

Supporting Latinx/a/o Students In Higher Education – A Focus on Basic Needs

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Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that our offices reside on the Indigenous lands of the Tonkawa Tribe, the first Native Americans to live in our area prior to the founding of the City of Round Rock, Texas by Anglo settlers in 1854.

It is believed that the Tonkawas and their ancestors resided on this land for thousands of years prior to being dispossessed of their homelands.

We recognize the Tonkawa Tribe, along with all other Indigenous Peoples who have been or are a part of the lands of Central Texas.

Overview

- Who are Latinx/a/o students?
- Why they matter in higher education
- Existing Narratives
- Understanding Basic Needs
- Re-shaping existing narratives
- Support strategies
- Culturally responsive approaches



Post-Traditional Student Profile

- Delay enrollment in higher education
- Begin at a community college
- Attend part-time
- Live with family while attending school
- Work 30 or more hours per week

Who are
Latinx/a/o
Students

(Santiago & Stettner , 2013)

Why should we focus on Latinx/a/o students?

- Fastest growing demographic
- Historically marginalized and systemically underserved
- High basic needs insecurity
- Significant contributor to the workforce and local economies

Understanding Master Narratives

- Entrenched, dominant stories related to the educational achievement of underserved and marginalized students based on longstanding and ongoing deficit views
- Examples of deficit-based master narratives:
 - Latinx, African American, and Native American students, especially women, are not good in STEM
 - Students of color are academically less capable than White student
 - Low-income parents and communities do not value education
 - Latino parents want their children to work instead of attend college
 - If students have too many adversities, they cannot succeed

Re-Shaping Deficit Narratives

Asset-Based Framework

- Latinx/a/o students possess significant sources of **community cultural wealth** (Yosso, 2006), **ventajas y conocimiento** (Rendón, Nora, & Kanagala, 2014), and **Psychological strengths** (Adames & Chavez Dueñas, 2016) that enable them to navigate and thrive within marginalizing and byzantine systems
- Latinx/a/o students have **high aspirations** that drive them to pursue higher education
- Latinx/a/o students want to succeed in college and sometimes **need additional support** to help them realize their goals.
- For Latinx/a/o students, **family is a source of cultural wealth** that provides motivation and support for college students (Jabbar et al., 2017)
- Basic needs insecurity is a **structural challenge** and should not be used to further marginalize Latinx/a/o students and other impacted populations

Basic Needs Definitions

According to report from University of California – November 2020

Students' Basic Needs include access to nutritious and sufficient food; safe, secure, and adequate housing—to sleep, to study, to cook, and to shower; healthcare to promote sustained mental and physical well-being; affordable technology and transportation; resources for personal hygiene; and childcare and related needs.

Basic needs security means that there is an ecosystem in place to ensure that students' basic needs are met.

Basic needs insecurity (BNI) is a structural characteristic affecting students, not an individual characteristic. It means that there is not an ecosystem in place to ensure that students' basic needs are met.

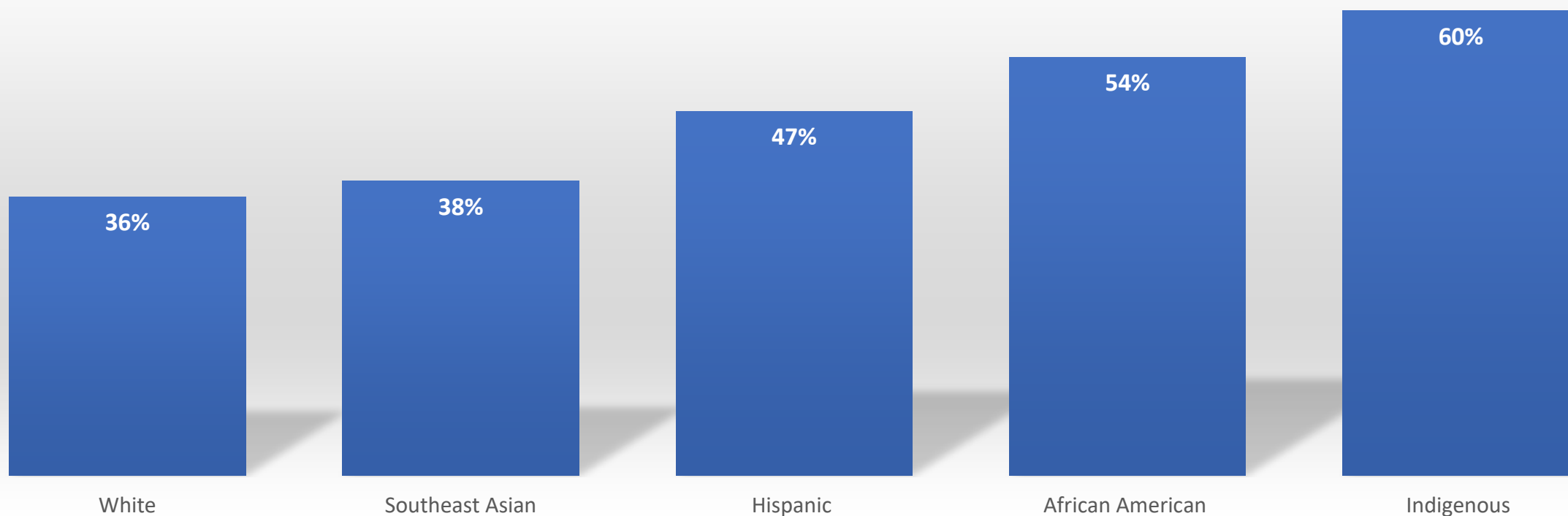
BNIs are higher for marginalized populations including Latinx, African-Americans and LGBTQA+

BNIs are not characteristics of students- they stem from systemic issues and policies

Food Insecurity Among College Students

National #Realcollege survey completed by the Hope Center in 2020 with 200K students ; 130 colleges; 72 Universities

Across the Nation



2021 Student Financial Wellness Survey

Latinx/a/o Student Data

- **47%** of Hispanic respondents reported experiencing housing insecurity
- **43%** of Hispanic respondents reported experiencing low or very low food security on the fall 2021 SFWS
- **14%** of Hispanic respondents reported experiencing homelessness



Basic Needs Insecurity

The associated impact on students



It is a condition of learning – students can't focus if they're hungry or don't have safe shelter

May result in high levels of stress, anxiety, unhealthy eating patterns, and a greater risk of chronic illness

Associated with lower grades and GPAs

Increase drop out rates

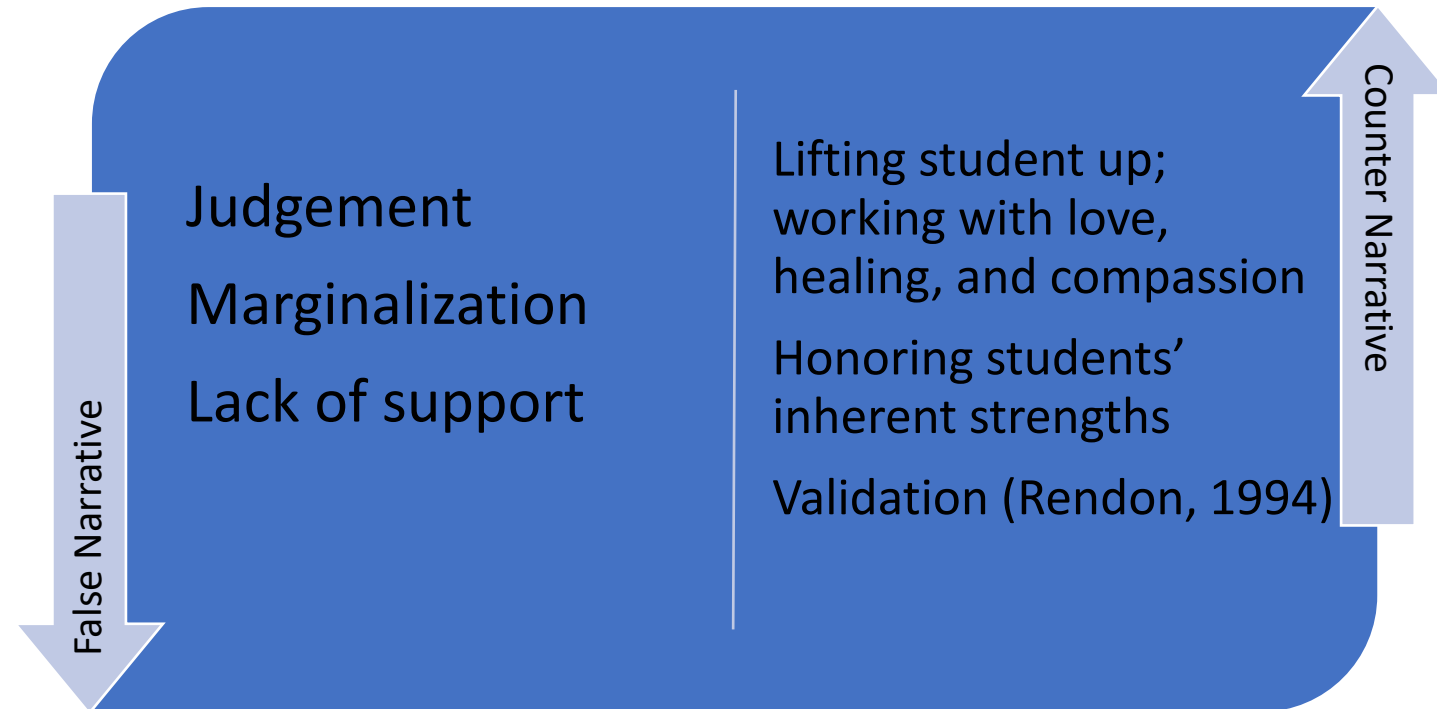
Impede confidence in students' abilities

Shifts the importance of their academic pursuits

The Education Narrative

False narrative: *Latinx students and communities do not value education and do not prioritize it in their lives.*

Counter Narrative: *Latinx students and communities have high aspirations but may lack critical basic resources that impede their ability to prioritize academics*



The Bootstrap Narrative

False narrative: *Students have to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and succeed on their own if they want to make it in life*

Counter Narrative: *Students that confront challenges securing basic needs are more likely to develop resilience and may need a little support to ensure that barriers do not impede their success*



The Adversity Narrative

False Narrative: *Latinx, low-income students face too many adversities and are largely incapable of succeeding in higher education*

Counter Narrative: *Latinx students, and other communities of color, who are disproportionately impacted by basic needs insecurity possess resistant and navigational capital that enable them to maneuver through marginalizing systems (Yosso, 2006)*



Change the Narrative – Change the Outcome

Levels of Support



Institution: Equity Mindedness

- Adopt an equity-minded approach
- Disaggregate data by race/ ethnicity



The Center for Urban Education
<https://cue.usc.edu/files/2020/01/Equity-Minded-Gears.png>

Institution: Change the Narrative

- Take action to understand Latinx students' needs and honor their voice through quantitative and qualitative assessment
- Be unapologetic about providing systemic support for targeted groups of students who are in need of services
- Embrace and nurture asset-based frameworks and uplifting narratives

Radical Care

Empathy is not enough...



Intentional Programing

Advocate and Create intentional programs and services that respond to the needs of your students



Campus-wide referral network

Build a network of care on campus by educating faculty and staff and ensuring these campus partners are ready to provide student support and resources



Foster partnerships

Build community partnership with local food bank and other social services agencies

Meeting Basic Needs of our students for their success

Utility Insecure	Food Insecure	Housing Insecure	Seek academic support	Seek mental health resources	Seek medical/ health care
66.3%	61.7%	61.7%	53.5%	48.9%	42.6%

Data from basic needs self-assessment tool conducted as part of the Advocacy Center intake process- reflects percentages of students served who identified as struggling, needing help, being in distress or being in crisis

NLC Advocacy Center

*Holistic Services *411 students served 19-20 academic year *925 students served during 20-21 academic year*

- Food Pantry
- Basic Needs Assessment
- Mental health Counseling
- Case Management
- Emergency Aid
- Daily Grab N' Go snacks
- Support accessing public benefits
- Giving Garden



Interpersonal – Recognize the Signs

Take Notice If You See...

In the Classroom:

- Inconsistent or decrease in classroom attendance
- Consistently failing to complete assignments
- Sleep deprivation or falling asleep in class
- Difficulty concentrating or focusing
- Reporting not doing the work because they haven't purchased the textbook
- Increased levels of distress
- Wearing the same clothes continually without them being cleaned

Around Campus:

- Sleeping in campus libraries
- Avoidance of personal details
- Hopelessness
- Poor health and diet
- Poor personal hygiene
- Student discloses that they have been sleeping in their car, couch surfing, do not have anywhere to stay over the break period, have not been eating, do not have enough money to pay for food or bills, etc.

Quick Tips

- **Normalize** the use of support services and provide information about available support services to all students
- **Inform** by adding a statement to an advising or class syllabus:
 - *Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live is urged to contact _____. The Food Pantry is located on the 2nd floor of Student Commons open to*
- **Inquire** about students' wellbeing and experiences outside of school
- **Stay engaged** with students who have shared their needs with you to ensure that they have the support they need

Validation and Authentic Caring

Support Latinx Students Through Validation and Authentic Caring

- **Validation** is an enabling, confirming and supportive process initiated by in- and out-of-class agents that fosters academic and personal development (Rendón, 1994)
- **Authentic Caring** “is relationship centered and is underscored by genuine concern for a student’s wellbeing and investment in their future” (Garza, 2021, p. 171). It is when individuals honor students’ lived experiences (Valenzuela, 1999)



A Culturally Responsive Approach

- Establish **CONFIANZA**
- Seek to **UNDERSTAND** students' lived experiences, personal values, and strengths
- Provide **SUPPORT** through direct connection to services, specialized programs, and affinity groups
- Recognize and honor their **EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE** and cultural wealth
- **NURTURE** the relationship through outreach and regular touchpoints

(Garza, 2021)

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