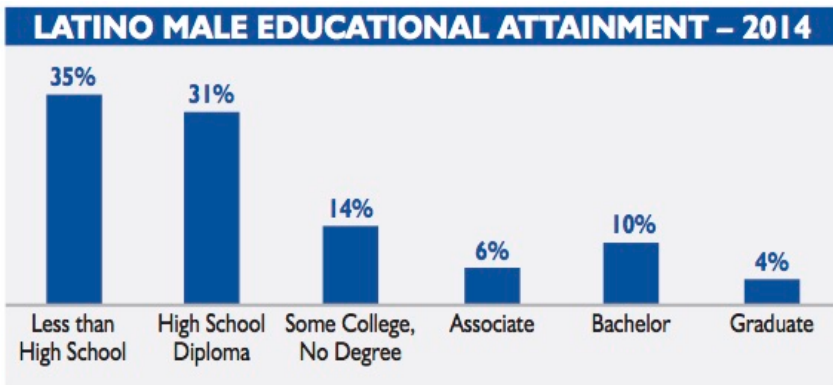


Latino Males: Mentoring for the Future

Excelencia in Education is dedicated to bringing attention to practices that work for Latino students through *Examples of Excelencia*; the only national effort to recognize evidence based-practices serving Latino students in higher education. Examples of *Excelencia*'s nomination and profile submission process builds our *Growing What Works database* – a national database that shares evidence-based programs that serve Latino students. We aim to influence policy and practice by sharing models and trends of what works for Latinos.

To bring attention to practices focused on Latino males, *Excelencia* has recognized Latino male programs through Examples of *Excelencia*, released fact sheets on the state of Latino males in higher education, and hosted webinars with leaders concerned with improving the success of Latino males.

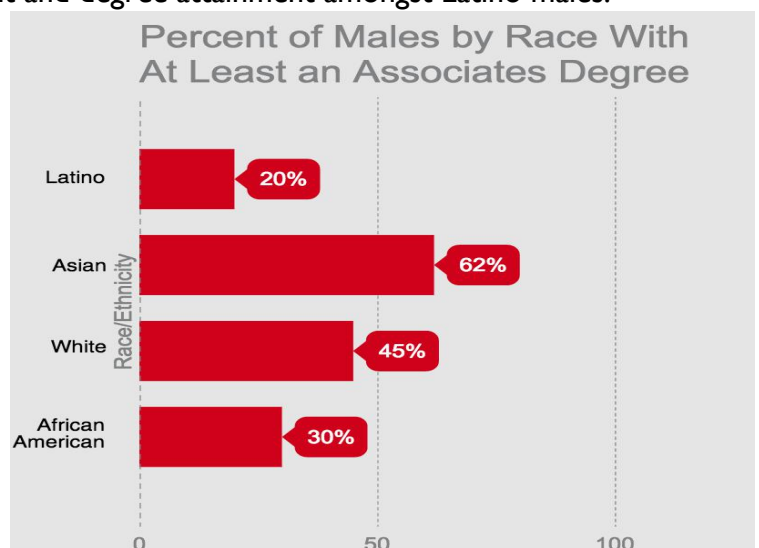


Why focus on gender?

To meet *Excelencia*'s mission of accelerating the success of Latino students it is imperative that we meet our national goals of educating young Latino males. This is an underserved and underrepresented population that needs support in degree attainment. When the Obama administration launched My Brothers Keeper, and other programs focused specifically on minority males began to

become more prominent, there was a national push to support young men of color. This creates an opportunity to address the issues of low enrollment and degree attainment amongst Latino males.

Although strides have been made in the past 10 years and Latino male college enrollment has increased by 75%, they still lag behind their peers in both enrollment and completion. *Excelencia*'s analysis shows males made up 43% of the total undergraduate Latino population and only 38% of the Latino graduate student population. Latino males also earned fewer degrees than their female counterparts. When compared to males of another race, 20% of Latino males had earned an associate degree or higher, compared to Asians (62%), Whites (45%), and African Americans (30%).¹



The Latino male workforce

Excelencia released a fact sheet in 2016 that found that Latino males represented a higher percentage of college-age students, but overall less of them were enrolled in college. Further, in 2014, 66% of Latino male adults (25 and older) had earned a high school diploma or less as their highest degree attainment. Latino men are more likely to participate in the labor force than men of other race/ethnicities.² However, they are also more likely to have low-skilled and lower paying jobs due to lower levels of degree attainment. According to the Bureau of Labor statistics, Latino males are overrepresented in construction occupations, and across all industry fields there is a wage disparity; Latino and African American men are more likely to earn fewer wages than Asian and White men that work in the same occupation. The median total income for men ages 16 and older of all race/ethnicities is \$895 weekly. The median weekly earnings for Latino men 16 and older are only \$631, the lowest of all race/ethnic groups.³ In order to strengthen the labor market, we must strengthen the skills of those in it, including Latino males. While individuals can find success without high levels of degree attainment, in order for Latino males to hold higher professional positions, it is imperative that their academic credentials match those of their peers.

Practices that increase degree attainment

Many academic support programs target specific student populations based on shared social, financial, and educational experiences. Programs focused on gender take this a step further to provide students with culturally and gender responsive services and support through college completion. Programs that help close the Latino male achievement gap, while providing a number of services unique to their students, share common practices that are helpful in increasing Latino male student success. The most common practice includes mentoring supplemented by parental engagement and leadership training.

Less than 2 percent of university faculty across the country are Latino males.⁴ When Latino males access higher education, they are more likely to be the only Latino males in their classrooms because of the lower level of college access when compared to their peers. While mentors can come from all backgrounds, and the differences between mentors and mentees does not preclude them from developing a strong relationship; there is something to be said when your mentor can look like you and share similar experiences with you. Mentorship for all students is impactful. There is countless anecdotal evidence showing how much of an impact a mentor has had on anyone's life. In academia mentors can be faculty, advisors, counselors, neighbors, coaches, peers, etc. Many of the programs we highlight make it a point to use mentorship as a part of their practices. By pairing students with someone who has been in their shoes, it allows them to seek guidance and advice from a trusted source who "has been there." The University of Texas at Austin's Project MALES (Mentoring to achieve Latino Educational Success) has created an intergenerational mentoring model that address three key groups: (1) Male professionals as role models who mentor (2) current undergraduate students, that mentor (3) high school students. This creates a pipeline of near peer mentorship where students that are mentored can grow to become mentors for incoming students. Their model promotes a college going culture from high school through college completion and encourages post-graduate success.

Latinos are increasing their college access, and many are the first in their families to attend and graduate from college. However, as shown, Latino males have fallen behind the accelerated college access of Latinas and efforts to target males specifically are intended to ensure these students also have educational opportunity for success. In response to this and to increase the involvement of families, many programs invite parents to participate as key members in their student's education. One unique practice, for example, is that of Encuentros Leadership, a non-profit in Vista, California. To increase the role fathers play in their son's education, they host "Platicas: Hombre a Hombre" where they encourage father-son communication and foster a space for them to grow their own relationships.

The ultimate goal for these programs is to keep their students engaged in education so that they can persist for their families, their peers/mentors/mentees, and most importantly themselves. To make an impact on their

communities and foster strong leaders many programs incorporate leadership trainings and volunteerism. Sam Houston State University's ELITE (Establishing Leadership In and Through Education) pushes Latino males students to take leadership roles in both the program and their institution by promoting civic engagement on campus. To connect their students with other leaders the program hosts a speaker series to increase their networking skills. Maricopa Community College's MEN (Male Empowerment Network) encourages their various chapters to host events focused on leadership training. Their events include participation in the AACCC (American Association of Community Colleges) Men of Color Student Leadership Institute, the MEN Leadership conference, and various community service projects.

Institutions face a challenge when serving male students if these students are reluctant to ask for help. By having a visible resource on campus, outreaching to local high schools, and recruiting young men of color, programs serving Latino male students become a safe space for them to seek help and guidance. In addition to academic services, practices such as mentoring, parent engagement, and leadership training can help programs retain Latino male students through college completion.

Some examples of programs focused on Latino male success in higher education

Encuentros Leadership College Preparatory Academy (Vista, CA)

The Academy was designed to increase access, improve retention, and increase baccalaureate completion for Latino males. The Leadership Academy's culturally-relevant curriculum teaches core competencies leading to improved self-esteem, self-worth, and personal confidence. For over nine years the program has served 474 students. 100% of their students graduate high school, with 97% of students enrolling in college after high school graduation. Between 2006 and 2016 204 students have earned a baccalaureate degree and 75% have advanced into a master's degree field of study.

Sam Houston Establishing Leadership In and Through Education (SH ELITE) – Sam Houston University (Huntsville, TX)

By pairing males with peer mentors and providing study skill instruction, peer group meetings, and speaker sessions, among other things, this program encourages students to take leadership roles on campus and supports them through college completion. Originally piloted as a freshman only program, it has grown to serve all minority males at the institution. Latino SH ELITE members are graduating at a 3.67 times higher than other minority male first-time freshmen students not in the program. ELITE members had a statistically significant higher GPA (3.02) than both a control group (2.42) as well as all other minority male students not in their program (2.39).

Project MALES (Mentoring to Achieve Latino Educational Success) – The University of Texas at Austin (TX)

Their mission is to develop undergraduate student mentors who are engaged and civic-minded. They bring together Latino professionals and graduate students, current UT undergraduate student mentors, and younger male students within Austin-area schools to develop strong social networks. The program includes a service-learning course that enhances college student engagement and academic achievement by focusing on academic and civic leadership, extant literature on males of color, and mentoring promising practices. The program has found success and continues to grow, from 33 mentors in 2014-15 to 48 mentors in 2015-16. They have gone from one high school in 2011 to reaching three local high schools (adding another in the fall 2016), and four middle schools in four years.

Male Empowerment Network (MEN) – Maricopa Community College (AZ)

With various chapters at different Maricopa County Community College campuses the MEN program aims to increase the retention and graduation rates of minority male students. Each campus has designated staff members to guide their chapters and each chapter provides students with academic guidance and enrichment, personal development experiences, activities aimed at cultural exposure and professional networking opportunities. For their 2015-16 cohort the fall to spring retention rate for students in the program was 86%. The average term GPA is 2.81 and college level course success rate is 77%.

For more information on other programs accelerating Latino student success explore our Growing What Works database: www.EdExcelencia.org/Growing-What-Works

Compiled by Andres Quintanilla, Program Manager, Examples of *Excelencia*

¹ *Excelencia* in Education. (2016). *Latino Males in Higher Education* Washington, D.C.:

² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2016 report on Labor Force Characteristics by Race and Ethnicity, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/race-and-ethnicity/2015/home.htm>

³ U.S. ³Bureau of Labor Statistics 2015 report on Labor Force Characteristics by Race and Ethnicity, <https://www.bls.gov/opub/reports/race-and-ethnicity/2015/home.htm>

⁴ U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *The Condition of Education 2016* (NCES 2016-144), *Characteristics of Postsecondary Faculty*.

Excelencia in Education accelerates Latino student success in higher education by promoting Latino student achievement, conducting analysis to inform educational policies, and advancing institutional practices while collaborating with those committed and ready to meet the mission. Launched in 2004 in the nation's capital, *Excelencia* is building a network of results-oriented educators and policymakers to address the U.S. economy's need for a highly educated workforce and engaged civic leadership. For more information, visit: www.EdExcelencia.org.

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