challenge is to find appropriate participants for my dissertation research. I hope that you will consider participating in this study, and I promise that I will handle issues of race/ethnicity with utmost sensitivity.

If you are interested in participating in my study please call me at (517) 281-9179 (mobile), or by email at leonard.a.savala@wmich.edu or savalale@msu.edu. If you happen to know of someone that is currently or within the last year held an executive leadership role within a Predominately White Institution please either forward them this email or I ask if you could provide me their contact information. For the purpose of this study an executive leadership position consists of each of following:

- President
- Chancellor
- Chief of Staff
- Executive Vice President
- Chief Academic Officer (CAO)/ Provost
- Central Senior Academic Affairs Officer
- Dean of Academic College
- Senior Administrative Officer
- Senior External Affairs Officer
- Chief Enrollment Management Officer
- Any Administrator with Vice President in their title.

Must have a Ph.D. or Ed.D. or other terminal degree
I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Leonard A. Savala III
Doctoral Student
Educational Leadership Program, Department of Educational Leadership, Research and Technology
College of Education and Human Development
Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI.
Appendix B

Introductory Letter/Consent Form
Western Michigan University
Education Leadership, Research, and Technology

Principal Investigator: Dr. Andrea L. Beach,
Student Investigator: Mr. Leonard A. Savala III

Title of Study: The Experiences of Latina/o Executives in Higher Education

You are invited to participate in a research project titled “The Experiences of Latina/o Executives in Higher Education.” This project will serve as Leonard A. Savala III’s doctoral dissertation for the requirements of doctor of philosophy in educational leadership. This consent document will explain the purpose of this research project and will go over all of the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating in this research project. Please read this consent form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need more clarification.

What are we trying to find out in this study?
The purpose of the study is to collect information on the experiences of Latina/o executives in higher education serving within Predominately White Institutions (PWI). The information gathered may assist aspiring Hispanics/Latinos who seek to lead within PWIs. This study may be a useful tool for Hispanic/Latino administrators looking to increase the representation of Latinos within Predominantly White Institutions.

Who can participate in this study?
This study seeks to identify executives who are currently holding a position or have held a position within the last year. The individual must have an earned Doctorate of Philosophy or Doctorate of Education or other terminal degree. For the purpose of this study an executive leadership position is defined as President, Chancellor, Chief of Staff, Executive Vice President, Chief Academic Officer (CAO)/Provost, Central Senior Academic Affairs Officer, Dean of Academic College, Senior Administrative Officer, Senior External Affairs Officer, Chief Enrollment Management Officer or Any Administrator with Vice President in their title.

Where will the study take place?
This study will take place either via telephone, Skype or in person at a commonly agreed upon time and location.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?
The time commitment for this study will entail participating in two interviews lasting between 60-90 minutes.
What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?
The principal method of research will be in-depth interviews. If you decide to participate you will be invited to complete a participant questionnaire, provide a copy of your curriculum vitae and participate in two interviews lasting between 60-90 minutes either via telephone, Skype or in person at a commonly agreed upon time and location. The participant questionnaire and vitae will be used to learn more about your past employment history as it relates how you have arrived at your current position.

It is important to mention that notes will be taken and the interviews will be audio taped. The audio tapes will be used to increase the accuracy of the transcriptions. At any point during the interview you may ask the interviewer to turn off the audio recording equipment. After the tapes have been transcribed or notes have been paraphrased, they will be destroyed. You will be given a copy of the interview transcripts prior to the second interview and during that time you may edit or modify any portion.

What information is being measured during this study?
The data analysis process for this study will entail transcribing the tapes of each interview. Once in transcript form, each interview will be categorized based on the respondent comments, perspectives, and stories. Utilizing the phenomenological process, I will identify themes and patterns within the data.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risk be minimized?
There are potential risks associated with participation in the study. The potential risks to you have been taken into consideration and I have designed this study to minimize the risks to you if you decide to participate. To ensure confidentiality a pseudonym will be used to reference each participant in this study. In addition, the name of the institution and geographic location will not be mentioned in this study. Also, any reference to a participant’s age, gender and current position title will not be mentioned in the study. Once a participant agrees to participate in the study the interviews will be conducted in person at the participant’s institution or at a commonly agreed upon time and location based on their preference and/or via phone or Skype (video) interviews. There may be psychological risk associated with this study. These questions could potentially invoke a feeling of emotional distress. You may recount a troubling experience or challenge in your professional career which may lead you to feel guilty or fearful. If during the review of the questions you mention any hesitation in answering a question that questions will be removed.
What are the benefits of participating in this study?
The expected benefits associated with your participation are: 1) The information gained from the participants may serve useful to Latinos who aspire to lead within administrative roles at PWIs; 2) The information gathered may also benefit institutions of higher education looking to recruit and retain Latino administrators.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?
The only cost associated would be your time spent during both interviews.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?
There is no compensation provided for participating in this study.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?
As an added precaution to safeguard the data that is collected via audio tapes the transcriptionist will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement. Interview materials and tape recordings will be stored in a safe area under lock and key at Western Michigan University and destroyed upon the completion of the study. The principal project investigator, student investigator and transcriptionist are the only individuals who will have access to information collected.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?
You can choose to stop participating in the study at anytime for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if you choose to withdraw from this study. The investigator can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your consent.

The umbrella terms used throughout the literature, and therefore this study, are Latina/o or Hispanic. As a doctoral student who identifies as Mexican American and Puerto Rican (Mexi-Rican), I recognize that individuals may not relate to either of these terms, and may in fact, find them offensive. I express my sincere apology if the usage of these terms are offensive in any way. My challenge is to find appropriate participants for my dissertation research. I hope that you will consider participating in this study, and as an administrator in higher education diversity for nine years I assure you that I will handle issues of race/ethnicity with utmost sensitivity.

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you may contact the primary researcher, Leonard A. Savala III, at 517-281-9179, or by email at leonard.a.savala@wmich.edu. You may also contact Dr. Andrea Beach, dissertation supervisor, at 269-387-0731 or andrea.beach@wmich.edu. You may also contact the
chair of WMU’s Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the course of the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this if the stamped date is older than one year.

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

Please Print Your Name

Participant’s signature Date
Appendix C

Interviewee Cover Letter
Dear Participant:

I would like to thank you for taking the time to discuss the importance of my research during our (phone call or via email) on ________. I also would like to thank you for your interest in learning more about my dissertation research study on the experiences of Hispanic/Latinos serving within Predominately White Institutions. Through phenomenological interviews, I seek to shed light on the experiences of Hispanic/Latinos serving in leadership positions within Predominately White, four-year institutions. I believe that my study is unique given the limited research on Hispanic/Latinos serving within higher education.

The anticipated duration of the two interviews is approximately 60 to 90 minutes. A copy of the participant questionnaire, interview protocol and the consent form are enclosed. I ask that you please review the consent form and if you agree to participate, sign and return the document. A self addressed envelope and stamp have been provided. I also ask that you email a copy of your curriculum vitae to my email address listed below.

The umbrella terms used throughout the literature, and therefore this study, are Latina/o or Hispanic. As a doctoral student who identifies as Mexican American and Puerto Rican (Mexi-Rican), I recognize that individuals may not relate to either of these terms, and may in fact, find them offensive. I express my sincere apology if the usage of these terms are offensive in any way. My challenge is to find appropriate participants for my dissertation research. I hope that you will consider participating in this study, and I promise that I will handle issues of race/ethnicity with utmost sensitivity.

If at any point you have questions, comments, or concerns please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at (517) 353-1835 ext. 107 (office), (517) 281-9179 (mobile), or by email at leonard.a.savala@wmich.edu.

Sincerely,

Leonard A. Savala III
Doctoral Student
Educational Leadership Program, Department of Educational Leadership, Research and Technology
College of Education and Human Development
Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI.
Appendix D

Interview Confirmation Email
Dear Participant:

This email serves as a confirmation of our interview appointments which are scheduled for:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Meeting</th>
<th>(Back up to First Meeting)</th>
<th>Second Meeting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
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<td>Time:</td>
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<td>Time:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>Location:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The anticipated duration of each interview is approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

If at any point you have questions, comments, or concerns please feel free to contact me. I can be reached at (517) 353-1835 ext. 107 (office), (517) 281-9179 (mobile), or by email at leonard.a.savala@wmich.edu.

Sincerely,

Leonard A. Savala III
Doctoral Student
Educational Leadership Program, Department of Educational Leadership, Research and Technology
College of Education and Human Development
Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI
Appendix E

Interview Protocol
Questions that the participants will be asked include:

Questions

1. How would you describe your experience leading within a PWI as a Latina/o administrator?
   - Please describe how this institution is different from others in which you have worked?
   - Are there differences in the way that you lead at this institutions than others in which have worked? Is so, can you provide an example?
   - What do you attribute to the limited number of Latinos working within administration a PWI’s?
   - Do you know of other administrative positions at your institution in which Latino holds a position? What do you attribute to the absences or presences of Latino administrators in leadership positions?

2. As a Latino administrator within this institution were you exposed to any opportunities, obstacles, challenges, or hindrances?
   - Have you experienced and any opportunities obstacles, challenges, or hindrances at other institutions in which you work?
   - Were there any specific differences you can point between this institution and others?

3. Has your ethnicity ever impacted the decisions you make at this institutions?
   - Have you encountered any barriers in your career; do you think those barriers were related to your ethnicity? If so, please explain.
   - There are very few Latino administrators who are employed within Predominately White Institutions. What would you say are the challenges or constraints that Latinos face who aspire to lead in an institution like the one you are currently employed by?
   - What does it mean to you to be a Latino administrator in higher education?
4. What strategies do you believe could be beneficial to institutions looking to recruit and retain Latinos administrators within PWIs?

5. Are there any other questions that you feel I should have asked to help me fully understand your experiences as a Latino administrator within a PWI?

6. Any final thoughts as we end this interview?
Appendix F

Interview Participant Questionnaire
### Participant Contact Information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME (First, Last)</th>
<th>Telephone: (   )</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office Address:</td>
<td>Email Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City:</td>
<td>State:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zip Code:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (   )</td>
<td>Skype username:</td>
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</table>

### Professional Information:

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Institution Currently Employed:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location of Institution (City, State):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Years in Current Position:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Years employed within Higher Education:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Previous Position held:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Educational Background:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Degree Attained:</th>
<th>Bachelor’s [ ] Master’s [ ] Doctorate [ ]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discipline:</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

### Demographics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender: Female [ ] Male [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were you Born in the United States?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes [ ] No [ ] If no, indicate what country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were your parents born in the United States?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, both parents: [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, only one parent: [ ] Please specify country of other parent:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, (Please specify country of birth for each parent): [ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you a U.S. Citizen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes [ ] No [ ]</td>
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</table>

### Ethnic Background:

In regard to your ethnicity, do you consider yourself:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hispanic [ ] Latina/o [ ] Chicana/o [ ] Other Please specify [ ]</th>
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<td>[ ]</td>
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</table>
Appendix G

Request for Corroboration and Additional Comments
Dear _____:

It was a delight meeting with you to discuss your experiences in higher education. I truly appreciate you taking the time out of your busy schedule.

As stated at the closing of the interview I have enclosed a copy of my notes from the interview for your review. I would like to assure you that I was careful to protect your identity. I ask that you read over the notes and, at your earliest convenience, please return them to me. A self addressed envelope and stamp have been provided to you.

I look forward to hearing from you in the days ahead. Again, thanks for your time.

Sincerely,

Leonard A. Savala III
Doctoral Candidate
Educational Leadership Program, Department of Educational Leadership, Research and Technology
College of Education and Human Development
Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI.
Appendix H

Interview #1 Guide
A. *Initiating the interview:*

1. I hope this will be more of a conversation than an interview.
2. The details of your experiences are critical to this study.
3. Please remember that all interviews will be kept confidential.
4. I would like to remind you that this interview will be audio taped unless you decline.

B. *Before we begin:*

1. Do you have questions regarding this study?
2. Are there any details of the study that are unclear to you?

C. *Interview Begins:*

I would like to turn on the tape recorder now is that ok? This is Leonard Savala. The time is ________, the date is ________. This is interview number _______ with participant number _______. As we begin I would like to ask if you have read and signed the consent form.

Please take as much time that is needed to reflect on each question and respond. Begin Interview questions

D. *Conclude Interview:*

This concludes our first interview. Are there any comments or questions at this time before we conclude?

E. *After The Interview:*

After approval of transcription I may need to contact you to follow up and seek clarification or added information.

Again, thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.
Appendix I

Interview #2 Guide
A. *Initiating the interview:*
   1. Again, I would like to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today.
   2. I would like to remind you that all information shared during this interview will be kept confidential.
   3. I would like to remind you that this interview will be audio taped unless you decline.

B. *Before we begin:*
   1. Do you have questions regarding this study?
   2. Are there any details of the study that are unclear to you?

C. *Interview Begins:*
   I would like to turn on the tape recorder now is that ok? This is Leonard Savala. The time is ______________, the date is __________. This is interview number _______ with participant number _______.

   Ask any remaining interview questions that were not covered during the first interview. Ask for any sort of clarification on any of the previous interview questions.

D. *Conclude Interview:*

   This concludes our first interview. Are there any comments or questions at this time before we conclude?

E. *After The Interview:*

   Again, thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.
Appendix J

Transcriptionist Confidentiality Agreement
As the transcriptionist __________________, I will maintain full confidentiality with regards to any materials (audiotapes and documentation) received regarding this project.

As the transcriptionist I agree:

- I will hold in strictest confidence the identification of any participant who may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio-taped interviews, or in any associated documents;

- I will not make copies of any audiotapes or computerized files of the transcribed interview texts;

- I will store all study-related audiotapes and materials in a safe, secure location as long as they are in my possession;

- I will return all audiotapes and study-related documents to the researcher in a complete and timely manner.

- I will delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any backup devices.

As the transcriptionist I am aware that I can be held legally liable for any breach of this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audiotapes and/or files to which I will have access.

Transcriber’s name (printed): __________________________

Transcriber’s signature: ___________________________ Date _______________________
Appendix K

Email to Solicit Participation (Organizational Letter)
To whom it may concern:

I am conducting a research study on Hispanic/Latinos serving within executive leadership positions at Predominately White doctoral degree granting institutions and I am seeking help to increase our understanding of the experiences of Hispanic/Latinos working at Predominately White Institutions. I am a doctoral candidate at Western Michigan University studying Educational Leadership. I am conducting research for my dissertation. The title of my study is “The Experience of Latina/o Executives in Higher Education.” This study may be useful for Latina/o administrators looking to increase the representation of Latinas/os within Predominantly White Institutions.

I am contacting __(Organizational Name)__ to ask if your organization would be willing to share information on your membership directory. It is my understanding that your organization maintains a directory of Hispanic/Latinos working in higher education. I am trying to identify individuals who may be interested in learning more about my study. If you are unable to share your directory information I would like to know if you would be willing to forward my cover letter as I seek to find individuals interested in learning more about my study.

If you are interested in learning more about the study please contact me by (517) 281-9179 (mobile), or by email at leonard.a.savala@wmich.edu or savalale@msu.edu.

I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Leonard A. Savala III  
Doctoral Student  
Educational Leadership Program, Department of Educational Leadership, Research and Technology  
College of Education and Human Development  
Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI.
Appendix L

HSIRB Approval Letter
Date: November 6, 2013

To: Andrea Beach, Principal Investigator
Leonard Savala, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 13-11-06

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled “Examining the Lived Experiences of Latina/o Executives in Higher Education” has been approved under the exempt category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may only be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project (e.g., you must request a post approval change to enroll subjects beyond the number stated in your application under “Number of subjects you want to complete the study”). Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation. In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

Reapproval of the project is required if it extends beyond the termination date stated below.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: November 6, 2014