

**UNDERSTANDING LATINO STUDENTS' CHALLENGES AND SUPPORTS  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE**

by

Christy Ann Calderón

An executive position paper submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in  
Educational Leadership

Spring 2018

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this accomplishment and scholarly work to my number one lifelong cheerleader, my dearest mother, Marta E. Calderón Acuña. I wish you could be here to share this moment with me, but I know you are always watching from above.

I love you, Ma!

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Completing this Executive Position Paper would not have been possible without the support of many individuals. I would like to thank my advisor and committee chair, Dr. Gail Rys, for her encouragement, guidance, and patience throughout this journey. Thank you to my committee members Drs. Robert Hampel, Rosalie Rolón-Dow, and James Tweedy for their feedback and continued support. Christina Johnson and David Hannah, thank you for always being there to answer my questions and cheer me on to finish. Dr. Mary Martin, I am grateful for the support you have provided me throughout the years.

Moving to Delaware when times were tough back home in Miami, Florida was difficult, but I am thankful for the families and friends that adopted Julio César and I. Thank you Deepti and Tara for your friendship. To the Greenwald Foley family, thank you for always including Julio César and me in family gatherings and holidays, and for showing us around Delaware and Pennsylvania. To my big brother, Dr. José-Luis Riera, his rock star wife Dr. Kate Caldwell-Riera and their beautiful daughters, thank you for always checking in on me, welcoming to your home, joining me on UD creamery visits, and reminding me that I needed to finish.

The words “thank you” are not enough for what the following person did for me throughout this journey. Without her guidance, constant follow-up and friendship, I would not have been able to finish within the timeline. Dear friend and dissertation boot camp instructor, Dr. Ashley B. Clayton, gracias por todo! Thank you to following individuals:

Christie (Dr. Mary C. Medina), Shannonlee Rodriguez, Tamica Ramos, Rebecca Pelham, Allison McComb, Amix (Dr. Mariela Campuzano), Chantal Camgulia, and the iCED Kendall team, your acts of kindness and support will never be forgotten. Dr. Tamara C. Bertrand-Jones, you have been my mentor and inspiration since the age of 17 when we met in Tallahassee. Tamara, thank you for challenging, encouraging, and supporting me throughout all these years.

Thank you to all my family members for your continued support throughout all these years of schooling. Gracias Ma and Pa for always supporting my crazy dreams since a young age and encouraging me to do my best. To my sister Ingrid, thanks for sitting with me as a young child to practice my reading. God knows all the practicing was put into good use throughout this educational journey. To my beloved niece Natalia and nephew Michael, thank you for the joy you brought to my life since the moment you were born. Thank you to my four-legged children Bella Maria and Oliver for accompanying me all those late nights. Lastly, but most importantly, thank you to my husband Julio César. Your encouragement and unconditional support throughout all these years were instrumental to achieving this dream. Your constant reminders of everything from my mother's promise to questioning me if I should be watching TV instead of working on my goal always helped me refocus. I thank God for blessing me with such an amazing life partner. I love you and look forward to our next chapter as parents. Diosito gracias por todo!

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## **ABSTRACT**

In 2011, the University of Delaware underwent an evaluation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The evaluation raised concerns about the university's lack of campus diversity, low five-year graduation rates for underrepresented minorities, and the potential decline in Latino student enrollment as a result of rising admissions standards. In an effort to understand undergraduate Latino students' experiences and persistence to graduation at the University of Delaware, this executive position paper seeks to follow up and expand on the findings from the evaluation. To gain a broader understanding of Latino students' experiences, this study used a convergent parallel mixed methods research design. The qualitative portion of the study consisted of four focus groups and one interview, totaling nineteen participants. In the quantitative portion of the study, 142 participants responded to a 60-question survey, which included 45 original questions and 15 questions from Pascarella and Terenzini's instrument on Persistence/Voluntary Drop Decision Scale (1980). Four themes emerged from the qualitative data: familial motivation and betterment of self; challenge of finding a sense of belonging and understanding; support from family, friends, and on-campus organizations; and desire for more culturally-based initiatives from the university. The findings from the quantitative survey indicated that Latino students felt satisfied with their experience at the university and would choose the University of Delaware again.

Overall, results demonstrated Latino students have varying opinions about their college experience; both negative and positive. Participants identified on-campus organizations and offices that supported them and also provided recommendations to the university. The results of this study contribute to the research on Latino student persistence at predominantly White institutions.

## **Chapter 1**

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

#### **Introduction**

The number of Latino students enrolling in four-year institutions of higher education is increasing (Ryu, 2010). According to the American Council on Education's *Minorities in Higher Education Report*, Hispanic enrollment increased 67% percent during the last decade (Ryu, 2010). The rise in Hispanic student enrollment from 1997 to 2007 surpassed the growth of all other racial and ethnic groups, and the continuing growth in the Hispanic population shows no indication of a decline (Ryu, 2010). This population has also shown growth in high school graduation completion and has exceeded other racial and ethnic groups in this area as well. The report demonstrates a percentage increase from 60 to 70 in high school graduation completion from 1998 to 2008 (Ryu, 2010). With the projected and demonstrated increase in rates of both high school graduation completion and enrollment in four-year institutions for Latino students, it is important to understand if colleges and universities, specifically Predominately White Institutions (PWI) are prepared to meet the needs of this growing population.

Due to the rise in Latino student enrollment in higher education, it is important for institutions to be aware of and have the capacity to meet the needs of this group. Esquivel (2010) states that to provide a fruitful college experience for Latino students, institutions

will need to provide academic assistance, cultural organizations and mentors. Because of a lack of critical mass, the Latino student population needs to see and feel a level of comfort and familiarity within their education environment (Hagedorn, Chi, Cepeda, & McLain, 2007). Currently, only 1.5% of all college faculty are Latino (Delgado-Romero & Hernandez, 2002). This lack of representation, in the form of insufficient minority faculty and staff role models for Latino college students, may result in loneliness and discomfort for the student in the academic environment (Hagedorn, 2007). Lack of a sense of belongingness may contribute negatively to retention of Latino students. Conversely, Hernandez (2000) identified positive influences such as encouragement and a sense of trust from professionals and advisors toward Latino students as factors that enhance this group's graduation rates.

As a Latina student, I attended a PWI for my undergraduate degree. I can identify with the need for understanding and support in higher education from Latino faculty and staff as mentors. I longed for the support of someone who spoke a similar language, and who resembled, and understood the same family values and culture in which I was raised. While most PWI's are currently seeing an increase in Latino enrollment, they are not experiencing the same increase in the hiring of Latino faculty, executives, and professional administrators. The University of Delaware is consistent with the other PWI's in this regard. A review of the number of Latino employees at UD for the years 2007 and 2011, showed that the number of Latino executives in administration decreased from three to two, Latino faculty decreased from 30 to 28, and the number of Latino professional staff increased from 17 to 20 during this five-year period (Office of

Institutional Research & University of Delaware Enterprise Warehouse, 2012). In 2012, UD’s Office of Institutional Research began to report employees by gender and employee status category such as faculty, exempt, and non-exempt employees. Table 1 illustrates the proportion of Hispanic employees at UD in 2012 and 2013. It is questionable whether this is adequate representation to support and mentor the current, and increasing number of Latinos at the University of Delaware, which stood at 1,144 in the Fall 2013 (Office of Institutional Research & University of Delaware Enterprise Warehouse, 2014).

Table 1  
*UD Hispanic Employee Breakdown by Category*

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Female	18.5%	18.5%
Male	19.5%	20.5%
<b>Exempt</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Female	15.4%	18.5%
Male	12.3%	16.4%
<b>Non-Exempt</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Female	7.20%	8.20%
Male	1.00%	1.00%

### **Problem Statement**

During the spring of 2011 the University of Delaware underwent a re-accreditation process conducted by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

The summary report provided information regarding on-campus diversity and retention rates for underrepresented minorities. The commission concluded, UD is not diverse in either absolute or relative terms. With few exceptions, we believe that the university trails its peers in every measure of diversity in every constituency of the institution” (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2011, p.8). The evaluation team also reported, we heard several times that the campus community does not reasonably reflect the diversity of the larger society. More importantly, it was also observed that this relative lack of diversity disadvantaged students in their educational experience, which is enriched by the studying, working, and living with students from varied backgrounds (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2011, p.8).

Furthermore, the report indicated concerns regarding five-year graduation rates for underrepresented minority students and the strategy the Office of Admissions used in autumn 2011 to reduce the number of admitted underrepresented minorities to help improve their graduation rates (p.10). Specifically, when the report looked at the last two years of data available for five –year graduation rates Hispanics graduated at a rate of 67.5 and 69.4 in 2004 and 2005 respectively, compared to the rate of 77.3 and 78.0 in the same years for White students

The evaluation identifies a lack of diversity at the University of Delaware, including the concerns for graduation rates of underrepresented minority students, and its authors “recommend that the university develops plans for increasing the racial/ethnic diversity of its student body” (p.10). All of this evidence then leads to the question, “Why do minority students at UD persist?” This study will therefore focus on examining the

factors related to undergraduate Latino students' persistence to graduation at UD by utilizing data collected spring 2013.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The intent of this study is to identify and understand the reasons why Latino students persisted, or stayed at the University of Delaware. As such, this study will illuminate the challenges undergraduate Latino students overcame in an effort to achieve degree attainment at the University of Delaware or why certain Latino students departed from the university prior to graduation. By investigating the areas of Latino student departure and persistence, the findings of this study will offer a better understanding of this student population at the University of Delaware in an effort to help improve diversity and retention. Likewise, it is also anticipated that the evidence will provide useful information to other PWI's across the nation, such as a greater understanding of Latino students' challenges and needs throughout their college career. Finally, the improvement goal is to identify ways that the University of Delaware and other PWI's can increase the retention and graduation rates of undergraduate Latino students.

### **Research Questions**

To understand undergraduate Latino students' persistence to graduation at the University of Delaware, this study will focus on the following questions:

1. What factors motivate undergraduate Latino students to enroll and persist at the University of Delaware?
2. What challenges and barriers do undergraduate Latino students face at the University of Delaware?

3. Where do undergraduate Latino students find support and a sense of community at the University of Delaware?
4. What are some ways that the University of Delaware can increase the retention and graduation of undergraduate Latino students?

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms will be used throughout this study:

**Latina/o** – “A person who was born or lives in South America, Central America, or Mexico or a person in the U.S. whose family is originally from South America, Central America or Mexico” (Merriam-Webster, 2017).

**Hispanic** – “Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before arriving in the United States. People who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be any race” (U.S. Census, 2017).

\*Note that both terms Latina/o and Hispanic will be used interchangeably throughout this study.

**Persistence** – “Refers to the desire and action for a student to stay within the system of higher education from beginning through degree completion” (Seidman, 2005, p. 7).

**Retention** – “Refers to the ability of an institution to retain a student from admission through graduation” (Seidman, 2005, p. 7).

**Personal Factors** – Including, but not limited to: family, personal goals, mentors, friends, programs, identity, finances and stereotypes.

**Institutional Factors** – Including, but not limited to: admissions programs, academic support services, faculty, professional staff, support staff, university mission statement,

student organizations (both academic and social), campus climate, campus police, campus location and campus physical structure.

**First Generation College Students** – Students whose parents have not attended college (Billson & Terry, 1982)

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Literature Review**

For the purpose of this study, to identify and understand the factors of undergraduate Latino students' persistence to graduate at the University of Delaware, I will focus on the analysis of the literature in the following areas: Latino enrollment trends; undergraduate Latino students needs/tools for success; higher education retention models; and theoretical frameworks on personal and institutional factors. Focusing on these areas will provide a more holistic view of undergraduate Latino students' persistence.

#### **Latino Enrollment Trends**

Nationally, Hispanics are the fastest growing minority group in higher education, with an increase in total enrollment at institutions “from 8 percent in 1997 to 10.5 percent in 2007” (Ryu, 2010, p. 32). UD does not fall behind with their Hispanic enrollment numbers. Table 2 indicates the steady rise of undergraduate Latino student enrollment at UD from 2009 to 2013. Hispanic retention rates at UD from freshman to sophomore year from 2009 to 2013 are above 82.4 percent (Office of Institutional Research & University of Delaware Enterprise Warehouse, 2014). Table 3 depicts the retention rates for this period. It is notable that the retention rate from 2010 to 2013 decreased more than 8

percent. Graduation rate comparisons (Table 4) between Hispanic and White undergraduate students at UD demonstrate White undergraduate students have a higher graduation rate than Hispanic students. Additionally, female undergraduate students overall, both Hispanic and White, have higher graduation rates than their male counterparts. There is also a larger graduation rate gap between undergraduate Hispanic and White males than there is between Hispanic and White females.

The UD student profile is constantly changing, much like the rest of the nation's institutions of higher education. However, the national persistence rates for Hispanic students that started their college careers at four-year institutions are not positive. According to the Minorities in Higher Education report, the graduation rates for this minority undergraduate student group have declined from 81 percent to 76 percent between the years of 1995 to 2003 (Ryu, 2010). There are various factors that may contribute to this decline at different institutions across the United States. This study will concentrate on identifying the factors that contribute to UD's undergraduate Latino students' persistence.

Table 2

*Total Enrollment of Undergraduate Hispanic Students by Full-Time and Part-Time Status at UD*

<b>Academic Year</b>	<b>Full-Time Students</b>		<b>Part-Time Students</b>	
	<i>N</i>	<b>%</b>	<i>N</i>	<b>%</b>
2009	845	5.6	29	4.1
2010	860	5.7	31	4.1
2011	903	5.8	38	4.8
2012	968	6.1	47	5.8
2013	1104	6.9	40	4.8

Table 3

*Retention Rates from Freshmen to Sophomore year for Undergraduate Hispanic and White Students at UD*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Hispanic Students</b>	<b>White Students</b>
2009	88.0%	91.8%
2010	90.7%	92.6%
2011	89.0%	92.6%
2012	88.9%	92.7%
2013	82.4%	92.0%

Table 4

*4-Year Graduation rates for First-Time, Full-Time Freshman at UD*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Hispanic Female Student</b>	<b>White Female Student</b>	<b>Hispanic Male Student</b>	<b>White Male Student</b>
2009	70.4	75.3	52.9	64.7
2010	75.7	78.6	54.2	66.3
2011	71.0	80.2	63.3	66.2
2012	74.9	79.9	55.9	67.0

### **Undergraduate Latino Students' Needs/Tools for Success**

Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) investigated Latino students' educational outcomes and what affects them. They explored four areas in order to better understand the factors that contribute to this student group's college success. The four areas were campus climate, a sense of belonging in college, analytical skills and abilities, and a development of a pluralistic view that translates into diverse workplaces (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005). Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) conducted a longitudinal study of incoming Latino freshmen from nine public universities across the United States. Surveys were administered at two time points, one during orientation and the other at the end of their second year. The sample consisted of 370 Latino students from among the nine campuses who responded to both surveys.

The results showed that students whose predominant language at home was Spanish were more likely to perceive a hostile campus climate than students who were English dominant speakers at home (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005). This suggests that among Latino students, those who hold on to linguistic cultural ties are more likely to feel

unwelcomed at their college campus compared to the English dominant speaking Latino students. Similarly, Latino students who engaged in diversity co-curricular programs were more likely to report a hostile climate. Hurtado and Ponjuan (2005) indicated that this result provides evidence of resistance, since it is a diverse activity that the students feel they have to participate in because other co-curricular programs are not intentionally diverse nor provide them with a welcoming environment. Their findings also confirmed that engagement in activities such as living on campus, academic support programs, and college-facilitated activities cultivate a sense of belonging. In the area of analytical skills, student survey participants reported more confidence in their analytical skills during their second-year than when they entered college. Hurtado and Ponjuan concluded, “we would expect that Latino students may disidentify with their college and its activities when exposed to stereotype threats, but we find that educational outcomes were not uniformly affected by student perceptions of a hostile climate” (p. 248). They also pointed out that Latino students who engage in co-curricular activities are more likely to have positive group interactions with other students who shared a critical view of their college racial dynamics (Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005)

Although there is an array of literature on college students overall, there is a limited body of literature that concentrates solely on Latino students (Olivas, 1986). In Hernandez’s (2000) review of the literature, he acknowledged the need for research that focuses specifically on the persistence of Latino students. Particularly, he cited Attinasi and Nora’s (1992) position on the use of structured survey instruments, suggesting such surveys do not expose the complexity of diverse student populations. Hernandez’s

outcomes from his three phase interview series data collection validates Attinasi and Nora's (1992) beliefs on the difficulty of capturing issues associated with diverse populations.

Hernandez (2000) conducted a qualitative study on Latino students in an effort to understand their retention and reasons for persisting in college. The participants in this study were five males and five females of Latino decent who were college seniors.

Hernandez used the following questions to guide the study:

1. What are the factors that influenced the retention and graduation of Latino college students?
2. In what ways, if any, did the environment influence the experience and ultimately the retention of Latino college students?
3. What meaning did students give to these factors? How was this meaning used in their decision to persist in college? (p.576).

Data was collected through a three-phase in-depth interview process, and identified 11 categories that impacted retention for participants. The categories are as follows:

- I want to do it
- The family
- Friends and peers
- Faculty and staff
- Cocurricular involvement
- Finding a Latino community
- Money Matters
- I'm going to make it within the environment
- Environment equals people
- Personal experience shape the perceptions of the physical environment
- Involvement as a way to break down the environment (p. 579-581)

Hernandez's findings demonstrate that Latino retention is not limited to common variables impacting college students overall, such as a general under-preparedness for college, financial difficulties or family responsibilities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is grounded in two theoretical frameworks that will help to guide the understanding of undergraduate Latino students' persistence to graduation at UD. Tinto's (1975) Retention Model and Pascarella and Terenzini's (1980) Notion of Persistence will be used to frame this study.

Tinto's (1975) Retention Model postulates that student background characteristics, including family educational background and social economic status, coupled with both academic and social interactions (such as faculty and peer relationships), contribute to a student's decision to depart from an institution of higher education.

Pascarella and Terenzini's (1980) Notion of Persistence Instrument will also aid in identifying and understanding undergraduate Latino students' persistence to graduation at UD. This instrument affirms that the following scales contribute to persistence: peer-group interactions, interactions with faculty, faculty concerns for student development and teaching, academic and intellectual development, and institutional and goal commitments.

In sum, the two frameworks discussed are an appropriate fit for the purpose of this study as the selected instrument, Pascarella and Terenzini's (1980) Notion of Persistence, validates Tinto's conceptual model of retention.

## **Chapter 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

Mixed methods methodological approach was selected for this study to examine undergraduate Latino students' experiences and persistence to graduation at UD. Mixed methods research combines both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Two forms of data are collected and analyzed to provide a better understanding of the research questions. Utilizing mixed methods delivers different forms of information by utilizing both open-ended data and close-ended data. By "mixing" qualitative and quantitative methods, the data will provide a more concrete and holistic response to the research questions (Creswell, 2014).

There are several mixed methods research designs that can be employed. For this study, the Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Design (Creswell, 2014) was used to evaluate the research questions. In this design, the qualitative and quantitative data is collected and analyzed separately. After each set of data is analyzed, a comparison of the results is made to determine similarities and/or differences. One of the assumptions of this design is that qualitative and quantitative data provide different information resulting in similar outcomes (Creswell, 2014).

Approval for this research study was obtained through the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). All participants in the focus groups, interview, and survey were informed about the purpose of the study and signed an informed consent form (see Appendices B and C). The university name, student group names, and event names were not changed, but the names of the participants were changed to protect their identities. There was minimal risk in participating in this study.

### **Sample**

Participants for this study were recruited through various procedures. The investigator requested the Office of the University Registrar at UD (post IRB approval) for an Excel spreadsheet of the entire undergraduate student population that self-identified as Latino on their admissions application to attend the UD Newark Campus. The spreadsheet included student names, current semester in college, self-identity as Hispanic, and student email addresses. Snowball sampling is an information-rich approach in finding key and/or highly knowledgeable individuals (Patton, 1990). For this study, snowball sampling methods were utilized during the recruitment process of participants. An email invitation was sent out to 936 self-identified Latino students requesting their participation on the survey portion of the study (see appendix D). The invitation also informed students that at the completion of the survey they were able to enter their name to win one of two cash prizes of \$50. At the end of the survey an invitation to participate in a focus group appeared, and they were provided with the investigator's contact information. The investigator also received recommendations from the associate dean of students, Latino-based club advisors, program advisors, admissions

officers, and Latino student leaders of additional students to approach for the study. In addition, the investigator attended a Latino-based club meeting, and at the end of the meeting she described the study she was conducting and extended an invitation to participate.

**Survey sample.** In the 2013 spring semester, the survey was emailed to 936 currently enrolled undergraduate students who self-identified as Hispanic/Latino on their admissions application. Participants in the survey sample consisted of 146 undergraduate students at UD that responded to the email invitation. Three participants did not answer ‘yes’ to the consent question and were removed from the final sample. Additionally one person gave consent, but did not answer any survey questions. After removing these four individuals, the final survey sample included 142 participants. The final sample included 38 males, 103 females, and one opted not disclose his/her gender. There were 51 participants from Delaware, 85 were out-of-state, 3 international, and 3 other. The sample included 37 first-year students, 32 second-year students, 38 third-year students, 34 fourth-year students, and 1 fifth-year student.

**Focus group and interview sample.** There were a total of nineteen participants in the qualitative study, which consisted of four focus groups and one individual interview. Eighteen of the participants engaged in one of the four focus groups and one student participated in an interview. Overall, thirteen females and 6 males participated. Nine of the students were first-generation college students. Year of classification consisted of 3 freshman, 4 sophomore, 7 junior and 5 seniors. All students indicated that their families were from Latin origins with the exception of one student who self-

identifies as a Latina but whose mother is from Italy and father is from Puerto Rico. Each student reported being from one of, or a combination of, the following countries: Belize, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Italy, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Spain and Venezuela. Participants were assigned a pseudonym and their demographic details are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5

*Demographic Information for Interview and Focus Groups Participants*

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>State of Residency</b>	<b>Family Origin</b>	<b>First Generation</b>	<b>Parent who attended college</b>
<i>Interview</i>							
Fabiola	Female	Sophomore	Human Services	DE	Puerto Rico	Yes	
<i>Focus Group 1</i>							
Adriana	Female	Senior	Health Behavior Science	DE	Dominican Republic	No	Mother
Mariela	Female	Freshman	Exercise Science	NJ	Puerto Rico	No	Father
Esteban	Male	Junior	History Education	DE	Mexico	Yes	
Patricia	Female	Junior	Wildlife Conservation	NJ	Colombia (M) Mexico (F)	Yes	
<i>Focus Group 2</i>							
Adrian	Male	Junior	Triple Language Major/Latin American Studies	PA	Puerto Rico	No	Mother & Father
Camila	Female	Junior	Accounting	PA	Puerto Rico	Yes	

Table 5 Continued

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>State of Residency</b>	<b>Family Origin</b>	<b>First Generation</b>	<b>Parent who attended college</b>
<i>Focus Group 3</i>							
Alfredo	Male	Junior	Undeclared - Business	DE	Colombia	Yes	
Leonardo	Male	Junior	English	DE	Puerto Rico (M)	Yes	
Michelle	Female	Sophomore	Math & Econ	CT	Italy (M) Puerto Rico (F)	Yes	
Pablo	Male	Senior	Civil Engineering	DE	Mexico	Yes	
Maria	Female	Sophomore	Medical Technology Interest	DE	Dominican Republic	Yes	

Table 5 Continued

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>State of Residency</b>	<b>Family Origin</b>	<b>First Generation</b>	<b>Parent who attended college</b>
<i>Focus Group 4</i>							
Monica	Female	Freshman	Communications	NY	Ecuador (M) Mexico (F)	No	Mother (2yrs)
Olivia	Female	Sophomore	History/Political Science	TX	Mexico	No	Mother & Father
Jessica	Female	Senior	Anthropology & triple Languages	MD	Colombia	No	Mother & Father
Guillermo	Male	Senior	Economics & International Relations	International Student	Venezuela	No	Father
Diana	Female	Junior	Art	NJ	Spain	No	
Xiomara	Female	Freshman	History	NJ	Honduras (M) Belize (F)	No	Mother & Father
Carolina	Female	Senior	Political Science & Spanish Literature	DE	Colombia	No	Father

## **Instruments**

For the quantitative portion of the study, the investigator developed a two-part survey. Part one of the survey requested information on the students' demographics, assessment of the racial and ethnic climate at UD, on-campus resources, and sense of belonging at UD. Part two of the survey utilized Pascarella and Terenzini's (1980) instrument on Persistence/Voluntary Drop Decision Scale. Permission from the authors is found in Appendix E. At the end of the survey, participants were asked if they were interested in participating in the qualitative portion of the study (focus groups). The survey was distributed to the sample via email in mid-April 2013. The email included a description of the study, link to the survey, consent form, and investigator contact information. The survey link was live for three weeks and a reminder email was sent a week and a half after the initial email distribution. A copy of the survey is located in Appendix F and the survey consent form in Appendix B.

For the qualitative portion of the study, four focus groups with 2 to 7 participants in each group were conducted. The length of each focus group was between 30 to 90 minutes and held in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions conference room at the UD Newark campus. The focus group protocol included the following sections: introductions in an effort to establish rapport, explanation of the study, review of confidentiality, completion of consent forms, interview questions, and investigator contact information (Appendix G). Focus group participants also filled out a demographic questionnaire (Appendix H) and signed a consent form (Appendix C). The interview questions consisted of questions developed by Hernandez (2000) from his study on Understanding

the Retention of Latino College Students (permission granted by author appendix I) and researcher-designed questions. The invitation to participate in the focus groups was emailed in mid-April 2013 (see Appendix J).

### **Data Collection**

Focus groups, interview, and survey data were collected between mid-April to early May 2013. Focus groups and interview were held in a conference room at the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at UD, Newark Campus. Conducted during the weekdays, each focus group lasted between 30 to 90 minutes and the one interview lasted 30 minutes. All the focus groups, including the interview, were audio recorded. The interview protocol consisted of questions about Latino students' college search and choice process, opinions on campus climate, use of campus resources, and overall experiences and challenges at UD (see Appendix C).

### **Data Analysis**

Each focus group and interview were transcribed verbatim. For this study the investigator articulated her positionality and biases that stem from personal, professional, and schooling experiences. The data was carefully examined and re-examined multiple times to deepen understanding of the participants' answers. Each focus group and interview transcription were first open-coded and then recoded with a preliminary codebook. A final codebook was developed and a final round of coding was conducted using consistent codes (Appendix H) (Crewsell, 2014). The investigator then organized the codes by research questions and conducted five stages of thematic analysis. The

investigator deduced the data during the stages of the thematic analysis, which resulted in the final emerging themes.

For the quantitative portion, survey data was compiled and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Qualtrics was the software system used to create, administer, and summarize the results of the survey. Means and frequencies were calculated across all survey questions. The quantitative data was analyzed separately, before comparing it to the qualitative results.

Following Creswell's (2014) recommendations, both data sources (survey and focus groups/interview) were evaluated separately first, and then analyzed together. There are numerous ways to bring the data together. Creswell suggests a side-by-side comparison of the quantitative and qualitative findings (descriptive statistics and themes), to confirm or disconfirm results.

### **Positionality Statement**

I am a first-generation Costa Rican-American born in Miami, Florida. My parents immigrated to the United States in the mid- 1970s and were hardworking factory workers. Neither my parents nor my grandparents attended college. The highest level of education my mother attained was a high school degree and my father's education is limited to elementary school. Both of my parents worked diligently in the United States to provide my sister and I with the best education they could offer us. They both insisted we attend college and take advantage of the opportunities we had in the United States. Since there is no family history of postsecondary education in my family, my older sister and I are both considered first-generation college students. While my sister earned an

associate's degree in her mid-30s, I was the first person in my family to enroll in postsecondary education and earn both a bachelor's and master's degree. Because I was the first in my family to attend college, it was extremely difficult for me to understand the challenges and barriers I would face throughout my college experience at a Predominantly White Institution (PWI) in the Southeast U.S.

When I decided to pursue my doctoral degree, I knew one of my research interests revolved around first-generation underrepresented ethnic minorities at PWIs. Shortly after my arrival at the University of Delaware as a doctoral student, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education assessed and reported on the university's lack of student diversity. The release of the Middle States Report helped me realize that I had the opportunity to make a contribution through my research interests to assist the university in understanding their undergraduate Latino students. I recognize that the research study conducted mirrors similarities to my personal undergraduate experience, which potentially could produce biases as I experienced many of these students' struggles firsthand. However, understanding the value and importance of connecting with administrators and faculty of a similar ethnicity, I felt that my position as a investigator could serve as an asset to this study. I believe participants sometimes found it easier to establish rapport and trust me since they knew I was able to relate to their experiences. Throughout this process, I was aware of my potential biases and consciously tried to review the data from an unbiased and new perspective.

## **Chapter 4**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **Qualitative Findings**

The results of the study were separated into four themes: (a) familial motivation and betterment of self; (b) challenging to find a sense of belonging and understanding; (c) support from family, friends, and on-campus organizations; and (d) desire for more culturally-based initiatives from the university. Each subsection discusses the themes in further detail.

#### **Familial Motivation and Betterment of Self**

The decision to attend a university can be a dream for some, an expectation for others, or a means for a better future. For the participants in this study, their decision to enroll in a university varied, but also had similarities. In the case of Esteban, he wanted to attend college to “become a great teacher and not necessarily for money reasons.” On the other hand, Patricia, whose parents did not attend college, was reminded by her parents numerous times throughout her life: “we moved here...so that you could attend a university and achieve higher education.” Patricia’s parents did not attend college and wanted her to have the educational opportunities that they did not have. Patricia, a first-generation student, is motivated to persist in college for both herself and her parents. She stated, “I do it for myself, but also for them”. In some cases, students felt that it was

expected of them to attend college. Camila shared how her mother did not attend college and her father started college, but was unable to finish. Camila discussed that going to college was never really discussed in her home; she shared “for me and my brother it was assumed, I’ve always done good in school, so it was assumed, like you’re going to school.” Mariela referenced her parents and grandmother as reasons why she persisted at UD. Reflecting back on the impact of a visit from her parents and grandmother to the university, Mariela states, “My parents! And my grandma, because she lives in Puerto Rico, in the middle of nowhere. We took her here and it was like mind-blowing. She couldn’t believe it. She was like this is so amazing, so, her too.”

For Monica, whose mother attempted college for two years but was unable to achieve a credential, she finds motivation in wanting to succeed for her parents and making her grandparents proud. Monica stated, “both my parents have always pushed me, and so have my grandparents, and they’re always so proud of me and seeing what I’m accomplishing. It’s a big part of my life.” Another participant explained that her siblings are her motivation to persist. Being the oldest sibling, Adriana believes it is her responsibility to set an example for them to attend college. She shared this when justifying the importance of college: “being the oldest, you have to set the tempo for your siblings and basically that’s the reason why. I try to tell them, mentor them; ... you have to go to college. I have to practice what I preach.”

Participants were motivated to attend higher education in hopes of achieving a more sound financial future and overall better well-being for themselves. Leonardo, who grew up in a single family home, saw first-hand the struggles his mother went through to

provide for him. When asked, “why is it important for you to attend college?”, Leonardo replied, “my mother and father never went to college...my mother she struggles. She is a nail technician and my father really isn’t in my life. I do want to help her out, and I think graduating college would definitely be beneficial to her and myself.” It was clear that Leonardo viewed education as a means to improve his quality of life, and subsequently his family’s.

Michelle also discussed the struggles of seeing her father work in a commission-based electrical trade industry. She knew she wanted to attend college and stated, “I wanted to go somewhere so I could be successful and ... not have to suffer with money issues like he does.” Maria, another first-generation student, shared how her family stressed education and how it was often discussed in her home. Maria stated, “personally I just want to go to college to just be able to have more opportunities, to be able to get a better paying job, and hopefully help my mother out in the future.” Both Michelle and Maria referenced the desire to attend college in connection with betterment of self and how a degree will provide them with potential professional opportunities.

For others, college is a not just a personal dream; it is also their family’s dream. In the case of Fabiola, her mother stressed the importance of college since she only attended college for a year and did not receive a credential and her father “barely graduated high school.” Her mother reminded Fabiola and her sister that college degrees open doors to numerous opportunities. In recalling her mother’s advice, Fabiola stated, “she always told us, there’s so much more opportunities, so you need to go to college. I guess from the example of my parents not having any education, higher education, that we wanted to do

it, just to get better opportunities.” There was a moment during the interview that Fabiola’s voice cracked when sharing the following statement:

I know it’s really important for my mom so I definitely want to do it for her. She always talks about that day when she’s going to see me and she says she’s going to start crying. So definitely for her and for myself just because I’m first generation so it would be an accomplishment for my family. It would be one step closer for me to be able to help people in the healthcare industry and I feel like especially in Delaware because I go to healthcare facilities here and there’s not really a lot of bilingual services offered. Sometimes I even have to go translate for patients to doctors because they can’t just talk or communicate properly with each other. I definitely want to be able to help in that area too.

Fabiola’s story is one that many fellow first-generations participants relate to. College students’ majors might be different, and financial independency may or may not be the primary purpose, but their strongest reason to persist in college was often for themselves and their families.

### **Challenging to Find a Sense of Belonging and Understanding**

Many students in this study shared their encounters with racism, insecurities with being Latino, perceptions of the campus climate, and views on the lack of diversity and support at the institution. Each student had varying challenges. Patricia, a half Colombian (mother) and Mexican (father) student, described an encounter with a White peer that brought feelings of insecurities, which she had not felt before.

Patricia stated:

I don't feel any different, like I don't feel different at all from people ...because I think we're all completely equal ... but I know my biggest challenge here was caused simply because of my last name. I actually had someone tell me and argue with me, they told me I only got in because I was Mexican, so I literally had the argument with someone who tried to prove to me that my grades were not as good as hers in high school. She got wait-listed but I got in immediately, and she told me, 'Well, it's clearly because you're Mexican.' She didn't even mention that I was Colombian, because once someone knows you're Mexican, you're just Mexican. It was incredibly traumatizing for me, but I took it as kind of like a challenge. It definitely changed me, and it's still something I think about. I just wanted to prove to myself and to the college and peers that I'm here because of my talents and my passion and my motivation... Just the feelings that were brought on by that incident.

Patricia was not the only participant that described a negative racial encounter. A survey participant expressed their concern for peers' use of the offensive term "spic" and the categorizing of all Latinos into one country of origin. It was mentioned by the participants that the practice of categorizing all Latinos into one country of origin was often used in a high school environment, but they were shocked to learn that the miscategorization continued to occur in a college setting.

One survey participant stated:

I have noticed a lot of racism from certain groups. I've also noticed more racism from Delaware students that were from local areas [Delaware and, Pennsylvania]. One thing I noticed was that the word 'Mexican' is often used to describe all Hispanic races and cultures. This did not personally offend me, however it scares me that my fellow students and peers place a variety of different types of races and cultures under one label Mexican... On a more serious note I have heard my peers, even a few of my friends use the word 'Spic'. Before college, I had never really heard this word used in reference to a Hispanic. Because of this I have developed an impression that that's the way my generation in the state of Delaware acts. (Male, fourth-year)

Participants also faced other forms of racism, particularly in the classroom setting. Adrian, whose family is native to Puerto Rico, grew up in a Spanish-speaking household. His negative racial encounter was with his English professor. He recalled, "my professor basically didn't expect much of me... she would hint towards the fact that even before getting to know who I was, she would make suggestive comments about being Puerto Rican or being Hispanic or not knowing English very well." Although Adrian felt pitied by his professor, he took the experience as a challenge to thrive as a better writer. In another case, a survey participant voiced being "unjustly graded because I was Latina in a Spanish course." Camila, a junior at UD, conveyed how being the only Latina in the classroom is a difficult responsibility. Although she did not consider it racism, Camila inferred she had an obligation to "represent" the Latino voice. She shared, "you have to represent the whole Latino community because you're the only one in the class".

Other participants expressed their desire and need for a sense of community in the academic classroom setting. Fabiola, of Puerto Rican family origin, described her usual process of counting the number of other Latinos on the first day of class. She described the process and how she thinks in her head, “I’ll be like, ‘okay, I’m one’, and I’ll see another come in, ‘okay, two’ but [then] it will stop.” Another Puerto Rican female, Michelle, also discussed her experience on the first day of class, but she utilized a different process. She stated, “since Latinos don’t always look Latino, I listen to the roll call for Rodriguez and Hernandez.” A Dominican-American participant, Adriana, advises her peers who are on a quest for a Latino community to put effort in the search for other Latino peers. She states, “If you don’t put your effort, you’re not just going to find it in your every day class. You’re not just going to find a group of Hispanics. That’s just not the way it is here at the University of Delaware.”

Sense of community in the social setting appeared equally as important to the participants. The participants in the study referenced the need for more communal opportunities for Latino engagement in addition to the current student clubs. HOLA and Campus Alliance de La Raza, often referred to as “La Raza”, are two registered student organizations that are supported by the Student Involvement Office within the University Student Centers. These two organizations and the Latino Greek Community were what students identified as the only social settings in which they could foster community. Carolina expressed concern that membership in the student clubs on campus is declining while enrollment numbers for Latino students are increasing. She shared, “it amazes me to see the admissions number increase, but then you go to HOLA and La Raza and

Multicultural Greek Life and it's dying out. So many Greek chapters are dying out this semester.”

Carolina, Camila, and Guillermo also shared their apprehensions towards recruitment tactics the university engaged in to increase Latino student enrollment, which they find to be deceiving. Destination Delaware was described to be an overnight program where Black and Latino prospective students considering UD visit the campus, stay in a residence hall with a current student (typically a student of color), and participate in on-campus activities showcasing UD's diversity. Camila attended Destination Delaware as a prospective student and stated, “Once I came onto campus, it was different to experience the whole student life aspect of it.” Given that the three of them worked as ambassadors for the Office of Admissions, they believed the program provided false perceptions of a diverse community on campus. They personally did not believe the program was detrimental, but acknowledged their concern that the University does not intentionally provide the students of color with the same sense of community that they were showcased during Destination Delaware.

The following are quotes from survey participants that shed additional light on their struggles and desires for community. When asked, “Are there any comments or recommendations you would like to add that may not have been covered in the survey?”, participants replied:

I think that it is important to give guidance to students. I have yet to find my "group", [or] a faculty member to consider my mentor. It is a very sad thing actually. I have no one to ask for notes from, or someone I can study with. This

lack of peers to talk about class material (not to mention on a personal level) has impacted my grades, especially in chemistry. But I find it very hard to approach people that I feel I have nothing in common with. Most of my classmates come from a different socio-economic status, different culture, etc. I feel like I have nothing in common with anyone. (Female, first-year)

We need more 100% Latinos on campus. Apparently we have more Latinos than African Americans, [but] I do not see it! There are a lot of people that check "Latino/Hispanic" box, to have a better chance to get into college, but they are not even half Latinos/Hispanics. I do not feel like we have a Latino community here at UD. (Male, second-year)

When asked; "Was there a question asked that you would like to elaborate on?", three students responded:

I didn't even consider diversity at schools when I was applying because, coming from a very diverse school district and hometown, I never knew anything different and didn't expect that minority representation would influence my college experience at all. However, once I came to college, I was shocked to discover that it was really difficult to become accustomed to the lack of fellow Hispanics among the student population. (Female, third-year)

Being the first person in my family to be on their way to earning a college degree besides my sister, I wish there was more support and help from the university to

achieve what I want. I cannot go to anyone in my family for advice or help because they have never experienced most situations. (Female, first-year)

I feel like the school is predominately white and close-minded students with fat wallets. I feel like I'd be more comfortable going somewhere where my bank account doesn't affect my social life/ how to get friends i.e. Greek Life is also huge here, which is a problem when it comes to being diverse. (Male, first-year)

Overall, focus groups and survey participants highlighted their need to feel a sense of belonging and understanding by both their peers and the university. A few of them shared their encounters with racism during interactions with faculty and peers. Even though these encounters caused them to question their own abilities, they decided to use the experience as a challenge to succeed at UD. It was also apparent that they sometimes felt lonely, both in and out of the classroom. They are aware of the investments the University has put towards getting them to matriculate but expressed a lack of investment focused towards their integration and persistence.

### **Support Comes from Family, Friends, and On-Campus Organizations**

Navigating through college can be difficult whether you are a first-generation college student or not. College is new to everyone that steps foot on campus and finding the right resources to achieve goals can be challenging. In this section participants shared the importance of support and sources of support. Although there was not a direct question about support in the interview or focus groups, it was a subject the participants

wanted to share. In general, participants' support often came from friends and on-campus organizations.

Adriana, found her support within her sorority: "I'm a senior...I found it through Greek life honestly. I'm in a Latin sorority, so that's where I found the mostly cultural side of things. It gave me that hope and that sense of community within, while on campus."

Other students found their support in academic student organizations. For example, Pablo established his support through an academic support group called Resources to Insure Successful Engineers (RISE) program, housed in the College of Engineering:

At first I didn't know about RISE, but then I was struggling a little bit and I went to my counselor and he told me about the program and that's how I got into it.

Also, the Student Enrichment Center for anybody that's a first time student they offer free tutoring. There's a lot of Hispanics that are first generation college students.

Fabiola found her support system at the Student Support Services Program (SSSP) located in the Office of Academic Enrichment. She shared, "I just got admitted to SSSP... they are very helpful. I was like, 'why didn't I know of this before?' They give you tutors and anything that I need. I love that organization but I don't know too many people yet." Fabiola also referenced HOLA as a support system:

I'm really grateful to be in HOLA because I know a lot of things and people I know come from HOLA." Like Fabiola, Leonardo also mentions HOLA and how

being a member of the group has been a social support. He said, “HOLA ... host[s] an event every year called Fiesta Latina and we basically just bring a live band to play salsa...we invite everyone... We cater food...nachos, tacos, rice and beans... it’s like a party basically just to celebrate Latino culture.

For Carolina, her family and sorority sisters acted as her support group. She also mentioned how she was intentional with her involvements when she arrived to the university:

I’m Latina and I grew up extremely Colombian... At home for me was very Spanish but school was very, very, White, like I was one of a few. So coming here, I was used to it, but I look for my people. I got involved with HOLA, La Raza, LTA, Multicultural Student Recruitment. So it was more of like what I wanted to involve myself with than my culture.

Carolina admitted that it may have been easier to make some of the on campus support connections because she was a Blue Hen Ambassador (BHA) in the Office of Admissions. Another BHA, Olivia, acknowledged The Honors Program as her support and community on campus. It is important to note that BHAs receive intensive training about the university and are well informed about admission numbers and campus resources.

Finally, Adrian talked about his friends and how they all have this drive to succeed in life:

I have a few Puerto Rican friends. I have a Venezuelan friend. I have a Mexican friend, all from different parts of Latin America. We don’t, we just have this

connection, I don't know, it's this heat about us all, this passion we all have for succeeding or something, that draws us together. Especially the girls, they're like Adrian, get on your grind. We write papers. We do work together. We get into study groups and do work, even if it's all different stuff. We'll ask each other; does anyone know about math? Can you help me out?

Adrian appreciated the accountability they had for each other and how it truly helped him to stay focused in school. Overall, support and accountability were essential for the success of these participants. Whether it came from a grandmother or student organization, participants valued the encouragement received.

#### **Desire for More Culturally-based Initiatives from the University**

Each participant in the interview, focus group, and/or survey was asked if they would like to provide recommendations to the university. Participants did not hesitate to answer and provide a variety of suggestions that ranged from their personal needs as a Latino student at a PWI to how UD could provide its Latino community with a stronger diverse campus culture. Both Camila and Leonardo referenced the Center for Black Culture (CBC), and described how the CBC was and is a place where African-American students have historically hung out, held events, and found support from college administrators. They felt that the CBC was also welcoming to non-African-American students and were pleased by their initiative to start programming for Latino students. Carolina a student who has interacted with the CBC shared,

Yes, they do a lot for Latinos, like organizing the Hispanic Heritage Month. And like now, I think with everything that's going on with the diversity initiative and

like the *Del* Program and all the talk about diversity, the CBC is creating stuff for Latino students, like each year they have a Latino Now [featured speaker]. Now, they have a Latino newsletter, but it's still like out of the CBC. I do feel like if they want the Latino students to be active, like, I agree they fill quotas, they do it. I work in Admissions but they don't pick the movers and shakers that want to do stuff with the Latino community. And I don't, like I see it in a way, like I am biased because I am very involved, but there's no place there for us to all be there. Like I wish there was a CBC for Latinos. I feel like it would bring the Latino community so much more together.

Carolina also brought up a point about alumni from the CBC: "the alumni are like super, super, involved, like you always see them together, and it's because of the CBC, because they have that one thing that connects all of them regardless if they want to be involved or not."

Another female survey participant agreed with Carolina and stated, "I strongly feel that there should be a place that supervises all Latino orgs, Greek life, etc., similar to the CBC. This will increase the sense of community with Latino students. There is really no "home away from home" sense here." Additionally, Adrian referenced a need for Latino food options, not just during Hispanic Heritage Month. He even suggested a location on campus, "I would get rid of Zoka in Perkins and turn it into La Tonalteca." These recommendations reaffirm their desire for familiar home life norms and culture.

Some participants suggested having a safe physical space, not exclusive to Latinos, but focused rather on inclusive cultural identities. Michelle suggested having an

event highlighting all cultures that are represented at the university. She said “You set up a table and you could make food, anything to display your culture because no one is ever going to understand your culture until you put it out there.”

Leonardo also suggested,

I know they have the Center for Black Culture and when you see that you automatically just think, oh, that’s for just the black students here but they definitely do a lot more than that. I would just say something that’s more, not like, I guess bigger than the black center, something bigger than that that’s here on campus, where we can all just go and meet each other and hang out instead of just meeting up in a little booth or in the HOLA office.

One survey participant recommended:

I would like to see more support from the University itself in supporting and fostering not just a strong Latino community, but [a] diverse community. The University has become more diverse in terms of admittance to the University but the separation and lack of understanding among students still exists. There may be many students who claim Latino [heritage] when applying to the University but very little identify with the culture. Many of the Latino groups on campus over the past few years have decreased greatly in size. I sometimes wonder how the University goes about its recruitment efforts in reaching a more diverse community. (Male, fourth-year)

Guillermo suggests that without engagement the university will be unable to create global citizens:

One of the reasons you should increase our diversity on campus is because the student community can benefit from different experiences. But if you're not engaging those international students, those minorities on campus, then there's no point to bringing in more diversity on campus, because if you're just going to have Asians and South Americans just walking around the university, that's not really going to benefit the student population. It's more about them getting involved in the university and really creating an international environment. If you really want to create that global citizen perspective, you have to engage these minorities so that everyone can benefit off of their knowledge and their experience.

Clearly, the participants are looking for and expecting more support and diverse programming from their university. They not only desire a physical space that can be their home away from home, but would like to build a sense of community in that space. Some described their vision for a shared space where different cultural identities can learn from one another while also learning more about their own culture. It is important to mention that the participants expressed gratitude toward the CBC for planning events for them and supporting them. They also noted that the Student Involvement Office that supports HOLA, La Raza and Greek Life was integral to their college experience. Despite not wanting to minimize the efforts from those units, the participants took the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas on how to enhance the campus community.

## **Quantitative Findings**

Of the 936 undergraduate Latino students who received an invitation to participate in the online survey, 146 visited the link to take the survey. Of those who visited the survey link, three students did not answer ‘yes’ to the consent question and their data was removed from the final sample. Additionally, one participant did indicate ‘yes’ to the consent question, but did not complete any other survey questions; this participant was also removed from the final sample. The four participant deletions reduced the final sample size to 142. The survey had a total of 60 questions, 3 of them being open-ended and previously analyzed, coded, and included in the qualitative findings section; the other 57 questions were organized by topical sections.

## **Demographics**

In the demographics section, there were eleven base questions. If the participant transferred to UD, an additional question was asked regarding the name of institution they transferred from. Questions included gender, age, classification (year in college), residency, country of origin, first-generation status, Latino identity, level of Spanish, entry to the university, current living situation, and major. The sample included 103 females, 38 males, and 1 participant who chose not disclose gender. Table 6 shows the gender and year in college breakdown among the participants. Less than 36% of the participants are Delawareans and 50% are from nearby states such as Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Virginia. Table 7 displays the participants’ state of residency. Three of the participants selected other and indicated Illinois, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), or “permanent resident but have not

claimed a state of residency” as their place of residence. Table 8 illustrates the country of origin participants’ families are from. The participants’ responses to their level of identification as a Latino show a correlation with level of speaking Spanish (Table 9). Those who strongly identified as Latino also had a higher level of engagement with speaking Spanish both in and out of the home. Those who do not identify strongly as Latino spoke Spanish less frequently or not at all.

Table 6

*Survey Participants by Gender and Year in College*

	<b>First Year</b>	<b>Second Year</b>	<b>Third Year</b>	<b>Fourth Year</b>	<b>Fifth Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Male</b>	11	8	6	13	0	38	26.76%
<b>Female</b>	25	24	32	21	1	103	72.54%
<b>Not Disclosed</b>	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.70%
Total	37	32	38	34	1	142	
Percentage	26.06%	22.54%	26.76%	23.94%	0.70%		

Table 7

*Survey Participants by Residency*

<b>Residency</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Delaware</b>	35.92%	51
<b>Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Virginia</b>	50.00%	71
<b>Connecticut, Massachusetts</b>	7.04%	10
<b>Florida, Texas, California</b>	2.82%	4
<b>Other</b>	2.11%	3
<b>Not applicable, I am an international student</b>	2.11%	3
<b>Total</b>		142

Table 8

*Survey participants Family Country of Origin*

<b>Country</b>	<b>N</b>
Argentina	3
Brazil	2
Chile	2
Colombia	11
Costa Rica	3
Cuba	10
Dominican Republic	5
Ecuador	7
Guatemala	3
Honduras	4
Mexico	22
Nicaragua	1
Panama	4
Peru	2
Puerto Rico	25
Spain	10
Uruguay	1
Venezuela	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>

Table 9

*Survey Participants by Latino Identity and level of Spanish*

		<b>To what degree do you identify yourself as Hispanic/Latino?</b>			
		<b>Strongly Identify</b>	<b>Somewhat identify</b>	<b>Do Not Identify</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>To what extent do you speak in Spanish? (Household refers to the home you grew up in...</b>	<b>I speak Spanish in and out of the household</b>	50	11	1	62
	<b>I speak Spanish only in the household</b>	13	11	0	24
	<b>I do not know Spanish</b>	14	33	5	52
<b>Total</b>		77	55	6	138

### **Prior to Arriving on Campus**

This survey section contained three questions that focused on students' views and experiences prior to arriving on campus. The survey asked participants about the importance of having Latino representation on campus, particularly representation within the student body, administration, faculty, and staff. Additionally, the survey asked if they participated in an Office of Admissions' event, such as those for prospective students and newly admitted student programs. Overall, participants indicated that having a Latino population on campus was not important during their college search process (Table 10). Similarly, administration, faculty, and staff of Latino representation were also not of importance (Table 11). There was also not a significant difference between the respondents that attended or had not attended an admissions recruitment event (Table 12).

Table 10

*Latino Population Factor College Search Process*

<b>During your college search process, how important was it to attend a university with a large Hispanic/Latino student population?</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
Not Important	64.71%	88
Somewhat Important	33.09%	45
Very Important	2.21%	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>136</b>

Table 11

*Latino Representation among Administration, Faculty and Staff*

<b>How important was representation of Hispanic/Latinos among administration, faculty and staff?</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
Not Important	60.58%	83
Somewhat Important	34.31%	47
Very Important	5.11%	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>

Table 12

*Office of Admissions Perspective Student Programs*

<b>Recruitment Events</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Yes</b>	43.80%	60
<b>No</b>	56.20%	77
<b>Total</b>		137

**Financing Your Education**

When survey respondents were asked questions about financing their education, response results were significantly low. There were five survey questions about financial aid, financial resources parents used, types of financial aid they received, working to help finance their education, and financial contributions to the home. More than half of the participants received financial aid and maintained a job to help finance their studies. Less than 40 % of participants responded to the question asking if their parents or guardians financed their education through various resources. The low response rate was possibly due to the participants not knowing what financial source their parents used to fund their education. Unfortunately, participants who indicated they work to help finance their education did not respond to the question regarding contributing to the household.

Table 13

*Receive Financial Aid*

<b>Currently Receiving Financial Aid</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Yes</b>	75.91%	104
<b>No</b>	24.09%	33
<b>Total</b>		137

Table 14

*Work to Help Finance Education*

<b>Working</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Yes, I work less than 10 hours per week</b>	12.59%	17
<b>Yes, I work 10 - 25 hours per week</b>	24.44%	33
<b>Yes, I work more than 25 hours per week</b>	7.41%	10
<b>Yes, I work during the summer and/or university breaks</b>	28.15%	38
<b>No, I do not work</b>	27.41%	37
<b>Total</b>		135

Table 15

*Parent or Guardian Finance Assistance*

<b>Parent Assistance</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Personal Funds (ex. Checking or Savings Accounts)</b>	61.29%	19
<b>Investment Funds (ex. Stocks, Bonds and Prepaid college funds)</b>	9.68%	3
<b>Private Loan (ex. Parent Plus Loan, Sallie Mae Loan or Bank Loan)</b>	12.90%	4
<b>Other</b>	16.13%	5
<b>Total</b>		31

**Campus Climate**

The climate section of the survey consisted of ten questions focusing on participants' feelings in their campus environment. When asked if they felt stereotyped in the classroom, over half (56%) indicated not at all. When asked if they felt the need to represent the Latino population in the class, 67% indicated not at all. Further, a majority of the participants (70%) did not feel that their identity as Latinos hindered them in the classroom. Interestingly, most of the participants (72%) did not engage with other Latino students in their social settings. Overall, they did not report feeling discriminated against or racially profiled by faculty, administration, students, or police (Table 16). Instead, they shared positive responses when asked if they felt professors created a classroom climate where they felt free to ask questions and engage in discussion. Additionally, only 31 participants responded to the survey question asking, "How much has the feeling of being stereotyped influenced your sense of belonging to the UD community?"

Table 16

*Discrimination and Racial Profiling*

		<b>Have you experienced racial discrimination by a faculty member or administrator?</b>					
		<b>Not At All</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>	<b>Regularly</b>	<b>Frequently</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Have you experienced racial discrimination by another student?</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	78	3	1	0	0	82
	<b>Rarely</b>	27	4	1	0	0	32
	<b>Occasionally</b>	13	3	3	0	0	19
	<b>Regularly</b>	0	0	2	0	0	2
	<b>Frequently</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	118	10	7	0	0	135

## Campus Resources

Participants were asked four survey questions addressing campus resources.

Overall, they were highly satisfied with UD campus resources. They reported feeling that UD offers sufficient cultural, educational, and social programs (Table 17). Similarly, participants felt comfortable utilizing academic support services (Table 18) and believed they sufficiently met their needs.

Table 17

*Sufficient Programs and Attendance*

<b>Attend UD Events</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Yes</b>	61.94%	83
<b>No</b>	38.06%	51
<b>Total</b>		134

Table 18

*Use of Academic Support Services*

<b>Academic Support</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Academic Enrichment</b>	15.77%	91
<b>Tutoring Services</b>	16.12%	93
<b>Professor Office Hours</b>	20.28%	117
<b>Academic Advising</b>	19.06%	110
<b>Writing Center</b>	16.64%	96
<b>Math Tutorial Lab</b>	11.96%	69
<b>Other</b>	0.17%	1
<b>Total</b>		577

**Being a Blue Hen**

The Being a Blue Hen section consisted of five questions about their identity as a UD student. One question asked the participants if they had identified a mentor at UD, in which 65.7% indicated they had not (Table 19). For those 47 participants who had found a mentor, the majority of them established the mentorship with a faculty member. Three additional questions asked if the participant had joined a student organization at UD (Table 20), if they would choose to come to UD again, and if they would recommend UD to future students. Participants answered positively regarding choosing and recommending UD again. Specifically, 84.9% would choose UD again and 91% would recommend UD.

Table 19

*Identified Mentor at UD*

<b>Mentor</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Yes</b>	34.33%	46
<b>No</b>	65.67%	88
<b>Total</b>		134

Table 20

*Student Organization Joined at UD*

<b>Student Organizations Joined</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Cultural Organization</b>	16.61%	48
<b>Academic Organization</b>	15.57%	45
<b>Intramural Sports</b>	12.80%	37
<b>Greek Life</b>	13.84%	40
<b>Religious Organization</b>	3.46%	10
<b>Community Service/Service Learning Organization</b>	12.80%	37
<b>Residence Hall Council</b>	3.81%	11
<b>Student Government Association</b>	0.69%	2
<b>Honors Society</b>	5.88%	17
<b>Other</b>	7.96%	23
<b>No, I have not joined any student organizations at UD.</b>	6.57%	19
<b>Total</b>		289

## Persistence/Voluntary Drop Decision Scale

Part two of the survey is comprised of Pascarella and Terenzini's (1980) instrument on Persistence/Voluntary Drop Decision Scale. There are five scales and each is discussed below.

**Scale I: Peer group interaction.** In Scale I participants are asked about their interactions with peers, particularly interpersonal relationships, difficulty making friends, and different values and attitudes. Participants indicated that they see their peers as positive influences in their personal growth, attitudes, values, intellectual growth, and interest of ideas. They also indicated it is not hard for them to make friends with peers (Table 21). When participants had to respond if most students at the university have values and attitudes different from their own, 31% agreed and 25% disagreed (Table 22).

Table 21

*Difficulty Making Friends with Peers*

<b>Making Friends</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	35.11%	46
<b>Disagree</b>	29.77%	39
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	20.61%	27
<b>Agree</b>	11.45%	15
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	3.05%	4
<b>Total</b>		131

Table 22  
*Values and Attitudes Difference*

<b>Values &amp; Attitudes</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	5.30%	7
<b>Disagree</b>	20.45%	27
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	42.42%	56
<b>Agree</b>	22.73%	30
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	9.09%	12
<b>Total</b>		132

**Scale II: Interactions with faculty.** In Scale II three questions are asked which focus on interactions with faculty and students. When asked about non-classroom interactions with faculty, 54.2% of the respondents agreed faculty had positive influences in their career goals. Sixty-four (Table 23) participants indicated they have established a close relationship with at least one faculty member. Furthermore, 79 out of 131 participants indicated satisfaction with their informal interactions with faculty.

Table 23

*Close Relationship with One Faculty Member*

<b>Close relationship with at least one faculty member</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	9.92%	13
<b>Disagree</b>	22.14%	29
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	19.08%	25
<b>Agree</b>	35.11%	46
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	13.74%	18
<b>Total</b>		131

**Scale III: Faculty concern for student development and teaching.** Scale III questioned survey participants about faculty concern for student development and teaching. When participants were asked to respond to the statement, “few of the faculty members I have had contact with are genuinely interesting in students,” 53 students agreed, 44 disagreed, and 33 did not agree or disagree. With regard to out-of-the-classroom discussions with faculty, 57 participants (Table 24) disagreed with the question, “Few faculty are willing to meet outside of class to discuss student interest.” Conversely, 68% agreed that faculty had an interest in helping students grow in areas outside of academia.

Table 24

*Faculty Willing to Meet Outside Class*

<b>Faculty Outside</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	4.65%	6
<b>Disagree</b>	39.53%	51
<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	23.26%	30
<b>Agree</b>	25.58%	33
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	6.98%	9
<b>Total</b>		129

**Scale IV: Academic and intellectual development.** Scale IV asks participants about their academic experience at the university and if they have academically performed as well as they thought they would. When asked if they were satisfied with their academic experience at the university 71.5% agreed to be highly satisfied. However, survey participants felt less positive when it came to their academic performance. When asked if they performed academically as well as they had anticipated they would, 42.3% of them disagreed.

**Scale V: Institutional and goal commitments.** Scale V includes three questions regarding the importance of graduating from college, confidence that they made a good decision in choosing UD, and whether receiving good grades is of importance to them. Participants positively agreed about the importance of graduating from college, 92.3%. In the area of grades, 86.15% disagreed with the statement, “Getting good grades is not

important to me.” As for college choice, 80% of the participants agreed they made the right decision to attend UD.

### **Limitations**

There were a number of limitations to this study that need to be discussed. First, not all students who self-identified as Latino in their admission application also identified as a Latino when they completed the Latino-identity question on the survey. In some cases the participants indicated they were only a 1/4 Latino. Secondly, the survey consent form on Qualtrics was not designated as a prerequisite before proceeding to the actual survey questions. Not having the designated prerequisite of the survey consent form caused three fully answered surveys to be excluded from the final survey sample, as they left the consent agreement unanswered. Additionally, the absence of the forced response allowed participants to skip questions causing questions to have varying sample sizes in the responses. Another limitation to the study was participants who agreed to the consent, but answered 10 or fewer questions out of the 60 total number of questions, and were included in the sample size. Despite the sample size being relatively large, it might not be good representation of the entire UD Latino student body because out of the 936 students invited to participate in the survey only 142 student responded. There was also a larger number of female participants than male participants which is consistent with UD demographics. Furthermore, the sample in this study does not necessarily represent the whole Latino population at UD.

## **Chapter 5**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **Side-by-Side Comparison**

After reviewing both the qualitative and quantitative data separately, the final step of the Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods design is to complete a side-by-side comparison of the data (Creswell, 2014). The comparison needs to indicate a clear convergence or divergence from the two databases. In this study the databases show conflicting results. In the qualitative results, themes emerged demonstrating participants' aspirations to complete a degree for the betterment of self and family. Participants also shared their need to feel a sense of belonging in the campus environment along with the importance of having a support system of family, friends, and campus organizations. Additionally, the desire for more culturally-based programs was mentioned frequently among participants.

On the contrary, the quantitative data results indicated that students felt an overall sense of contentment with their UD experience. When survey participants were asked about being stereotyped in the classroom, 56% responded, "not at all," yet Adrian recalled a scenario where his English professor stereotyped him because he was Latino. Eighty-seven percent of survey respondents, when asked about being racial discrimination by their faculty, answered "not at all." Camila shared that when she sat in

the classroom she felt as though her faculty and peers looked to her to represent the Latino population's voice. However, when asked on the survey if they felt they had to represent the Latino voice, 24.6% of the survey participants responded that they rarely feel this way, and 42.5% said 'not at all.' As previously mentioned, participants from the focus groups and interview expressed the need for more culturally-based programs. On the other hand, when survey participants were asked if UD provides sufficient cultural, educational, and socially based programs 32.8% agreed, 45.5% were unsure, and 21.6% disagreed. Overall, the study results indicate clear divergence between the qualitative and quantitative data.

One of the factors that might have caused divergence as the result of the study is the students' level of Latino identity. As previously mentioned in the limitations section, these students self-identified as Latino in their UD admissions application. There is a possibility that some of the participants identify more with another ethnicity, but utilized the Latino identification when convenient, as it would be for a PWI college admissions process. Another possible factor with the positive survey results is the "survival mode." Many of these participants are well aware of the challenges and obstacles they need to face while at UD, but despite all odds they are committed to persist.

### **Implications for Practice**

This study provides essential information for college administrators at UD and other similar predominantly White institutions about the experiences of Latino students. It is evident from this study that Latino students have both negative and positive opinions about their college experience. There were four strong themes that emerged from this

data that may help guide UD administrators on how to provide a more inclusive experience for their Latino students. Specifically in the area of Latino-based student organizations, since participants identified these groups as their support system, and what provides them with a sense of community on campus.

Furthermore, participants embraced the opportunity to answer the question: “What type of recommendations would you have me make to UD administration that would enhance the Hispanic/Latino experience at the University of Delaware?” Their answers varied from increased culturally-relevant food options, to requesting transparency from UD, to a physical space for Latinos to come together. Food may seem trivial or beg the question ‘how would this help them persist?’, but in the context of family gatherings, food is essential. Food brings people together and makes memories. For example, if UD were to invest in bringing some “sazón” (Latin spices) into their kitchen or an authentic Latino vendor onto campus dining, Latino students would feel more welcomed and included. This could potentially help Latino students assimilate to the campus and consider UD as their second home.

During the focus groups and interview, participants referred to the “diversity initiative” or “we need to be diverse” and felt frustrated with how the university is going about becoming more diverse. They mentioned that UD is “tricking people to think they are diverse”. One student went on share her personal opinion and frustrations about UD not being diverse and the numbers shared are from the Associate of Arts program. A few students shared their wish that Destination Delaware would be all year round and not just a recruitment tactic, which they again said was to “trick perspective students to think we

are diverse”. The students were adamant about asking UD to be transparent with their diversity issue and to make changes.

The need for a physical space also came up a number of times throughout the focus groups and interview. Students mentioned that they desire a space that builds community among the Latino student population. Specifically, the Center for Black Culture (CBC) was referenced and participants shared a sincere appreciation for the center’s efforts to include them and plan programs that they would enjoy. When they described the CBC, they explained how the Black alumni come back for Alumni Weekend and share fond memories of their time at UD and how the CBC is always tied to those memories. These students would like such an atmosphere for themselves. Being able to have a physical space might assist those students that participated in the survey that shared difficulty making friends because they are unable to find similarities with their classmates and afraid to ask for help.

At UD, Latino students are proud to be Blue Hens, but would like their environment to feel more inclusive of them. Some ways this might be accomplished is by including Latino students in college-wide committees, particularly those committees that affect their population. The university could provide them with a designated space that would help them build “their hen house”. Further, it would be beneficial to hire more Latino faculty and staff and create intentional programing to facilitate more interaction among Latino students. Research shows mentorship plays a strong role in student persistence and although being Latino is not a requirement to being a Latino student mentor, an increase in Latino faculty and staff would provide more possibilities for

students seeking a Latino mentor. UD can provide diversity training for those faculty members who are unfamiliar with the Latino culture.

### **UD Strides**

It is important to note that UD has made efforts to address concerns since the release of the Middle States Report in 2011. The university established a Center for the Study of Diversity within the College of Arts and Sciences and their mission is to engage faculty and students in scholarly research and facilitate discussions on understanding academic and social impact of diversity. The center funded a Latino/a Research Project in 2013 titled Touchstones for Understanding Inclusion and Belonging at UD: A Study of Latino/a Student Experiences. The faculty researchers Rolon-Dow, Guerron Montero, and Covarrubias identified Four Touchstones Latino students experience while at UD in their White Paper released February 2016. The Four Touchstones are Invisibility, Within Group Diversity, Racial Microaggression and Stressors, and Limited Scope of Latino/a Community. The research project has informed UD administration of the Latino voice.

UD has also invested in advancing inclusion excellence by creating a new position at the university in 2014 titled Vice Provost for Diversity. The purpose for this position is to advance, ensure, and put into practice the university commitment to “embracing a diverse and inclusive campus that reflects our collective views, experiences, capabilities, cultures, aspirations, and ultimately our commitment to excellence” (Inclusive Excellence at University of Delaware, 2014). Currently the vice provost as well as two other high-level university administrators are co-chairing the Multicultural Center Working Group. This working group recently brought an outside

consulting group in to evaluate and assess the need for a multicultural center at UD. The final recommendations from the consulting group will be released to the university in early 2018.

In the Division of Student Life, the administrators have acknowledged the supportive value of Latino Registered Student Originations to the student population and created a Latinx Leadership Council. This council is comprised of presidents of Latinx student groups that come together to help train, support and promote collaboration among their groups. The Division of Student Life is also working collaboratively with the Vice Provost of Diversity's Office on the multicultural center work.

### **Recommendations**

In the Implications for Practice section, recommendations were provided based on the research outcomes. Recommendations in the following section are based on my twelve years of professional experience in the field of Higher Education.

**Admissions.** In the area of admissions, UD should consider implementing a summer bridge program. At one of the previous public universities I worked for, one of my responsibilities was to manage the admissions process of the summer bridge program. The summer bridge program requirements in 2005 were the following: Florida resident, graduate from a public high school, low socio-economic status, first-generation, 2.5 grade point average (GPA) and 900 SAT score. Although the programs minimal requirement of the gpa and test score were low, the majority of the applicants that were admitted met the regular university admissions requirements. The university only admits a maximum of 300 students into the summer bridge program, which begins in the summer term, and

participants attend orientation and live together in the same residence hall throughout the summer term. The university hires upperclassmen to serve as program counselors throughout the summer and have a number of responsibilities such as being resident assistants, providing campus tours, serving as orientation leaders, hosting group meetings and handling programmatic situation that may come up. Many of the upperclassmen that were hired to serve as program counselors entered the university through the summer bridge program which provided a sense of comfort and ease to the new students in the program. During the summer term, program participants would take two three-credit general education classes and a diversity course. Due to the numerous interactions between peers, upperclassmen and university personnel, these students established a bond among each other and adapted well to university life. Once fall began, the students would take different classes within their major but still had program gatherings and leadership development opportunities throughout the academic year.

The university also monitored these students since the program's inception and results were positive. The program participants completed their first year with higher GPAs than their peers that started in the fall and their graduation rates were also higher than their peers. The majority of the students in the program were underrepresented minorities. I know UD has the Associates of Arts program at the Wilmington Campus but I believe they should consider a summer bridge program at the Newark Campus because the students that transfer from the Wilmington Campus have a difficult time adapting to the Newark campus as mentioned by one of the study participants. Investing in a summer

bridge program will help underrepresented minorities acclimate to the college life, campus environment, and establish their communities.

Another suggestion in the area of admissions is parental outreach. As part of the team in the UD Office of Undergraduate Admissions, I know UD provides an excellent program throughout the school year to bring middle school students from surrounding counties in Delaware on to campus to experience UD for a day. During their visit, UD students presented to the middle school students about course selection and college life. They also visited a campus lab and received an interactive presentation from a faculty member. Overall, the middle school students had a wonderful experience. After each middle school visit, I would reflect about the long-term outcome of the visit and always concluded that the experience was not enough to achieve lasting results such as applying to UD once in high school or to any college.

My recommendation is UD should invest in reaching out to those parents of the middle school students that attended. A possible parental outreach initiative could be that an admissions officer can host a presentation series at various middle schools the students visited UD. The presentations can vary from preparing for high school course selection, financial preparation for college, how to apply for scholarships, college essay preparation, and how to prepare for the SAT or ACT exams. Providing these presentations to the parents may have a higher positive result than a one-day visit to UD. In addition, the presentations should be available in other languages. Most parents of underrepresented minorities, especially those that immigrated to the United States, do not have the knowledge or background to guide their children through the college application

process. Adding the suggested component to the visit can truly develop a pipeline of future Blue Hens or college bound students.

**Community Engagement.** UD should consider expanding their curricular and co-curricular programming to include the local Latino community. One example, would be for the Office of Service Learning to find local community agency that serves the Latino community and partner them with a faculty member that integrates service learning in the classroom. Such partnerships can be mutually beneficial for all parties involved. The community agencies will receive assistances, faculty members enhance student learning and social development, and the university will strength relationships within the community. Many students' life experiences may have been sheltered and opportunities like service learning help them understand and process the world around them.

For co-curricular programming, UD should advise the University of Delaware Alternative Breaks (UDaB) Program to consider establishing an ongoing partnership with a community agency that will continue year after year. For example, if they choose immigration as their social issue and select a site in the west coast, the UDaB Program is required participants to complete a pre and post service project in their local community as part of their experience. Furthermore, they would need select a local immigration non-profit to serve in the community to establish a partnership continues year after year. The university may also want to consider opening their doors to local cultural community events to be hosted on campus rather than off campus venues. This would strength UD

relationship with local partners and provide all students the opportunity to learn and connect with the local community.

**Welcoming Environment.** Based on the outcomes of my study, Latino students at UD feel unwelcomed and lack a sense of belonging within the UD community. The common Spanish saying “Mi casa es su casa” (my house is your house) is one Latino students at UD cannot sense on campus. One of their recommendations from the study was a physical space they can call their own. I too believe UD should invest in a physical space for them by way of an Office of Multicultural Affairs. I am suggesting an Office of Multicultural Affairs rather than a Center for Latino Culture because it would leave room for the university to include future underrepresented minorities that might not be largely represented currently. Universities may want to keep in mind demographics are constantly changing within the United States as we are a country of immigrants and should be proactive in preparing a sense of community for future students.

The office administrative personnel would serve as advocates for diversity and inclusion across campus and be dedicated to address student issues and concerns while also providing a myriad of cultural programs for all UD students. In addition, it would provide a space for sub-cultures that are currently underrepresented at the university. The physical space of the office can include a large multipurpose room where all sub-cultures can collectively meet to share thoughts, ideas, and engage in social justice dialogue. It would also have smaller multipurpose rooms for each sub-culture to embrace as their “home” and along with office space for the administrative personnel. The office would be open to faculty to engage with students and offer opportunities for teaching and learning.

By investing in this office, personnel, and physical space, it would not only offer Latino students and other underrepresented minorities a home they so long to have at UD but affect the campus climate positively.

### **Future Research**

Future research should explore students' strength of Latino identity and its relationship to campus climate, particular at institutions similar to UD. It was interesting that the focus group and interview participants' responses differed tremendously in comparison to the survey participants. Perhaps replicating this parallel mixed methods study with a population of Latino students that indicate a high level of Latino identity might yield more convergent findings. I believe it is important for future research to note the differences in levels of Latino identity, as there may be a possible correlation between levels of identity, cultural environment, and first generation status.

### **Conclusion**

We know that the enrollment numbers of Latino students at four-year institutions are increasing and exceeding that of other racial and ethnic groups (Ryu, 2010). We also know that to provide a fruitful college experience for Latinos students, institutions need to provide academic assistance, cultural organizations, and mentors (Esquivel, 2010). Furthermore, research tells us that the Latino student population needs to see and feel a level of comfort and familiarity within their educational environment, and that a lack of representation of minority faculty and staff role models has been found to result in loneliness and discomfort in students (Hagedorn, et al, 2007). A report provided by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (2011) confirms that "UD comes up

short” (p. 10) in diversifying their student body and ensuring high graduation rates for Hispanics, which is consistent with the research.

The qualitative findings indicate that there is a lack of representation in faculty and administrators, culturally-targeted resources and services, and a sense-of-belonging felt among the Latino student-body at the University of Delaware. However, students who participated in the quantitative portion of my study reported almost unanimously that they would persist, choose, and recommend the University of Delaware. Interestingly, what emerged from my data as a strong motivator to persist was Latino students’ personal conviction to make their family proud, to better themselves, and graduate. Moreover, student-participants voluntarily provided suggestions that they felt would help them better integrate into the educational environment at a PWI like U.D., but this did not ultimately deter Latino students from persisting to graduation.

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## APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD



RESEARCH OFFICE

210 Halliham Hall  
University of Delaware  
Newark, Delaware 19716-1551  
PA: 302/831-2136  
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: April 16, 2013

TO: Christy Calderon  
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [453207-1] Understanding Undergraduate Latino Students' Persistence

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: APPROVED  
APPROVAL DATE: April 16, 2013  
EXPIRATION DATE: April 15, 2014  
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.



RESEARCH OFFICE

210 Hullihen Hall  
University of Delaware  
Newark, Delaware 19716-1551  
Ph: 302/831-2136  
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: April 7, 2014

TO: Christy Calderon  
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [453207-2] Understanding Undergraduate Latino Students' Persistence

SUBMISSION TYPE: Continuing Review/Progress Report

ACTION: APPROVED  
APPROVAL DATE: April 7, 2014  
EXPIRATION DATE: April 15, 2015  
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Continuing Review/Progress Report materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.



RESEARCH OFFICE

210 Hullihen Hall  
University of Delaware  
Newark, Delaware 19716-1551  
Ph: 302/831-2136  
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: March 23, 2015

TO: Christy Calderon  
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [453207-3] Understanding Undergraduate Latino Students' Persistence

SUBMISSION TYPE: Continuing Review/Progress Report

ACTION: Approved for Data Analysis Only

APPROVAL DATE: March 23, 2015

EXPIRATION DATE: April 15, 2018

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # (7)

Thank you for your submission of Continuing Review/Progress Report materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.



RESEARCH OFFICE

210 Hullihen Hall  
University of Delaware  
Newark, Delaware 19716-1551  
Ph: 302/831-2136  
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: April 4, 2016

TO: Christy Calderon  
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [453207-4] Understanding Undergraduate Latino Students' Persistence

SUBMISSION TYPE: Continuing Review/Progress Report

ACTION: Approved for Data Analysis Only

APPROVAL DATE: April 4, 2016

EXPIRATION DATE: April 15, 2017

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # (7)

Thank you for your submission of Continuing Review/Progress Report materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.



RESEARCH OFFICE

210 Hullihen Hall  
University of Delaware  
Newark, Delaware 19716-1551  
Ph: 302/831-2136  
Fax: 302/831-2828

DATE: April 5, 2017

TO: Christy Calderon  
FROM: University of Delaware IRB

STUDY TITLE: [453207-5] Understanding Undergraduate Latino Students' Persistence

SUBMISSION TYPE: Continuing Review/Progress Report

ACTION: Approved for Data Analysis Only

APPROVAL DATE: April 5, 2017

EXPIRATION DATE: April 15, 2018

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # (7)

Thank you for your submission of Continuing Review/Progress Report materials for this research study. The University of Delaware IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.

## **APPENDIX B: ONLINE SURVEY CONSENT FORM**

**Title of Project:** Understanding Undergraduate Latino Students' Persistence

**Purpose of Research Study:** The purpose of this study is to understand how Latino students' experiences and environment affect their persistence in college. The results of these focus group interviews will be included in the researcher doctoral executive position paper. The results will be shared with the student life administration in an effort to improve Latino students' college experience at the University of Delaware main campus Newark, Delaware.

**The Researcher:** I am a doctoral candidate for the degree of Educational Leadership in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Delaware. I am conducting this study as a doctoral program requirement.

**Student Consent:** I understand that I was invited to participate in this online survey because I self-identified as Hispanic/Latino on my admissions application and am currently a full-time undergraduate student at the University of Delaware. I understand that I will be asked to complete an online survey about my experience at the University of Delaware as a Hispanic/Latino student. The total time commitment will be no more than 30 minutes. I do not anticipate any risks if I agree to participate in this study. I understand my participation is completely voluntary and I may stop participation at anytime. All my answers to the questions will be anonymous and no results will be linked to me.

I understand results will be presented to others in summary form only, without my name or other identifying information.

There are no benefits to my participation. However, all participants who submit a completed survey will be able to enter into a drawing where two winners will receive a \$50 cash prize.

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or penalty. I have been given the right to ask and have answered any inquiry concerning the study.

I understand my completed online survey will be held on a secure online server (Qualtrics.com), all data will be secured in a locked cabinet and/or password protected environment. All data collected for this study will be destroyed at the completion of the

study or when data is no longer needed.

I understand that I may contact Cristy A. Calderón at (305) 965-7065, calderon@udel.edu or Dr. Gail Rys at (302) 831- 1632, gailrys@udel.edu for answers to questions about the research.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects, Institutional Review Board through the Office of Research at (302) 831-2137.

## APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

**Title of Project:** Understanding Undergraduate Latino Students' Persistence

**Researcher:** Christy A. Calderón, Doctoral Candidate  
School of Education  
University of Delaware  
113 Willard Hall Education Building  
Newark, Delaware 19716  
Phone: 305.965.7065

I am a doctoral candidate for the degree of Educational Leadership in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Delaware. I am conducting this study as a requirement for my Executive Position Paper.

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Gail Rys  
Assistant Dean, Graduate Services  
College of Education and Human Development  
106 Alison Hall West  
University of Delaware 19716  
Phone: 302.831.1632

*Please read this consent form carefully before you decide to participate in this focus group.*

**Purpose of Research Study:** The purpose of this study is to understand how Latino students' experiences and environment affect their persistence in college. The results of these focus group interviews will be included in a doctoral executive position paper. The results will be shared the student life administration in an effort to improve Latino students' college experience at the University of Delaware main campus Newark, Delaware.

**Description of the Focus Group Process:** You have been invited to participate in this focus group interview because you self-identified as Hispanic/Latino in your admissions application and are currently a full-time undergraduate student at the University of Delaware. There will be approximately 4 groups comprised of 5 to 7 students. These students would have voluntarily provided their information after completing the Understanding Undergraduate Latino Students' Persistence at the University of Delaware

online survey. In addition to the students that have filled out the survey the researcher requested nominations of students from expert nominators (ex. Dean of Students and/or directors with in student life). Focus group interviews with all willing participants are being conducted to learn more about their sense of belonging, campus climate, students' experiences and persistence. The focus group will take approximately 60-75 minutes and will be audio recorded. The researcher will ask questions regarding students demographics, academic, social and campus experiences. Recommendations for future students will be welcomed.

**Confidentiality:** Your personal identity and responses to interview questions will be kept confidential throughout the entire study. Your name will never be disclosed or mentioned throughout the study or any published articles and/or presentations. The researcher will assign each participant an alphanumeric code. All data and audiotape will be secured in a locked cabinet and/or password protected environment. All data collected for this study will be destroyed after three years, December 31, 2016 or when data is no longer needed.

**Risks:** There are no risks associated in the participation of the study and your participation is voluntary.

**Benefits:** There are no benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, the information you share during this study will help improve future Hispanic/Latino students at the University of Delaware.

**Participation and withdrawal:** Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may stop participation at anytime. You have the right to choose not to answer a question during the focus group interview. You may also withdraw yourself at any time point during the study by informing the researcher. If you choose to withdraw yourself from the study all data pertaining to you will be destroyed.

**Results from the Project:** When the findings are reported your identity will never be disclosed. The findings of this study will be utilized as part of my Executive Position Paper which is a requirement to earn the Ed.D. The results of the study may also be used internally within the University of Delaware administration for analyzing and improving services for Hispanic/Latino students at UD. Lastly, the study results may be used at various conferences and/or scholarly publications.

#### **WHO SHOULD YOU CALL IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS?**

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the researcher, Christy A. Calderón at 305.965.7065 or faculty advisor, Dr. Gail Rys at 302.831.1632.

If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board at 302-831-2137. Thank you for taking time to join this focus group!

**Student Consent:** I understand I will be asked to participate in a group interview. I understand that I will be audiotaped recorded by the researcher. The researcher will keep these tapes in a locked filing cabinet. I understand that only the researcher will have access to these tapes and that they will be destroyed by December 31, 2016. The total time commitment is 60-75 minutes. I do not anticipate any risks beyond what is experienced in normal life if I agree to participate in this study. I understand my participation is completely voluntary and I may stop participation at anytime. **My signature below will constitute my consent to participate in the research project.** All my answers to the questions will be kept confidential. My name will not appear on any of the results.

I understand that this consent may be withdrawn at any time without prejudice or penalty. I have been given the right to ask and have answered any inquiry concerning the study.

I understand that I may contact Cristy A. Calderón at (305) 965-7065, [calderon@udel.edu](mailto:calderon@udel.edu) for answers to questions about the research. I understand that information obtained during the course of the study will remain confidential, to the extent allowed by law.

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects, Institutional Review Board through the Office of Research at (302) 831-2137.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Date

---

Printed Name of Participant

## **APPENDIX D: SURVEY E-MAIL INVITATION**

To: UD Undergraduate Student

From: Christy A. Calderón

Subject: Invitation to participate in an Undergraduate Hispanic/Latino Study

Greetings Fellow Blue Hen! You have been invited to participate in a research study on understanding undergraduate Latino students' persistence at the University of Delaware. Currently, I am a graduate student at the University of Delaware, pursuing a Doctorate in Education, an Ed.D. I am originally from Miami, Florida by way of Costa Rica.

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about your undergraduate experience as a Hispanic/Latino student at the University of Delaware. The information collected will help me gain a better understanding of the Hispanic/Latino student experience at UD and help me suggest possible areas of improvement for current and future Hispanic/Latino students at the university. Your participation will take approximately 30 minutes to complete the online survey. Once you have completed the online survey you can enter into a drawing where two winners will receive \$50 cash prize. Please submit your survey by 11:59 pm on April 29, 2013.

This project is being supervised by Dr. Gail Rys ([gailrys@udel.edu](mailto:gailrys@udel.edu) or 302.831.1165) in the College of Education and Human Development. This research project 453207-4 has been reviewed and approved by the University of Delaware's Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Please follow the link to participate in this study. Keep this letter for future reference. You may contact me at 305.965.7065 or [calderon@udel.edu](mailto:calderon@udel.edu) or my advisor Dr. Rys if you have questions or concerns. Thank you very much for consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Christy A. Calderón  
Doctoral Candidate  
School of Education  
University of Delaware

## APPENDIX E: INSTRUMENT PERMISSION REQUEST

Re: Persistence/Voluntary Dropout Decision Scale - Permission Request

Inbox x



 **Christy Calderon** <calderon@udel.edu> 8/16/12 ☆  

to ernest-pascarella. ▾

Dear Dr. Ernest T. Pascarella,

Hope all is well. My name is Cristy Calderón-Coto and I'm a doctoral student at the University of Delaware. I would first like to say that your research on the impact college has on students has been extremely helpful and interesting to me (especially throughout my graduate career). For my executive position paper, I am interested in looking into the persistence of Latino/a students at PWI's (focusing on the personal and institutional factors). As I am in the process of finalizing my proposal, I have been in search of a persistence instrument. I came across an article by G. Evelyn Lesure-Lester that looked at the Persistence of Latino Students. I noticed she used your & Terenzini Persistence/Voluntary Dropout Decision Scale as part of the study.

After reading your & Terenzini (1980) article, I thought that the instrument would be a good addition to my study. I would like to request permission from you to utilize Persistence/Voluntary Dropout Decision Scale.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your response.

Best Regards,

...

 **Pascarella, Ernest T** <ernest-pascarella@uiowa.edu> 8/16/12 ☆  

to me ▾

Christy: Sure – feel free to use the scale – just cite the 1980 article. M Best of luck with your research. Cordially, Ernie Pascarella

---

**From:** Christy Calderon [mailto:[calderon@udel.edu](mailto:calderon@udel.edu)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 16, 2012 1:07 AM  
**To:** Pascarella, Ernest T  
**Subject:** Re: Persistence/Voluntary Dropout Decision Scale - Permission Request

...

Dear Dr. Ernest T. Pascarella,

Hope all is well. My name is Cristy Calderón-Coto and I'm a doctoral student at the University of Delaware. I would first like to say that your research on the impact college has on students has been extremely helpful and interesting to me (especially throughout my graduate career). For my executive position paper, I am interested in looking into the persistence of Latino/a students at PWI's (focusing on the personal and institutional factors). As I am in the process of finalizing my proposal, I have been in search of a persistence instrument. I came across an article by G. Evelyn Lesure-Lester that looked at the Persistence of Latino Students. I noticed she used your & Terenzini Persistence/Voluntary Dropout Decision Scale as part of the study.

After reading your & Terenzini (1980) article, I thought that the instrument would be a good addition to my study. I would like to request permission from you to utilize Persistence/Voluntary Dropout Decision Scale.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your response.

Best Regards,

--  
Cristy A. Calderón-Coto  
Office of the Dean of Students, Intern  
Doctoral Student, School of Education  
University of Delaware

## APPENDIX F: ONLINE SURVEY

**Title of Project:** Understanding Undergraduate Latino Students' Persistence

**Purpose of Research Study:** The purpose of this study is to understand how Latino students' experiences and environment affect their persistence in college. The results of these focus group interviews will be included in the researcher doctoral executive position paper. The results will be shared with the student life administration in an effort to improve Latino students' college experience at the University of Delaware main campus Newark, Delaware.

**The Researcher:** Is a doctoral candidate for the degree of Educational Leadership in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Delaware. The researcher is conducting this study as a doctoral program requirement.

**Student Consent:** I understand that I was invited to participant in this online survey because I self-identified as Hispanic/Latino on my admissions application and are currently a full-time undergraduate student at the University of Delaware. I understand that I will be asked to complete an online survey about my experience at the University of Delaware as a Hispanic/Latino student. The total time commitment will be no more than 30 minutes. I do not anticipate any risks if I agree to participate in this study. I understand my participation is completely voluntary and I may stop participation at anytime. All my answers to the questions will be anonymous and no results will be linked to me. I understand results will be presented to others in summary form only, without my name or other identifying information. There are no benefits to my participation. However, all participants who submit a completed survey will be able to enter into a drawing where two winners will receive a \$50 cash prize. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice or penalty. I have been given the right to ask and have answered any inquiry concerning the study. I understand my completed online survey will be held on a secure online server (Qualtrics.com), all data will be secured in a locked cabinet and/or password protected environment. All data collected for this study will be destroyed at the completion of the study or when data is no longer needed. I understand that I may contact Cristy A. Calderón at (305) 965-7065, calderon@udel.edu or Dr. Gail Rys at (302) 831- 1632, [gailrys@udel.edu](mailto:gailrys@udel.edu) for answers to questions about the research. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects, Institutional Review Board through the Office of Research at (302) 831-2137.

If I answer YES, I will moving forward to the next page of the survey, which confirms I have read the consent form, understand my rights and I am giving consent to participant in the study. *Keep a copy of this page for records.*

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

*If answer to Consent Question is “No” – participant receives this message*  
Question 64 If you reconsider filing out the online survey on Understanding Undergraduate Latino Students' Persistence, the link will be available till 11:59 pm on April 29, 2013.

*If answer to Consent Question is “Yes” – participant continues with survey*

**Question 1: Gender:**

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Transgender (3)
- Rather not disclose (4)

**Question 2: Age:**

- Numeric Response

**Question 3: Current Classification:**

- First Year (1)
- Second Year (2)
- Third Year (3)
- Fourth Year (4)
- Fifth Year (5)
- Other (6) \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 4: If a United States Citizen, state of residency:**

- Delaware (1)
- Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Virginia (2)
- Connecticut, Massachusetts (3)
- Florida, Texas, California (4)
- Other (5) \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 5: If an International student, country of residency:**

- Written text response

**Question 6: What is your family's country of origin?**

- Written text response

**Question 7: Are you a first generation college student? (First Generation College Student means neither of the students' parent(s) or guardian(s) received a degree higher than a high school diploma)**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

**Question 64: To what degree do you identify yourself as Hispanic/Latino?**

- Strongly Identify (1)
- Use Only for Demographics (2)
- Do Not Identify (3)

**Question 8: To what degree do you speak Spanish? (*Household refers to the home you grow up in*)**

- I speak Spanish in and out of the household (1)
- I speak Spanish only in the household (2)
- I do not know Spanish (3)

**Question 9: When you started at the University of Delaware, were you a**

- First time Freshman (1)
- Transfer Student (2)

*If answer to Question 9 is "Transfer Student" – Participant is then asked Question 10:*

**Question 10: If you were a transfer student, did you previously attend**

- Community College (1)
- 4-year College or University (2)
- Were you a member of UD Associate of Arts Program (3)

**Question 11 You currently live:**

- On Campus (1)
- Off Campus (apartment/rental) (2)

- Home with family (3)

**Question 12: What is your current major?**

- Written text response

**Question 13: During your college search process, how important was it to attend a university with a large Hispanic/Latino student population?**

- Not Important (1)
- Somewhat Important (2)
- Very Important (3)

**Question 14: How important was representation of Hispanic/Latinos among administration, faculty and staff?**

- Not Important (1)
- Somewhat Important (2)
- Very Important (3)

**Question 15: Did you participate in any Office of Admissions events, such as Destination Delaware, Decision Days, Blue and Golden Saturdays and/or Blue Hen Gateway?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

**Question 55: Are you currently receiving financial aid to help pay for your education at UD?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

*If answer to Question 55 is “Yes” – Participant is then asked Question 56:*

**Question 56: What type of financial aid do you receive from UD? Please check all that apply.**

- Federal or State Loans (ex. Perkins Loan or Stafford Loan) (1)
- University Scholarships (ex. A.I Dupont) (2)
- Private Scholarships (ex. Gates Millennium Scholars) (3)

- Grants (ex. need based such as Pell Grant) (4)
- Work Study (5)
- Other (6) \_\_\_\_\_

*If answer to Question 55 is “No” – Participant is then asked Question 57:*

**Question 57: Are your parents and/or guardians financing your education through...**

- Personal Funds (ex. Checking or Savings Accounts) (1)
- Investment Funds (ex. Stocks, Bonds and Prepaid college funds) (2)
- Private Loan (ex. Parent Plus Loan, Sallie Mae Loan or Bank Loan) (3)
- Other (4) \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 58: Are you working to help finance your UD education?**

- Yes, I work less than 10 hours per week (1)
- Yes, I work 10 - 25 hours per week (2)
- Yes, I work more than 25 hours per week (3)
- Yes, I work during the summer and/or university breaks (4)
- No, I do not work (5)

*If answer to Question 58 is “Yes, ...” – Participant is then asked Question 59:*

**Question 59: If you are currently working to help finance your education, do you also financially contribute to your parents or guardians household?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

**Question 16: Has your time at UD provided you with a better understanding of other racial and ethnic groups?**

- None (1)
- Little (2)
- Some (3)
- A Lot (4)

**Question 68: For the next set of questions use the following scale:**

- Not at all = Never (1)
- Rarely = Once a semester (2)
- Occasionally = Once every 2 to 3 months (3)
- Regularly = Bi-weekly or Monthly (4)

- Frequently = Daily or Weekly (5)

**Question 18: Are your social encounters on campus predominantly with Hispanic/Latino students?**

- Not at all (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Regularly (4)
- Frequently (5)

**Question 19: As an Hispanic/Latino student, do you feel stereotyped in the classroom?**

- Not at all (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Regularly (4)
- Frequently (5)

**Question 20: Do you feel expected to represent the Hispanic/Latinos in classroom discussions?**

- Not at all (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Regularly (4)
- Frequently (5)

**Question 21: Have you ever felt hindered in the classroom because of your Hispanic/Latino identity?**

- Not at all (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Regularly (4)
- Frequently (5)

**Question 22: Have you experienced racial discrimination by a faculty member or administrator?**

- Not At All (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Regularly
- Frequently (5)

**Question 74: Have you experienced racial discrimination by another student?**

- Not at all (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Regularly (4)
- Frequently (5)

**Question 23: Do you feel have you been a victim of racial/ethnic profiling by campus police or others in authority?**

- Not at all (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Regularly (4)
- Frequently (5)

**Question 75: As an Hispanic/Latino student do you feel stereotyped on campus?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

*If answer to Question 75 is “Yes” – Participant is then asked Question 67:*

**Question 67 How much has the feeling of being stereotyped influenced your sense of belonging to the UD community?**

- None (1)
- Some (2)
- Quite a Bit (3)
- An Extreme Amount (4)

**Question 25: I feel UD offers sufficient cultural, educational and social programs for Hispanic/Latino students.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Unsure (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 69: Have you ever attended cultural, educational or social programs hosted by UD?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

**Question 27: As an Hispanic/Latino student, I feel comfortable using the following academic support services programs. Please check all that apply.**

- Academic Enrichment (1)
- Tutoring Services (2)
- Professor Office Hours (3)
- Academic Advising (4)
- Writing Center (5)
- Math Tutorial Lab (6)
- Other (7) \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 28: I believe the academic support services listed in the previous question sufficiently meets my needs.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 30: For the most part, do your professors create a classroom climate where you feel free to ask questions and engage in open discussion?**

- Yes
- No

**Question 32: Would you recommend UD to family members and friends?**

- Yes
- No

**Question 76: If choosing a college again would you still choose UD?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

**Question 33: Have you joined any student organizations at UD listed below? Please check all that apply**

- Cultural Organization (1)
- Academic Organization (2)
- Intramural Sports (3)
- Greek Life (4)
- Religious Organization (5)
- Community Service/Service Learning Organization (6)
- Residence Hall Council (7)
- Student Government Association (8)
- Honors Society (9)
- Other (10) \_\_\_\_\_
- No, I have not joined any student organizations at UD. (11)

*If answer to Question 33 is “No, I have not joined any student organizations at UD” – Participant is then asked Question 70:*

**Question 70: Why have you chosen not to get involved?**

- Written text response

**Question 61: Is there someone you identify as your mentor at UD?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

*If answer to Question 61 is “Yes” – Participant is then asked Question 62:*

**Question 62: Is your mentor a...**

- Faculty Member (1)
- Administrator (2)
- Staff Member (3)
- Other (4) \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 37: My interpersonal relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my personal growth, attitudes, and values.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 38: My interpersonal relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 39: It has been difficult for me to meet and make friends with other students.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 41: Most students at this university have values and attitudes different from my own.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 44: My non-classroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my career goals.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 45: Since coming to this university I have developed a close relationship with at least one faculty member.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 46: I am satisfied with the opportunities to interact informally with faculty members.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 47: Few of the faculty members I have had contact with are genuinely interested in students.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 49: Few of the faculty members I have had contact with are willing to spend time outside of class to discuss issues of interest and importance to student.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 50: Most of the faculty I have had contact with are interested in helping students grow in more than just academic area.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 55: I am satisfied with my academic experience at this university.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 59: I have performed academically as well as I anticipated I would.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 60: It is important for me to graduate from college.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 61: I am confident that I made the right decision in choosing to attend this university.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question65: Getting good grades is not important to me.**

- Strongly Disagree (1)
- Disagree (2)
- Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)
- Agree (4)
- Strongly Agree (5)

**Question 71: What recommendations do you have for improving the Hispanic/Latino student experience at UD?**

- Written text response

**Question 72: Was there a question asked that you would like to elaborate on?**

- Written text response

**Question 73: Are there any comments or recommendations you would like to add that may not have been covered in the survey?**

- Written text response

### **Closing Statement**

The second part of my study will include focus group interviews that will take place during the spring semester 2013. Each interview session will last approximately 60-75 minutes. I will be asking questions about your experience as a Hispanic/Latino student at the University of Delaware. This is an opportunity to have your opinion and concerns about the University of Delaware college experience heard. If you are interested in participating in this second part of my study please send me your name, email and phone number to [calderon@udel.edu](mailto:calderon@udel.edu).

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### **RAFFLE ENTRY**

In order to have a chance to win one of the two \$50 cash prizes for submission of your completed survey, please copy and email the information below to

udlatinostudy@gmail.com. If you enter the survey raffle, note that the researcher will know you participated in the survey but your name will not be linked to your survey responses. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Remember if you have any questions or comments regarding this study contact Cristy Calderon at (305) 965-7065, calderon@udel.edu or Dr. Gail Rys at (302) 831- 1632, gailrys@udel.edu. Thank you again for all your help. Have a wonderful day!

## APPENDIX G: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### *Understanding Latino Students' Persistence at the University of Delaware*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Pre-Introduction**

- Good afternoon or Good evening!
- How is your day going?
- Handout consent form
- Handout short questionnaire

#### **Introduction**

- **Who am I:** Thank you for your willingness to participate in this focus group interview. My name is Cristy Calderon and I am a doctoral candidate in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Delaware. I decided to research the undergraduate Latino population at UD because I am Latina (Costa Rican-American) and also attended a Predominantly White Institution. I can relate to many of the experiences you have encountered throughout your college life.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to understand how Latino students' experiences and environment affect their persistence in college. The results of these interviews will be included in a doctoral executive position paper which is a requirement for completing my doctorate degree. The interview will also be recorded and transcribed. Your responses will be confidential and none of you will be individually identified in my paper or on tape.
- **Format of Interview:** The interview will be structured but informal and take about 75 minutes. I ask that all of you honor confidentiality and what is discussed here is not repeated or disclosed after the focus group interview ends. I will start off by asking you to introduce yourselves and then go my questions. I will leave time at the end for questions. Are we ready? Okay, lets go...

### **Demographic Information**

- Introductions – Tell me a little bit about yourself so we can get to know each other
  - Probe: What do you most like to do in your free time?
  - Probe: Year/Classification?
  - Probe: Major?
  - Probe: Family Origin?
  - Probe: Do you live on or off campus

### **Interview Questions**

1. Why was it important for you to attend college?
2. What factors helped you decide to attend the University of Delaware?
  - a. Probe did any of you attend an UD admissions event
  - b. Financial offer
  - c. Location
  - d. Personal connection to UD
3. As a Latino/a on campus, how do you think your college experience compares to non-Latino/a students?
  - a. Probe both academic and social experiences
4. What have been the greatest challenges as a Latino/a on the University of Delaware campus?
5. What is the best thing about being Hispanic/Latino on UD's campus?
6. How would you describe UD's Hispanic/Latino culture?
7. Can you tell me about an event or experience that really captured what it's like to be a Hispanic/Latino student at UD?
8. What type of recommendations would you have me make to UD administration that would enhance the Hispanic/Latino experience at the University of Delaware?
9. Would you choose UD again? Why or why not?

### **Wrap Up**

- Are there any other thoughts you'd like to share with me regarding your experience at the University of Delaware
- Any questions for me?

Thank you for your time and willingness to participate. If you have any questions about the study feel free to contact me at [calderon@udel.edu](mailto:calderon@udel.edu) or 305.965.7065.

## APPENDIX H: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Rather not disclose

Student Classification:

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

State of Residency: \_\_\_\_\_

Country of Family Origin: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you First-Generation:

- Yes
- No

If no, who in your family attended college?

- Mother
- Father
- Sister
- Brother
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX I: RESEARCH QUESTIONS PERMISSION REQUEST

Re: Research Questions - Permission Request - University of Delaware

Inbox x



 **Christy Calderon** <calderon@udel.edu>  
to Hernandez\_john

8/9/12 ☆



Dear Dr. John Hernandez,

Hope all is well. My name is Cristy Calderón-Coto and I'm a doctoral student at the University of Delaware. I would first like to say that your research on Latino college student retention has been extremely helpful and interesting to me (especially throughout my graduate career). As I am in the process of finalizing my proposal, my mentor suggested I reach out to you. For my executive position paper, I am interested in looking into the persistence of Latino/a students at PWI's (focusing on the personal and institutional factors). I would like to request your permission to utilize your Phase I Interview Questions and Phase II - Institutional & Climate Issues of the Environment questions as part of my survey and/or focus group interviews. Also, I was wondering if you knew of a persistent instrument that may exist. I have been doing searches for instruments but haven't succeeded.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your response.

Best Regards,

...

--

Cristy A. Calderón-Coto  
Office of the Dean of Students, Intern  
Doctoral Student, School of Education  
University of Delaware

 **Hernandez, John** <Hernandez\_John@sccollege.edu>  
to me

8/14/12 ☆



Hello Christy,

Thank you for your email re: requesting permission to utilize my interview questions; please feel free to use them as you pursue your dissertation research. It's always good to hear from graduate students who have read that study—so I'm flattered.

Unfortunately I am not aware of a persistence instrument although I'm sure they are out there. Are you looking for one that is specific to Latino/a students? Or students in general? One suggestion is to identify Latino scholars who have published on Latino retention issues and contacting them personally to see if they are aware of instruments for your consideration.

Good luck as you move forward.

Best, John

.....  
John C. Hernandez, Ph.D.  
Vice President of Student Services &  
Foundation Director  
Santiago Canyon College  
8045 E. Chapman Avenue  
Orange, CA 92869  
email: [hernandez\\_john@sccollege.edu](mailto:hernandez_john@sccollege.edu)  
phone: (714) 628-4886  
fax: (714) 532-2055

*"I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacle's which one has overcome while trying to succeed." Booker T. Washington*

## APPENDIX J: FOCUS GROUP E-MAIL INVITATION

To: UD Undergraduate Student

From: Christy A. Calderón

Subject: Invitation to participate in an Undergraduate Hispanic/Latino Study

Attachment: Focus Group Consent Form

Greetings Fellow Blue Hen! You have been invited to participate in a research study on understanding undergraduate Latino students' persistence at the University of Delaware. Currently, I am a graduate student at the University of Delaware, pursuing a Doctorate in Education, an Ed.D. I am originally from Miami, Florida by way of Costa Rica.

The purpose of this 60-75 minute focus group interview is to gather information about your undergraduate experience as a Hispanic/Latino student at the University of Delaware. The information collected will help provide a better understanding of Hispanic/Latino students and possible areas of improvement at the university. This is an opportunity to have your opinion and concerns heard.

I will be hosting 4 focus groups interviews during the spring semester 2013 (will insert exact dates). Location and times are TBA.

I have attached the focus group consent form for your review. I will have hard copies available at the interview for you to sign. Reply to this email by TBA to secure your participation in this study. I look forward to learning and discussing your overall college experience at the University of Delaware.

*This project is being supervised by Dr. Gail Rys ([gailrys@udel.edu](mailto:gailrys@udel.edu) or 302.831.1165) in the College of Education and Human Development. This research project 453207-4 has been reviewed and approved by the University of Delaware's Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB).*

Feel free to contact me at [calderon@udel.edu](mailto:calderon@udel.edu) or 305.965.7065 with questions or concerns. Thank you very much for consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Christy A. Calderón  
Doctoral Candidate  
School of Education  
University of Delaware

## **APPENDIX K: CODEBOOK**

### **1. Importance of College**

- a. Credential
- b. First-Generation
- c. Easier life
- d. Expectation
- e. Family value
- f. Financial
- g. Role model
- h. Betterment of self

### **2. Decision to attend UD**

- a. Location
- b. Quality education
- c. Sibling attended
- d. 2-2 program
- e. Major
- f. Campus look
- g. Recruitment event
- h. Athletics
- i. Financial
- j. Medical condition,
- k. Honors program
- l. Second thoughts

### **3. Challenges as a Latino student**

- a. Lack of relativity
- b. Judgment
- c. Making friends
- d. Doesn't feel like home
- e. Overcoming cultural stereotypes
- f. Asking for help
- g. Lack of mentorship
- h. Bad roommate experience
- i. Transferring
- j. UD Culture shock
- k. Lack of support

- l. Seeking Latino friends
- m. English as a Second Language
- n. Financial Hardship

**4. Campus Involvement**

- a. Cultural opportunities
- b. Latino student group
- c. Multicultural Greek Life

**5. Perceptions of White Peers**

- a. Money = Success
- b. Uninterested in cultural diversity
- c. Wealthy
- d. Overlook ½ Latino

**6. Academic Experience**

- a. Only Latino in class
- b. Major promotes diversity
- c. Low faculty expectations
- d. Academic support programs
- e. Strong as White Peers

**7. Support**

- a. Latino friends
- b. Multicultural Greek life
- c. Admissions staff
- d. Self
- e. Honors program
- f. Family
- g. Academic support programs
- h. Other Latinos' experiences

**8. Latino Identity**

- a. Latino on paper
- b. Misperceptions of identity
- c. Skin color
- d. Embrace culture vs. not
- e. Use difference for a benefit
- f. Happy medium concept

**9. Campus Climate**

- a. Lack of diversity
- b. Less of a community
- c. Misjudged by peers
- d. Admissions quotas
- e. Minorities stick together

**10. Recommendations to UD**

- a. Request intentional programming
- b. Admit and engage
- c. Engage diversity
- d. Safe physical space
- e. More funding towards cultural programming
- f. Develop more outreach to support community