IMPACT: Empowering Latino Undergraduate Students Through Service Learning and Mentoring

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Learning Outcomes

This session will provide participants with:

- An understanding of how IMPACT was developed, and the impact it has on the undergraduate mentors that take the course.
- An understanding of potential topics relevant to mentoring as it pertains to working with men of color across the K-12 pipeline.
- An understanding of how Project MALES is creating a supportive and responsive environment for undergraduate mentors on campus and the youth Project MALES serves through the mentoring program.
- An understanding of how partnerships with UT-Austin and the local community continue to reaffirm important cultural and academic values Project MALES hopes will translate into success in the classroom and beyond for the students within Project MALES.
What is Project MALES?

● Launched in the fall 2010, Project MALES is a multifaceted research and mentoring initiative that examines the gender gap in education, specifically for Latino males.

● Project MALES encompasses three interrelated initiatives:
  ○ An ongoing research project
  ○ A mentoring program
  ○ A statewide P–16 Consortium

● Project MALES embodies praxis by fusing these initiatives through mentoring, research, collective impact, and dissemination to research and practitioner communities.

● Undergraduates who attend UT-Austin have the opportunity to become mentors for the program, and are expected to commit to a full academic year of mentoring as well as our serving learning course, IMPACT, which is a requirement for all undergraduate mentors.
What is Project MALES?

- **Research Agenda**
- **Project MALES Student Mentoring Program**
- **Project MALES Student Council (DOS)**
- **Texas Education Consortium for Male Students of Color**

**Latino Male Educational Success (K-16)**
- Student Work-Study (Fall 2013)
- **Student Mentors**
- Formed Fall 2012
- Launched Summer 2013
- 24 Institutional Members (K-16)
Why Focus on Males of Color? Understanding the Environmental Demand

Issue
Many are unaware of the depth of the gender gap; It’s a SILENT CRISIS.

College Enrollment
Despite growth in enrollment, Latino male representation is lower than females. In Fall 2014, Latino males represented 43% of Latino undergrads and females represented 57% (1.26 million v. 1.7 million).

Degree Attainment
Two-thirds of Latino male adults have only a high school education or less. In 2014, 31% had earned a high school diploma as their highest educational attainment while 20% had earned an associate's degree or higher (including a bachelors/graduate degree).
Why Focus on Males of Color? Understanding the Environmental Demand

Excelencia in Education. (April 2016). Latino male educational attainment - 2014 [graph].
Overview of Service Learning

- Service learning was first practiced, defined, & described in higher education in the 1960’s/1970’s as a community-based approach to teaching & learning (Stanton & Erasmus, 2013).

- The National Service Learning Clearinghouse defines service learning as a “teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities” (Greenwood, 2015).

- Service learning can be distinguished from other experiential programs by their goals of addressing social needs and promoting social change, and increasing student learning and development (Butin 2005; Moore 2010).
Developing Instructing Males through Peer Advising Tracks (IMPACT)

- Started in fall of 2014
- Offered through the College of Liberal Arts
- Collaboration with Project MALES.
- Literature focused on the challenges young males of color face within the K-20 education pipeline
  - Focus on K-12 educational in the fall and Higher Education experience in the Spring
Teaching Philosophy of IMPACT

- Taking our lived experiences as students of color and as products of the current educational system, our understanding of multicultural education is grounded in ideas based on culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and the culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2002) frameworks.

- Our teaching philosophies and curriculum have been influenced by two main ideas; first, we work from the perspective that all of our students, regardless of their age, racial/ethnic background, gender, socio-economic-status, ability, and sexual identity or orientation bring their own sets of skills and knowledge’s (Yosso, 2005), which they have developed through their own lived experiences inside and outside of educational settings.

- Second, through our teaching we demonstrate and practice authentic forms of caring (Valenzuela, 1999), emphasizing relations of reciprocity between teachers and students.
Some of the topics of discussion include:

**FALL**
- school-to-prison pipeline
- zero tolerance policies
- restorative justice
- hyper-criminalization of young males of color.

**SPRING**
- Latino Students in the Community College Sector
- Undocumented Latino Students in Higher Education
- Project MALES Research Affiliates: Masculinity, Latino Enrollment at HBCUs, Coping with Social and Academic Obstacles

Other topics include: Latino families and education, the myth of the culture of poverty, the Latino Schooling conditions.

IMPACT gives undergraduates the opportunity to practice what they learn in the classroom and out in the field through mentoring, which is the service learning activity.
Example of In Class Agenda

- Happy News/Venting Session
- Key Points About the Reading
- Discussion
- Housekeeping Items
### Examples of Course Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Post</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Reflection Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</tbody>
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- Huerta (2015) describes how the different systems (microsystem, mesosystem, and macro system) shape Latino males views of opportunities and amplifies how these students interact with each system structure pathways into gangs, the military, or college. Using your own lived experiences as students and mentors provide one example for each system, were you describe how you can support your mentee(s) to navigate and negotiate these environments by focusing on the idea of going to college.

- Each group will be responsible for providing information regarding each of the themes found in Ceballo’s work, but also tying it back to personal experience:
  - Parental Emphasis on the Importance of Education
  - Parental Support of Children’s Autonomy
  - Nonverbal Support for Educational Endeavors
How IMPACT Affects our Latino Undergraduate Students’ Educational Outcomes and Empowers Them

1) The partnership between IMPACT and Project MALES has Helped our Latino Undergraduates Integrate to Campus

2) IMPACT has Helped Motivate our Latino Undergraduates to Wanting to Complete Their Degree in Order to Give Back.

3) IMPACT has Supported the Development of Authentic Forms of Caring that Transcend the Boundaries of the Classroom and Translate into Extended Forms of Mentoring.

4) IMPACT has Increased our Latino Undergraduate’s Community Cultural Wealth by Adding to their Aspirational, Social, and Navigational Capitals.

5) IMPACT has Allowed our Latino Undergraduates to Become More Involved on Campus.
Outcome #1: Campus Integration

“Being involved in project MALES has created a comfortable, welcoming Hispanic community and indirectly improved my leadership qualities. Within this community, I witness older Hispanic men pursuing graduate education provides an indirect membership that I did not sign up for. I am confident that I will pursue higher education and create a legacy for myself at UT. However, I have also realized the disconnection I have with the rest of the student body, specifically non-minorities this has shaped my future endeavors to grow myself culturally by joining a non-latino organization. I have found my Hispanic community at UT, now onto my overall community.”- Jose

“My work here is definitely a defining experience I've had here at UT”- Sam

“Being part of Project MALES has impacted my experience here at UT Austin by showing me that although we are a minority, we still have a say and can do so much. We are an important aspect and factor at this college and we can definitely make a difference. We must make ourselves be heard and prove to others that minorities are intelligent”- Antonio
Outcome #2 - Complete Degree in Order to Give Back

“ My association with Project MALES has motivated me to become a better mentor and educator that strives to eliminate the inequities produced by social and economic factors within education. Project MALES has made me understand WHY everybody deserves a chance to have the best experience within education possible, and that opportunity and access in relation to education are two very contrasting concepts.”-Heron

“This course has been a nice refresher in my college career. After semesters of purely analytical classes, the issues we discuss here actually allow me to understand how I can truly make an impact in the real world. Hence, it encourages me even more to succeed in my field in order to give back to my community”-Esteban
“Through Project MALES I have found a certificate program I am passionate about, the Bridging Discipline Programs in Public Policy. Additionally, in BDP Public policy we decided on concentrations to focus our internship experience and elective classes, and I decided to go into Education Policy, and Immigration & Citizenship Policy. I plan on pursuing this certificate head on by possibly becoming an Archer fellow and interning in D.C., maybe working for the department of Education. Finally, this course has enabled me to think about my future impacts, particular influencing me to pursue a Master’s in Education or a Master’s in Science & Technology Public Policy, in order to protect my community. My ideal dream would be leading and run my own technology education non-profit to fix many of the issues latinos face.” -Jose
Outcome #3: Supported the Development of Authentic Forms of Caring that Transcend Extended Forms Mentoring

“In the end, I do not mentor for myself. While mentoring can be an uplifting experience for my own personal experience. However, mentoring young men of color has helped realize and comprehend more the actions of many men. The most rewarding aspect is being able to guide someone or in a sense, be someone’s role model”-Ilse

“With Project MALES I feel I have found one of my passions, I have noticed that I speak about the issues and articles with great excitement, anger, and fear. My friends have noticed this spark too, indicating how I can never stop talking about a certain topic or issue for the week! .”-Jose
Outcome #4: Increased Undergraduate Community Cultural Wealth

“Beyond purely academic reasons, I feel that Project MALES has made me grow closer to my latino heritage, and I’m increasingly thankful for that. This isn’t to say that I wasn’t before, but it’s made me realize that there’s a lot to be proud of, and that I’m beyond grateful to be where I am now.” -Heron

“In certain aspects, I was raised by a single mother that truly encouraged female empowerment. My mother always implemented in my head to never rely on a man nor to never trust a man. However, because of Project MALES (mentoring and in class), I have been able to understand more the Latino male experience. I have been able to be more compassionate and understanding towards Latino males, instead of being accusing men of their “macho” or “masculine” mentality.” -Ilse

“However, I have also found a new appreciation for my parents, realizing their support for higher education and allowing myself to let no barrier from finances to machismo get in the way of my dream. Even though I have overcome many obstacles as a latino male in higher education, it has also re-lit a new more powerful fire to prove the statistics wrong through my education action and community impact.” -Jose

“I've also learned how to better relate to other people and their experiences through the mentoring program as well as bettering my networking skills through interacting with other professionals Project MALES brings in”- Sam
Outcome #5: Become More Involved on Campus

“As previously stated, Project MALES has given me a very different outlook on the kind of career I want to pursue, which is drastically affecting the kind of roles I'm going to assume over the course of my remaining career as an undergraduate student, and beyond.” - Heron

“As a double major of both, RTF (Radio Television and Film) and MALS (Mexican American and Latino/a Studies), I have realized the strong passion within the social justice realm. The more and more I read about the inequality and unfair treatment towards people of color, has only fueled a devotion to the Latinx community.” - Ilse

“Finally, this course has allowed me to be more focused on my academics in order to not be another negative stat.” - Hector

“I want to branch out an organization I am in to mentor in the Austin community and not just the University Austin community.” - Evin
IMPACT Course Challenges

- Creating a syllabus with meaningful and purposeful readings and activities.
- Creating a curriculum for our mentees.
- Student engagement.
- Time constraints.
The Future of IMPACT

Expansion

- Freshman signature courses (UGS 302) are required courses as part of the university core degree requirements for graduation.

- We look forward to the possibility of expanding our 1-hour course and build towards establishing the service learning course as a full fledged class.
Thank you!

Closing Remarks and Q&A