



Study

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Federal Policy and Latinos in Higher Education

by

**Deborah A. Santiago
Sarita Brown**

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About the Authors

Deborah A. Santiago, Irvine Fellow at the University of Southern California, and Principal, *Excelencia* in Education, has extensive experience in education policy and research as an analyst at the U.S. Department of Education, as Deputy Director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, as Vice President for Data and Policy Analysis at the Los Angeles County Alliance for Student Achievement as well as in various educational advocacy organizations.

At the U.S. Department of Education and White House Initiative, Ms. Santiago focused her research and analysis on educational issues related to the condition of Latinos in education, institutional trends in student access and completion, programmatic support services, accountability, programs that effectively serve Latino youth, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and development of institutions serving low-income and underrepresented students. She also analyzed and developed postsecondary education legislation, policy, and budget for student financial aid and higher education programs. [deborah.santiago@edexcelencia.org]

Sarita E. Brown, Senior Fellow, Pew Hispanic Center and President, *Excelencia* in Education in Washington, DC has spent more than two decades at prominent national academic and educational institutions and in the highest levels of government working to develop more effective strategies to raise academic achievement and opportunity for low-income and minority students. She began her career at the University of Texas at Austin creating a national model promoting minority success in graduate education and continued to address academic achievement and opportunity for low-income and minority students co-directing the Community Compact for Student Success at the Education Trust at the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) and as Senior Fellow at the American Council on Education editing “Making the Case for Affirmative Action in Higher Education”.

In 1997, Ms. Brown was appointed Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans and in 2000 released the report, “Creating the Will: Hispanics Achieving Educational Excellence” (co-author Deborah Santiago) which offers recommendations to stakeholders from all sectors to close the educational achievement gap for Latino students from early childhood to graduate and professional education. From 2001-03, Ms. Brown served as Founding President of the Hispanic Scholarship Fund Institute, the public sector affiliate of the Hispanic Scholarship Fund where she worked to increase federal support for Latinos in higher education. [sbrown@edexcelencia.org]

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The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Pew Charitable Trusts.

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OVERVIEW

Latinos are the largest minority group in the United States, yet lag behind other major racial and ethnic groups in higher education attainment. Improving the extent and quality of higher education for Latinos will indisputably raise their economic prospects and civic engagement, and contribute to the long-term economic and civic health of the entire nation. Both the Clinton and Bush Administrations have declared that improving college graduation rates for Latinos are a national priority.

The purpose of this study is to describe federal legislation and programs that support higher education and to assess Latino participation in these programs. While there are many programs at the state, institutional, and community levels that facilitate access to higher education for Latinos, the Higher Education Act (HEA), due for reauthorization this year, is the main policy vehicle at the federal level for postsecondary education programs. These programs provide concrete examples of educational activities that can inform—and be informed by—local activities and programs to facilitate Latino student access, persistence, and completion of higher education. A series of developments in the costs and financing of colleges and universities set the context for HEA reauthorization.

This study begins by addressing the cost of higher education and the impact on Latino participation, followed by a statistical summary of Latino achievement in higher education, including college enrollment and completion rates. All of the data cited are from public sources, including analysis by the U.S. Department of Education. Following the statistical review is a discussion of several programs in the Higher Education Act and Latino student participation in these programs.

Effective state and local programs may influence the creation and expansion of some federal programs. Therefore, this study offers an example of a state program and several community-based programs that stimulated the creation of federal programs. While the programs were not developed solely to serve Latinos, many Latinos participate.

POLICY CONTEXT: THE COSTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Latinos represented almost 13 percent of the U.S. population in the 2000 Census. About 11 percent of Latinos now have a college education, while the national average for adults is over 25 percent.¹ For Latino students, as with many students, college costs and available financial aid are among the most significant factors that influence their decision to enroll in college.²

Over the last 10 years (1993-2003), average tuition and fees have risen almost 50 percent at public baccalaureate colleges and universities and 22 percent at community colleges. In the last year alone (2003-04), average tuition and fees increased almost 15 percent for students at both public baccalaureate and community colleges.³ To pay for their education, most college students receive some form of financial aid. According to a College Board report, *Trends in College Pricing*, almost 60 percent of undergraduate students receive some form of financial aid to help them pay for their education. This

financial aid includes grants, loans, work-study and tax credits from federal, state, local, and institutional sources. However, Department of Education data shows that a decreasing portion of federal aid is distributed according to need.⁴ Further, in recent years, low-income students received a declining share of grants for financial aid.⁵ As many Latino students come from low-income families, the limited availability of financial aid, the increasing costs of higher education, and the mismatch of aid levels to actual costs impede Latino participation in higher education.

The growth in college costs is due, in part, to decreases in the rate of state funding for higher education. At the same time, state budget crises have compelled institutions of higher education to make large cuts in expenditures. These cuts have had serious implications for institutional capacity as well as for student access to higher education. Intensifying the challenge are directives to shrink or limit enrollment at many institutions as a cost-control strategy. Institutions of higher education are dealing with rising tuition costs, slowing state funding for higher education, and budget-driven directives, while experiencing increases in applications from students eligible for enrollment.

CURRENT STATUS OF LATINO PARTICIPATION AND ACHIEVEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Data on Latino higher education access and completion provide a context for understanding the impact of public policies and programs. The following section includes an overview and then a more detailed profile of Latinos in undergraduate and graduate education.

Overview

Latinos are the fastest growing college enrollment group and currently represent about 11 percent of students in higher education. The “traditional” college student enrolls full-time upon high school graduation, is financially dependent, lives on campus, and either works part-time or not at all. However, traditional students represent only 40 percent of students in higher education today.⁶ The majority of students in higher education are “non-traditional,” including many Latino students. As the following statistics illustrate, Latinos are enrolled in community colleges near where they live, attend college part-time, commute to college, work, are first-generation college students, are low-income, have less academic preparation than their peers, and are concentrated geographically in a small number of states and institutions of higher education throughout the nation.

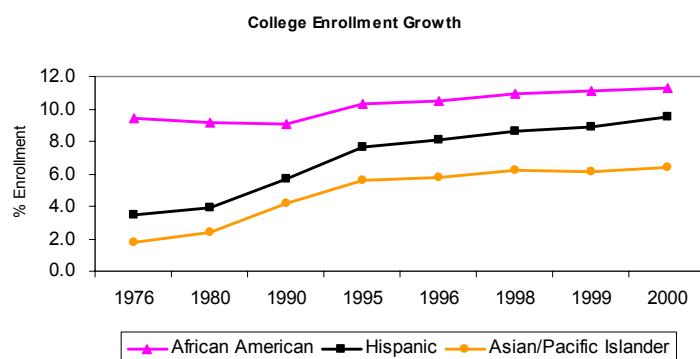
Almost half of Latino students in higher education begin at a nearby community college but do not transfer to a baccalaureate-granting institution. According to analysis conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center, many Latinos who do enroll for the first-time at a baccalaureate institution do not graduate.⁷ For Latinos in the U.S. 25 and older, about 11 percent have a bachelor’s degree.⁸ In comparison, about 29 percent of whites and 25 percent of other non-Hispanics had a bachelor’s degree.

Latinos in Undergraduate Education

Undergraduate education is an important path to ensuring a better future in the U.S. economy. Hispanics currently represent 15 percent (4.1 million) of the total traditional college-age population (18 to 24 years). By the year 2020, Latinos will constitute almost 25 percent of that population.⁹

Enrollment

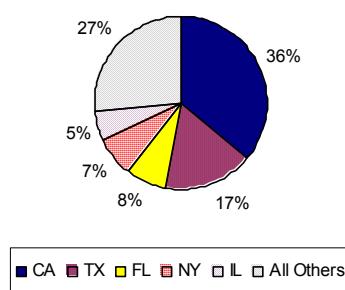
The representation of Hispanics in higher education continues to grow. In 2000, Hispanic students represented almost 10 percent of the total student enrollment in higher education (1.5 million), compared to only 4 percent in 1976 (383,800).¹⁰ In fact, in just four years (between 1996 and 2000), the number of Latinos enrolled in undergraduate education increased 25 percent, compared with only 2 percent for whites, 15 percent for blacks, and 18 percent for Asian/Pacific Islanders.¹¹ Despite increases in enrollment, however, only 22 percent of college-age Latinos were enrolled in college, compared to close to 40 percent of whites, 30 percent of blacks, and 56 percent of Asian/Pacific Islanders.¹²



While Latinos are enrolled in every state, the majority of Latino students in higher education are concentrated in a few states. Just over 50 percent of all Latinos enrolled in college are in California and Texas. Almost 75 percent of Latinos are enrolled in five states: California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois.¹³ Further, most Latino

undergraduate students are concentrated in a small number of institutions. About 45 percent of Hispanic undergraduate students are enrolled in about 230 institutions of higher education identified as Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). These 230 institutions represent seven percent of all postsecondary institutions. HSIs are defined in the HEA as accredited degree-granting public or private nonprofit institutions of higher education with low educational and general expenditures, a high enrollment of needy students, and at least 25 percent total undergraduate Hispanic full-time-equivalent student enrollment, of which at least 50 percent of Hispanic

Hispanic Enrollment in 5 States (2000)



students are low-income.¹⁴

The majority of Latinos in higher education are enrolled in two-year institutions, while the majority of white, black and Asian/Pacific Islander students are enrolled in four-year institutions.¹⁵ In conjunction with community colleges, a higher percentage of Latino students are enrolled in higher education as part-time students compared to either white, black or Asian/Pacific Islander students.¹⁶

Race/Ethnicity	% Enrolled in Two-Year Institutions	% Enrolled Part-time
White	46	40
Black	43	43
Hispanic	58	51
Asian/Pacific Islander	41	40

Close to 60 percent of Latino undergraduates receive some form of aid to pay for college. However, Latinos are less likely to take loans to pay for college (25 percent) than whites (29 percent) or blacks (36 percent).¹⁷ This is in part due to the fact that many Latino students are enrolled in community colleges and/or enrolled part time. Community colleges are less expensive than baccalaureate institutions so Latino students would need to borrow less to pay for college.

Educational Attainment

Latino students are less likely to complete college through the traditional path (enroll within one year of high school graduation, and attain the bachelor's degree within six years). Only 4 percent of Hispanics completed a postsecondary credential through the traditional path, compared to 15 percent of whites and 23 percent of Asians (based upon students in 8th grade in 1988).¹⁸

Latinos increased undergraduate degree attainment, although their levels are still below other groups. In 2000, Hispanic students earned 9 percent of associate's and 6 percent of bachelor's degrees awarded. In comparison, whites earned 72 percent of associate's and 75 percent of bachelor's degrees, blacks earned 11 percent and 9 percent, and Asian/Pacific Islanders earned 5 percent and 6 percent of associate's and bachelor's degrees.¹⁹

Enrollment and Degrees Conferred: 2000				
Race/ Ethnicity	% of Enrollment in 4-year Institutions	% of Enrollment in 2-year Institutions	% of Bachelor Degrees Conferred	% of Associate Degrees Conferred
Hispanic	6.6	14.2	6.1	9.1
White	71.1	64.0	75.1	72.4
Black	10.6	12.4	8.7	10.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	6.2	6.8	6.3	4.9

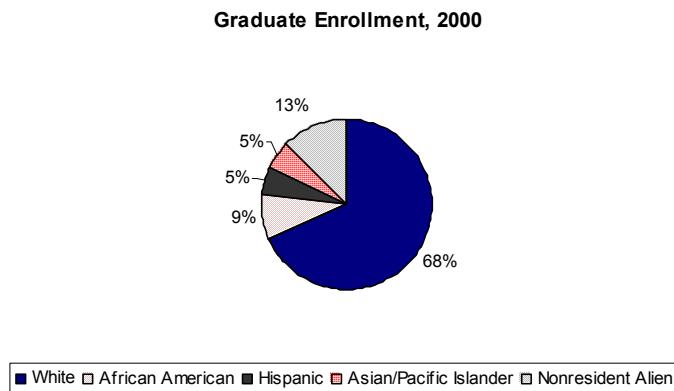
The top three disciplines in which Hispanics earned bachelor's degrees were business, social sciences and psychology. The top three disciplines for associate's degrees conferred to Latinos were liberal arts, business and the health professions.²⁰

Latinos in Graduate Education

Graduate education provides the means to advance to the professional level of a discipline and to become an expert in a field of study.

Enrollment

In 2000, Hispanics represented 5 percent of graduate students, while whites represented 68 percent, blacks represented 9 percent, Asian/Pacific Islanders represented 5 percent, and nonresident aliens represented 13 percent. In 1990, Hispanics represented 3 percent of graduate students.²¹ Hispanic women have surpassed Hispanic men in graduate enrollment. In 2000, over 60 percent of Latinos enrolled in graduate education were women.²²



Educational Attainment

Master's: Latinos earned 5 percent of master's degrees in 2001 (21,500 degrees). White students earned 70 percent, blacks earned 8 percent, Asian/Pacific Islanders earned 5 percent, and nonresident aliens earned 12 percent of all master's degrees.²³ The top three master's degrees earned by Latinos were education, business, and public administration. These fields represent over 70 percent of all degrees awarded.²⁴

First-Professional: Latinos earned 5 percent of first-professional degrees in 2001 (3,800 degrees). White students earned 74 percent, blacks earned 7 percent, and Asian/Pacific Islanders earned 12 percent.²⁵ The top three first- professional degrees earned by Latinos were law, medicine, and pharmacy. Over 75 percent of first-professional degrees earned by Latinos were in law or medicine.²⁶ Further, men earned 52 percent of first-professional degrees obtained by Latinos (1,977).²⁷

Doctoral: More Latinos are earning doctoral degrees than before, but overall the numbers are still small. In 2001, Latinos earned 3 percent of doctoral degrees (1,500). In comparison, whites earned 61 percent, blacks earned 5 percent, Asian/Pacific Islanders earned 6 percent, and nonresident aliens earned 24 percent of doctoral degrees.²⁸ The top three doctoral degrees earned by Latinos were education, psychology, and biological/life sciences.²⁹

Graduate and First-Professional Enrollment and Degrees Conferred

2000-01	Graduate			First Professional	
Race/ Ethnicity	% of Enrollment	% of Master's Degrees	% of Doctoral Degrees	% of Enrollment	% of Degrees
Hispanic	5.2	4.2	2.9	5.0	4.8
White	68.0	70.1	62.1	71.8	74.5
Black	8.5	7.8	5.0	7.7	6.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	5.2	5.1	5.4	12.0	10.7
Nonresident Alien	12.6	12.2	24.2	2.7	2.3

FEDERAL PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT ACCESS AND PERSISTENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The Higher Education Act (HEA) authorizes the major federal programs supporting postsecondary education in the United States. HEA is reauthorized every five years, and is due to be reauthorized again this year. The programs contained in the HEA reflect the evolution of the federal role in higher education. Programs in the HEA target many diverse stakeholders in higher education: students, parents, teachers, not-for-profit organizations, and institutions of higher education. These programs include financial aid to students, support for improving colleges and universities, investment in research, and promotion of collaborations between community organizations and institutions supporting the academic preparation of students.

Programs in the HEA are authorized through federal legislation and then separately funded through the Congressional appropriations process. To demonstrate the process and underscore the distinction between authorizing a program and funding it through appropriations, note that the Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions program was originally created through authorization in 1992, yet funding for the program was not provided until 1995. Most funding for higher education programs is discretionary, meaning that the level of funding for each program is not set at a specific level and may be adjusted or eliminated every year by Congress. Applicants are required to compete for funding with other eligible organizations for the limited funds distributed through funded HEA programs.

Several HEA programs were selected to examine the impact on Latino student access and achievement in higher education for the purposes of this brief. The programs described provide funding for institutional support, student financial assistance, student support services, and graduate education. While no programs were created specifically or solely to serve Hispanic students, understanding their impact on Latino student achievement is important to assessing the influence of federal policy.

Institutional Support

The HEA authorizes eight institutional aid and development programs. Among them, the two that most directly serve Latino students in higher education are the *Developing Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) Program*, which provides five-year grants for institutional development to institutions serving a large percentage of Hispanic students, and the *Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program (MSEIP)*, which provides grants to institutions to recruit and educate minority students towards bachelor's degrees in science and engineering.

The Developing HSIs program supports institutional development for a wide range of activities to improve the quality of education at these institutions, including faculty development, endowment enhancement, student services, technology efforts, and curriculum development.

The Developing HSIs program was first authorized in 1994, when about 130 institutions met the criteria for eligibility. In the last ten years, the number of institutions meeting the criteria has almost doubled, reflecting the large increase in Latino enrollment in higher education. More than 200 grants averaging about \$375,000 per year have been awarded to these institutions of higher education.

About 45 percent of Latinos in higher education are enrolled in Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs). Therefore, one avenue for targeting services to large numbers of Latino students is through HSIs. In 2002, there were approximately 230 HSIs located in 12 states and Puerto Rico.³⁰ This represents about seven percent of all institutions of higher education. California has the most HSIs (with 68), followed by Texas (37), New Mexico (18), and New York (12). Further, 50 percent (114) of HSIs are public community colleges and 20 percent (47) are public baccalaureate institutions. Overall, HSIs represent 10 percent of all public community colleges and 7 percent of all public baccalaureate institutions. The remaining 30 percent of HSIs are private institutions. While annual reports to the Department of Education show progress in institutional development as a result of this program, many of these colleges and universities have not reported on the direct impact of their services on the Latino students on their campuses.

The Minority Science and Engineering Improvement Program (MSEIP) was created to address the under representation of Latino and other minority group students in science and engineering. In 2002, \$8.5 million was available for institutional grants, and funding has been level for at least five years. Institutions receive grants to increase their recruitment and support of these students. In 2000-01, less than 10 percent (7,100) of Latinos who earned bachelor's degrees received degrees in science and engineering.³¹ While the number of Latino graduates in science and engineering is not large, it has grown since the inception of MSEIP. Many participating institutions credit the program with helping them to develop effective recruiting mechanisms to identify interested Latino, black, and Native American students and to diversity their student body in these disciplines.

Student Financial Assistance

The HEA authorizes the majority of grant and loan programs to provide financial aid for student access to higher education. The grant programs to students include the Pell Grants, Federal supplemental educational opportunity grants (SEOG) [part of the campus-based programs], and special programs for students whose families are engaged in migrant and seasonal farm work. In addition, the HEA authorizes the Federal Family Education Loan Programs such as the PLUS loans for parents of dependent student federal consolidation loans, unsubsidized loans, loan forgiveness for teachers, loan forgiveness for child care providers, College Work Study, Direct Loans, and Perkins Loans.

There are four primary ways to pay for college: grants, loans, work-study, and personal contributions. These four options are not mutually exclusive, and most students use a combination to pay for their college education. While financial aid is available outside of the federal sector, approximately two-thirds of all student financial aid comes from federal programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

In addition to the four options mentioned, the federal government also has a tax credit that provides some reimbursement for postsecondary expenses. The federal Hope Scholarship program is a credit of up to \$1,500 per student for qualified tuition and related expenses per year, covering the first two years of postsecondary education. The credit covers 100 percent of the first \$1,000 of qualifying expenses plus 50 percent of the next \$1,000.

Latinos receive the lowest average amount of financial aid awarded—by type and source of aid—of any ethnic group. Full-time, full-year undergraduate degree-seeking Latino students received the least financial aid of any major racial/ethnic group (including federal aid or non-federal aid).³² Latinos also received the smallest grants of any ethnic group, larger loans than Black or American Indian/Alaska Native students, and lower work-study awards than White or Asian/Pacific Islander students.

Financial Aid to Full-time, Full-Year Undergraduate Students

Race/Ethnicity	Any Aid			Grants			Loans			Work Study Total
	Total	Federal	Non-federal	Total	Federal	Non-federal	Total	Federal	Non-federal	
Hispanic	\$7,084	\$5,335	\$3,581	\$4,244	\$2,680	\$3,130	\$5,400	\$4,926	\$4,178	\$1,650
White, non-Hispanic	8,659	6,261	5,288	5,053	2,382	4,658	5,483	4,781	5,106	1,658
Black, non-Hispanic	8,476	6,517	4,336	4,667	2,669	3,965	5,267	4,950	4,295	1,598
Asian/Pacific Islander	9,221	6,168	5,422	5,819	2,700	4,881	5,455	4,933	4,867	2,008
American Indian/Alaska Native	\$8,343	\$5,413	\$4,399	\$5,155	\$2,897	\$4,141	\$5,234	\$4,851	---	---

For part-time or part-year undergraduate students, Latinos also received the lowest average total financial aid award of any ethnic group.³³ Latinos were second to Native Americans in receiving the least federal aid. Latinos did receive slightly larger federal

grants than blacks or whites. Latinos received the smallest work-study awards of any ethnic group and the smallest loans of any ethnic group except Native Americans.

Financial Aid to Part-time or Part-Year Undergraduate Students

Race/Ethnicity	Any Aid			Grants			Loans			Work Study
	Total	Federal	Non-federal	Total	Federal	Non-federal	Total	Federal	Non-federal	
Hispanic	\$3,640	\$3,807	\$1,516	\$1,886	\$1,717	\$1,253	\$4,440	\$4,249	\$3,257	\$1,816
White, non-Hispanic	3,959	4,213	2,003	1,947	1,498	1,677	4,657	4,324	4,481	1,556
Black, non-Hispanic	3,779	3,983	1,647	1,874	1,649	1,347	4,767	4,510	3,835	1,456
Asian/Pacific Islander	4,406	4,430	2,094	2,446	1,860	1,836	4,953	4,660	---	1,484
American Indian/Alaska Native	\$3,424	\$3,505	\$1,737	\$2,059	\$1,743	\$1,497	\$3,644	\$3,521	---	---

Among full-time master's degree students, Latinos also received less overall aid than other groups. Only 65 percent of Latino students received any aid, compared to 76 percent of whites and 90 percent of blacks. Specifically, Latinos studying for master's degrees received less grant aid and work more than either white or black students. Only about 20 percent of Latino students received grants, compared to more than 30 percent of both white and black students. Twenty percent of Latinos received assistantships, compared to 10 percent for blacks and 9 percent for whites.³⁴ Some studies have shown that working may prolong or limit the completion of a graduate education.

The average aid for Latino master's degree students is only \$8,729, compared to \$13,875 for blacks and \$12,566 for whites. For first-professional degree students, the average aid for Latinos is only \$16,766, compared to \$21,440 for blacks, \$18,182 for whites, and \$18,416 for Asian/Pacific Islanders.³⁵

Student Support Programs

The HEA also authorizes several programs to help prepare students for higher education starting in middle school, including the *TRIO programs*, and *Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP)*. The GEAR UP program was authorized in 1998 to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP provides five-year grants to states and partnerships to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools. GEAR UP grantees serve an entire cohort of students beginning no later than the seventh grade and follow the cohort through high school. Once identified, colleges form partnerships with middle schools in low-income neighborhoods to provide college preparation and raise the educational expectations of whole classes of students. Such assistance continues through high-school graduation. Many of the partnerships give college scholarships to the students they serve.

Since 1999, the GEAR UP program has awarded 265 grants to partnerships in 45 states and in Guam, Micronesia, and Puerto Rico. Each partnership gets enough money to spend \$800 per student. The U.S. Department of Education estimates that the

program served approximately 1.3 million students in 2003. While the GEAR UP program was not explicitly created to serve Latino students, general studies have shown that large numbers of Latino students are being served through these partnerships. Given that many Latino students who enroll in higher education do so at institutions near where they live (and thus attended high school), the GEAR UP program offers a continual support mechanism as they make the transition to college.

Within TRIO, eight outreach and support programs are authorized and targeted to help the academic progress of low-income, first-generation students from middle school to post-baccalaureate programs. In 2002, \$802 million was provided for these programs.

1. *Talent Search*: program to provide academic, career, and financial counseling to support high school completion and college-going.
2. *Upward Bound*: program to provide tutoring, mentoring, academic support and development of skills needed for college preparation and entrance.
3. *Upward Bound-Math/Science*: program to strengthen the math and science skills of participating students and encourage college study in these areas.
4. *Student Support Services*: program to provide academic development, assist with basic college requirements, and motivate students to complete postsecondary education.
5. *Educational Opportunity Centers*: program to provide counseling and information on college admissions to those who want to enter or continue higher education.
6. *Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate*: grants to institutions to prepare students for doctoral studies.
7. *TRIO Dissemination Partnership*: program designed to encourage the replication of successful practices of TRIO programs by partnership with existing grantees and other institutions or community-based organizations.
8. *Training Program for Federal TRIO Programs*: program to enhance the skills and expertise of the TRIO programs' project directors and staff.

Census data show that there is a large and growing number of college-age Latinos in the U.S. Many Latino students are low-income and potentially first-generation college students without direct access to information about higher education or what is required to prepare academically for higher education. Under the TRIO programs, colleges and community agencies identify qualified elementary and secondary school students from low-income families and help them pursue higher education. Participants receive academic and career counseling as well as help in applying to colleges and obtaining student aid.

The three main TRIO programs are Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services. The participating students in the TRIO Talent Search program are in grades 6 to 12. Further, two-thirds of the students in each local program must be from families in which neither parent attended college. Each Talent Search program gets about \$365 per student, and in fiscal year 2002, there were 475 programs nationwide serving about 390,000 students with an appropriation of \$142 million.

Upward Bound works with low-income students in all four high-school grades whose parents do not have a bachelor's degree. Students take after-school classes in core academic subjects, such as English, mathematics, science, and a foreign language, and receive free tutoring in the same subjects on weekends. They also get help applying to colleges and pursuing financial aid, and they live in a college dormitory for six weeks during the summer for a summer-school session. According to the most current available data, Upward Bound participants are 50 percent African-American, 22 percent Hispanic, 21 percent white, 4 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, and 3 percent American Indian or Native Alaskan.

The Student Support Services (SSS) program provides opportunities for academic development, assists students with basic college requirements, and serves to motivate students toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education. The SSS program may also provide grant aid to current SSS participants who are receiving Pell Grants. The goal of SSS is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants and facilitate the process of transition from one level of higher education to the next. In 2002, \$267 million was provided for 937 programs across the nation serving about 198,000 students at an average cost of \$1,320 per student.

Evaluations of Upward Bound and Student Support Services programs in TRIO have shown that these programs significantly improve the academic preparation of Latino students who participate. Specifically, a national evaluation showed that Latino students routinely gained more course credits from participating in these programs than other ethnic groups in several subjects (math, English, foreign languages, and social studies).³⁶ However, a later study has also found that Upward Bound had virtually no effect on the college-going rates of many of its participants.

Graduate Education

The HEA authorizes several national graduate fellowship programs that support education in the humanities, disciplines of national need, and law. The *Jacob K. Javits Fellowship Program* provides fellowships for students to pursue graduate study in the arts, humanities, and social sciences based on a student's demonstrated achievement and financial need. The *Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need* program provides grants to institutions that offer a graduate degree in an area of national need, as defined by the Secretary of Education. A third program, the *Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program*, provides a grant/contract with the Council on Legal Education Opportunity to provide low-income minority, or disadvantaged college students with information, preparation and financial aid to access and complete law school.

STATE AND LOCAL-LEVEL PROGRAMS THAT INFLUENCE FEDERAL PROGRAMS

The GEAR UP program and the HOPE scholarship program are two federal programs modeled after state or local educational programs.

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs)

The federal GEAR UP program was modeled after three existing programs located in multiple communities throughout the country: 1) The AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program, 2) Project GRAD (Graduation Really Achieves Dreams), and, 3) "I Have a Dream."

- 1) AVID is an in-school academic support program for grades 5-12 that prepares students for college eligibility and success. AVID places academically average students in advanced classes in an effort to address the de facto "tracking" that tends to keep low-income and minority students out of college preparatory programs and that results in lower levels of academic achievement.
- 2) Project GRAD is a nonprofit K-16 school reform model that is currently under way in ten school districts across the country. The mission of the program is to ensure a quality public education for all children in economically disadvantaged communities, to increase high school graduation rates, and to prepare graduates to be successful in college. Project GRAD works with students from kindergarten through college within feeder systems of schools—all the elementary and middle schools that "feed" individual high schools. The project focuses its efforts on low-performing schools in low-income neighborhoods. Over 90 percent of the students in Project GRAD schools meet the federal poverty guidelines for special assistance.
- 3) The third program that influenced the creation of the federal GEAR UP program is The "I Have a Dream"® Program. This program helps children from low-income areas reach their education and career goals by providing a long-term program of mentoring, tutoring, and enrichment and assuring an opportunity for higher education. Local "I Have a Dream"® projects adopt an entire grade from an elementary school or an entire age group from a public housing development. They work with this group of children (the "Dreamers") and their families year-round from their elementary school years through college. With more than 180 Projects in 64 cities across 27 states (75 of which are currently active), "I Have a Dream"® has now served more than 13,500 students during its more than two decades of operation.

HOPE (Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally) scholarship

The federal HOPE scholarship—created in 1997—was inspired by Georgia's HOPE scholarship program, begun in 1993. This state program rewards eligible students with financial assistance in degree, diploma, and certificate programs at eligible Georgia public and private colleges and universities and public technical colleges. The intended purpose of the program is to make college an affordable reality for all state residents, regardless of income.

In the first five years of the federal scholarship program, reports show that the main beneficiaries of the program have been students from middle-income families. In 2000, more than 50 percent of credits from the HOPE program went to people whose families had annual incomes of \$30,000 to \$75,000. Students from families with incomes of less than \$30,000 collected about 30 percent of the credits. Students from the poorest families took less advantage of the program and received the least financial help from it. Students whose families made less than \$10,000 received only 1 percent of the credits, or a credit of about \$230. Those who made \$10,000 to \$19,999 received fewer than 15 percent of the credits, with an average of about \$620.³⁷

CONCLUSION

By improving the extent and quality of higher education for Latinos, their economic prospects, civic engagement, and ability to contribute to the long-term economic and civic health of the nation indisputably increases. Yet meeting the educational needs of the growing Latino population in today's economy is challenging. This study offers data to examine the impact of federal programs on Latino student participation as a means to assess the influence of the Higher Education Act on Latino student achievement.

ENDNOTES

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- ²² *Ibid.*

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