

ABSTRACT

PREPARING LATINO IMMIGRANT STUDENTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION AND COLLEGE ENROLLMENT:
A GRANT PROPOSAL

By

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May 2015

The purpose of this project was to locate a potential funding source and write a grant proposal for a program designed to prepare Latino immigrant youth for high school graduation and college readiness through education, mentoring, and parental involvement. The proposed program was designed to be implemented at Estancia High School located in Costa Mesa, California. The program will provide students and their families with an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills needed to navigate high school and postsecondary education. This will be accomplished through participation in educational workshops, mentoring sessions, college tours, and financial aid advising. If funded, the program will address many of the educational needs of Latino immigrant students who often encounter multiple barriers that may put them at greater risk for truancy, school dropout, low-wage jobs, and risky behaviors. Actual submission for funding was not required for successful completion of this project.

PREPARING LATINO IMMIGRANT STUDENTS FOR HIGH SCHOOL

GRADUATION AND COLLEGE ENROLLMENT:

A GRANT PROPOSAL

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I remember sitting in my English as a Second Language (ESL) class with tears running down my face, unable to understand anything my teacher was saying, and feeling totally hopeless. Eight and a half years later, my life has changed so much. Now, tears are running down my face, but this time my tears are tears of happiness. However, I am sure I would not be where I am today if it were not for God and all the wonderful people He has put in my life. Thank you Lord for giving me the strength and the hope to keep going even when I felt like giving up.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The United States: A Nation of Immigrants

The United States has been historically known as a nation of immigrants. Throughout the centuries, people from all over the world have immigrated to this country in search of a better life. Some people have come to escape war, others in search of religious freedom, and yet others came for the opportunity to improve their economic situation. However, regardless of their reasons for coming to the United States, most people have immigrated to the nation in large numbers and at specific periods. In the past, for example, most immigrants came from Europe and Asia; but in recent decades, the largest influx of immigrants has been coming from Latin America (Haskins & Tienda, 2011). For instance, in 2011 research indicated that 53% of immigrants are from Latin America, and the Latino immigrant population is expected to continue growing at a significant rate (Haskins & Tienda, 2011).

Problem Statement

Many of these immigrants from Latin America come to the United States in search of better educational opportunities for their children. One of the major factors for them in deciding to immigrate to the United States is access to public education (Hill & Torres, 2010). Moreover, according to Hill and Torres (2010), research also indicated that Latino immigrants are more likely than other immigrants to have high expectations about the quality of schools in the United States and the opportunities it will provide

which results in them trying to succeed economically and academically. However, despite a strong work ethic, an intense motivation to succeed, an understanding of the value of education, and high expectations about the quality of the American school system, the academic achievement of Latinos lags behind others in the United States (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Keeping in mind that the United States has a large population of Latino immigrants who are lagging behind others in their academic achievement, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of the current situation. In 2010, the Center for Immigration Studies revealed that 47.3% of Hispanic immigrants had less than a high school education and 28.2% had only a high school education, which means that 75.5% of all Hispanic immigrants at that time were not pursuing a college career. Moreover, research indicated that Latino immigrant youth had one of the highest dropout rates with about 52% of foreign-born Latinos being high school dropouts (Pew Research Center, 2010). Additionally, it was found that Latino students, both immigrant and nonimmigrant, were more likely to be placed on a vocational track than on a college preparatory track (Hill & Torres, 2010). Therefore, it is not surprising that “low educational achievement among Latinos is one of the biggest problems limiting the future of immigrant children” (Haskins & Tienda, 2011, p. 2).

Purpose of the Project

Based on these findings, the purpose of this project was to locate a funding source and write a grant proposal to fund a program designed to increase high school graduation rates and college readiness among Estancia High School English learners through education, mentoring, and parental involvement. The program will provide students and

their families with an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills needed to navigate high school and postsecondary education. This will be accomplished through participation in educational workshops, mentoring sessions, college tours, and financial aid advising. Furthermore, the program will address many of the educational needs of Latino immigrant students who often encounter multiple barriers that may put them at greater risk for truancy, school dropout, low-wage jobs, and risky behaviors.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined as:

Vocational Track: Particular course of study designed to prepare students for practical non-academic occupations. Behavior and conformity are expected from students in this category rather than learning and thinking (Worthy, 2010).

College Preparatory Track: Particular course of study designed to prepare students for college. Students in this track are expected to be sophisticated thinkers, active participants, and independent learners (Worthy, 2010).

Limited English Proficiency: Restricted ability to write, speak, and/or read English because primary language is not English and fluency has not been developed (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014).

Low-Track Curriculum: A course of study geared toward vocational training for students who have no intention or plans to go to college. It focuses on basic literacy skills, test preparation, and simple low-difficulty content (Worthy, 2010).

Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act): Federal legislative effort that would allow “undocumented students willing to attend college or serve in the military to have the full ability to contribute to our society by creating a clear

path to citizenship and allowing states to determine eligibility requirements for in-state tuition” (Palacios, 2010, p. 2).

Multicultural Relevance

Educational achievement varies significantly among different immigrant minority groups in the United States. Research indicated that, “among all ethnic and racial groups, those of Asian origin have the highest levels of education and income” (Haskins & Tienda, 2011). Furthermore, according to Crosnoe and Turley (2011), the United States Department of Education found that for more than 20 years, Latinos have had the lowest graduation rate among all ethnic groups. To explain this difference between the Latino and the Asian population, Crosnoe and Turley suggest that Asian immigrants benefit not only from the choice of their educated parents to immigrate to the United States, but also from the willingness of the school system to invest more time and resources in children from immigrant groups that have been academically successful. By contrast, immigrants from Latin America are more likely to experience socioeconomic disadvantages and stereotypes that prevent them from being educationally successful. Therefore, it is important that social workers understand the disparity in academic performance among diverse immigrant groups.

When working with immigrants from Latin America, it is also important to keep in mind that there is diversity even within the Latino culture. There are 19 countries in Latin America with many sub-ethnicities, races, and languages represented. People from these different countries come to the United States with varying levels of economic and social capital that aid or hinder their adaptation (Moreno & Gaytán, 2013). “ In addition to the resources that immigrants had in their home country and the resources they arrive

with, the access that immigrants have to information, education, and cultural knowledge (i.e., language, norms, and customs) after their arrival to the new country will lead to different pathways of adaptation” (Moreno & Gaytán, 2013, p.10). Therefore, in order to implement interventions to improve the academic achievement of Latino immigrant students, it is fundamental that professionals acknowledge cultural differences within the Latino community and provide the necessary supports for them to access information, education and cultural knowledge.

Social Work Relevance

Working with vulnerable and oppressed populations is an essential component of the mission of the social work profession. Social workers must engage in efforts to promote social justice and to advocate for social policies to address inequalities in various systems (National Association of Social Workers [NASW], 2014). Therefore, social workers generally work with individuals and communities affected by these inequalities. With this in mind, it is important for social workers to continue doing research and advocating for social change to develop a more accepting and equitable educational system in which students from diverse backgrounds can have an opportunity to succeed. Social workers can contribute to the creation of a positive school climate by implementing strategies to help promote the academic success of Latino students and their families. Social workers can also work with other individuals and organizations to link Latino immigrant students with academically successful Latinos from their community who can serve as positive role models and mentors.

School social workers can also help by making sure that all written and spoken information is available in Spanish for parents who have limited English proficiency. As

cited by Moreno and Gaytan (2013), research indicates that the lack of written or verbal communications in Spanish causes frustration among Latino parents and a feeling that their culture and viewpoints are not valued. Therefore, it is important for social workers to ensure immigrant students and their families have access to information they can understand. Social workers can also assist Latino immigrant students and their parents by teaching them how to navigate the American school system and how to advocate for themselves if they perceived they are not having access to the supports and resources they need to be academically successful (Becerra, 2012).

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The first section of this literature review provides a brief historical background of Latinos in the United States school system. The second section describes the demographics of the Latino immigrant and nonimmigrant population in the United States. Then, the third section identifies risk factors that increase low academic achievement among the Latino immigrant population. These factors include limited English proficiency, immigration status, lack of familiarity with the higher education system, socioeconomic status, and segregated school systems. The fourth section provides a review of the protective factors that promote high academic achievement. These include parental involvement, extracurricular activities, generational status, and positive role models. Finally, the last section identifies programs that have been effective in supporting and preparing Latino students on their way to high school graduation and college enrollment.

Historical Background of Latinos in the United States School System

During the first half of the 20th century, Latino children, especially those from a Mexican American background were seen as intellectually inferior, and they were often placed in separate classes or separate schools (Menchaca & Valencia, 1990). This separation of Mexican American children from their White peers originated in the decades following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (Valencia, 2005). The signing of

the treaty and the annexation of the southwest states marked the beginning of decades of persistent and pervasive prejudice and discrimination against people of Mexican descent residing in the United States (Valencia, 2005). Segregated schools were established as a way to prevent Mexican American students from attending White schools, and in a short period of time school segregation became a common practice throughout the southwest states.

The segregation of Mexican American students in the Southwest continued to increase into the 1890s and spilled over to the 20th century. By the beginning of the 1930s, there were approximately 88,000 students enrolled in 13 California state school districts. Approximately 25% of them were Mexican American. In areas where the new immigrants were concentrated, such as the lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas, segregation of Mexican students became much more prevalent. By the 1930s, 90% of the schools were racially segregated (Valencia, 2005). In sum, school segregation throughout the Southwest was so pervasive that it became the setting in which the academic failure of Chicano students originated and proliferated (Valencia, 2005). Therefore, given the strong connections between segregation, inferior schooling, and poor academic outcomes for many Mexican American students, segregation has become a significant topic of study in the field of education.

Demographics

The Latino population in the United States has significantly increased over the past decades. According to Dondero and Mullen (2012) Latinos constitute approximately 16% of the total U.S. population, and they are the largest minority group in the country. The Latino population in the United States is comprised of people from different national

and ethnic backgrounds. These include immigrants from Mexico (59.3%), Puerto Rico (9.7%), Cuba (3.5%), Central America (5.1%), South America (4.0%), and Dominican Republic (2.3%). Research also indicates that a significant portion of them (40.2%) was born out of the United States. Furthermore, it is estimated that 35% of the total Latino population consists of children and adolescents under the age of 18 years old. Therefore, Latino youth in particular is one of the largest and fastest-growing groups in the nation and an important segment of the school system population (Schwartz et al., 2013). However, in terms of school enrollment and achievement, they attend the most poorly equipped schools, they are underrepresented in Advanced Placement classes, and they are more likely to be placed on a vocational track than on a college track (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Risk Factors

Latino immigrant students often have to confront many challenges that make them more likely to drop out of high school and prevent them from pursuing higher education. Given the great demand for advanced skills and knowledge in today's global economy, high school graduation and access to higher education have become increasingly important (Baum & Flores, 2011). Therefore, it is essential to review some of the major challenges that may prevent Latino immigrant students from completing their education and developing these advanced skills needed to succeed in today's society. Some of these challenges include language barriers, citizenship issues, lack of familiarity with the higher education system, and socioeconomic status (Baum & Flores, 2011).

Language Barriers/Limited English Proficiency

Limited English proficiency is one of the main factors playing a significant role in the educational achievement of immigrant students. These students are more likely to be placed in low-track curriculums with limited exposure to regular classes due to limited language proficiency (Kim & Diaz, 2013). Consequently, the lack of exposure to these classes increases their likelihood of underperforming on standardized testing and dropping out of high school. Additionally, according to Hill and Torres (2010), limited English proficiency also influences parental involvement. According to them, the lack of translators or bilingual staff is more than an inconvenience for Latino parents because teachers often treat them as if they were incompetent. Therefore, rather than feeling encouraged to work in partnership with teachers and school staff, Latino parents often end up feeling inferior and embarrassed (Hill & Torres, 2010).

Immigration Status

Another important issue to address in the realm of high school graduation and college access is the impact of immigration status on educational achievement due to the growing number of immigrants entering the country illegally every year. Recent estimates indicate that approximately 11 million undocumented people live in the United States, of whom about 9% are younger than 18 years of age and almost two-thirds are from Mexico or Central America (Greenman & Hall, 2013). It is also important to keep in mind that despite the introduction of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act in Congress in 2001 and the large numbers of people advocating for immigration reform, the legal status of undocumented students remains uncertain (Perez, 2010). Therefore, many Latino immigrant students across the United States continue to

be unable to meet eligibility criteria for any type of financial assistance to attend college (Perez, 2010). Under current law, a large number of these young adults are subject to deportation, cannot receive financial aid, and cannot legally work. Additionally, they are more likely to experience high levels of stress due to their legal status, making it harder for them to focus on academic success (Greenman & Hall, 2013).

The immigration experience can be very stressful because it typically involves separating from family members and friends, learning a new language, and adapting to a different cultural system. In addition to these immigration stressors, a large number of Latino immigrants also face great difficulties related to unstable and undesirable working and living conditions (Arbona et al., 2010). The level of psychosocial pressure and tension experienced by immigrants as a result of these stressors is commonly known as acculturative stress (Santiago, Gudino, Baweja, & Nadeem, 2014). For Latino youth, acculturative stress related to conflicting cultural values and practices, language difficulties, and discrimination is associated with increased feelings of anxiety and depression (Santiago et al., 2014). Often times these feelings interfere with academic functioning and result in poor grades, low academic self-efficacy, higher dropout rates, and lower probabilities of attending college. Furthermore, acculturative stress is a risk factor that may negatively influence emotional development and self-esteem, and predicts problematic behavior among immigrant and nonimmigrant Latino youth (Barrett, Kuperminc, & Lewis, 2013).

Lack of Familiarity with the Higher Education System

In addition to language barriers and immigration status, inadequate information about the United States higher education system is another major challenge preventing

Latino immigrant students from pursuing a college career. Students and their families often lack the information necessary to make an informed decision about their education. For instance, consistent research findings have revealed that the lack of financial aid knowledge among Latino families is one of the main factors significantly influencing their decision to apply for college (Zarate & Burciaga, 2010). Most immigrant students and parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds often learn about financial aid programs too late to be able to consider attending college. Additionally, although both parents and students expect to receive such information from school personnel, very few receive timely information from teachers or counselors. In a study conducted by Zarate and Burciaga (2010) almost 80% of high school students received information on financial aid as juniors or seniors from their high school counselors or teachers. This was especially true for low socioeconomic status Latino immigrants, who were 72% more likely to rely on counselors for financial aid information, compared with 34% of high-income students.

Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status has also been identified as a factor that significantly influences academic ability and educational outcomes among immigrants. For instance, Kim and Diaz (2013) stated that data from the Current Population Survey revealed that about one-third of the children of immigrants (including first and second-generation) live in poverty. According to them, this situation continues into young adulthood, with consequences such as low academic achievement, higher school-dropout and low postsecondary enrollment rates. Furthermore, even though a similar percentage of the foreign-born and native-born population lived in poverty in 2010 (18.6% vs. 14.8%,

respectively) within the immigrant population, poverty rates differed by region of origin. For example 27.9% of all immigrants from Mexico lived in poverty, followed by 20.9% of immigrants from Central America, 19.1% of immigrants from the Caribbean and 12.7% of immigrants from Asia (Motel & Patten, 2012). While some of these immigrants successfully navigate the American school system, many others, especially Latino immigrants who tend to come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, are more likely to drop out of high schools and fail to gain access to colleges and universities. Additionally, Kim and Diaz stated that in a study conducted by Solorzano, Villalpando and Oseguera (2005), 52% of Latinos graduated from high school, but when students' country of origin was factored in students from Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico showed higher graduation rates than students from Mexico and El Salvador.

Segregated Schools

Many Latino immigrant youth often find themselves in segregated schools that reduce their access to educational resources and put them at greater risk for low academic achievement. Research has shown that children of immigrant families are more likely than non immigrant students to attend schools with a high concentration of minority students, crowded classroom space, and limited school supplies and resources (Han, 2008). These factors significantly influence students' sense of security, ability to concentrate, and capacity to learn (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010). Therefore, these schools often have poor achievement test outcomes, high dropout rates, and limited information about college (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010). Furthermore, research shows that segregated school environments may prevent the development of social capital because they limit the

opportunities to build valuable networking connections, which are crucial factors to academic success (Ryabov & Van Hook, 2007).

Protective Factors

Social Capital

As previously mentioned, social capital is known as one of the factors that increases opportunities for students to build valuable networking connections needed for educational development and academic success. The concept of social capital refers to social networks and the quality and strength of these networks. Such relations have value for individuals because they provide an avenue for information exchange and facilitate the establishment of social norms (Shoji, Haskins, Rangel, & Sorensen, 2014). The development of social capital between schools and families can be beneficial for children because it connects two essential social systems in which they learn and grow. Greater connectivity between the family and the school system promotes mutual awareness of children's needs, provides avenues for parents to advocate for their children, and encourages teachers to work in collaboration with parent and students to achieve academic success. Furthermore, it was found that strong social capital helps Latino students to be more engaged in school and improve their academic achievement (Shoji et al., 2014).

Social capital can take several forms in supporting high school students' academic achievement. Two of these forms include funds of knowledge and emotional support. Funds of knowledge refer to the repertoire of information and behaviors helpful to navigate the educational system, while emotional support refers to the offering of affective support and encouragement (Nunez, 2009). In addition to these two forms of

social capital, Putnam (2000) identified a third form of social capital known as civic engagement, which involves a sense of obligation to give back to the community through participation in community service activities. Research indicates that all these forms of social capital can facilitate Latino students' transition to college. With respect to the funds of knowledge, research suggests that students' ability to navigate the college environment is positively associated with sense of belonging and retention. Additionally, emotional support has been shown to be positively associated with academic adjustment, academic performance, and college retention (Nunez, 2009). Finally, with regard to civic engagement, it was found that students' sense of reciprocity leads them to engage in community service activities that significantly increase their access to social capital (Putnam, 2000).

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is a factor that plays a significant role in the educational achievement of children. Research has shown that when parents become involved in their children's education, college aspirations and academic preparation are higher (Gonzalez, Borders, Hines, Villalba, & Henderson, 2013). According to Gonzalez and colleagues (2013), there is a positive association between parental involvement and student grades, rates of participation in advanced courses, lower dropout rates, motivation toward schoolwork, and valuing education. Furthermore, parental involvement in education has been identified as a way to close demographic gaps in achievement and as an effective approach to maximize students' potential (Gonzalez et al., 2013). However, despite of the benefits of parental involvement, Latino immigrant parents may not view parental involvement as part of their role for several reasons. One of them could be their

own experience in formal education settings (Gonzalez et al., 2013). For instance, Mexican families in the United States often feel that schools are focused on academics and individuality, and this makes them feel unclear about what role they can play in the school system (Gonzalez et al., 2013). Therefore, it is important to inform parents about the educational system in the United States so that they can better understand their role and the positive impact they can make on their children's education.

It is also important to keep in mind that typical definitions and expectations of school parental involvement in the United States usually do not acknowledge cultural differences (Gonzalez et al., 2013). Many families often are able to work within the school's framework by participating in traditional parent involvement opportunities. However, there are families that have many barriers to participation due to economic, linguistic, cultural, and life circumstances (Gonzalez et al., 2013). For example, Latino families that immigrated recently to the United States may be beginning to learn about the structure of the school system while also having to work and learn the language. Sometimes these circumstances prevent them from getting involved in traditional forms of parental involvement such as Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and volunteering at the school. This does not necessarily mean they are uninvolved in their children's education. Often times, Latino immigrant parents may be following their cultural standards, which include respecting the authority of the school to do its work while maintaining active involvement in the life of their children at home (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). This cultural value is held by many Latino immigrant families, and it is commonly known as *respeto*, which includes holding in high esteem adults and professionals in the community. Therefore, making suggestions or interfering with the

work of the school can be viewed as disrespectful (Gonzalez et al., 2013), and parents may choose to engage in other forms of parental involvement.

The vast majority of research on parental involvement has focused on traditional school-based practices, while non-traditional home-based practices have been frequently overlooked. This can be problematic because racial/ethnic minority parents are less likely than European American parents to engage in school-based parental involvement activities due to perceived personal and social barriers (Suizzo, Pahlke, Yarnell, Chen, & Romero, 2014). Therefore, it is important to understand that there are different types of parental involvement besides school-based practices. Examples of nontraditional parental involvement include excusing children from chores in order to do schoolwork, finding them a quiet workplace in overcrowded homes, and making personal and financial sacrifices to provide them with the best possible education (Ceballos, Maurizi, Suarez, & Aretakis, 2014). Such practices correspond with the sociocultural context in which many poor, racial/ethnic minority families reside.

Another form of nontraditional parental involvement that has been overlooked is parents' participation through community organizing. Although traditional parental involvement practices such as monitoring children's homework, reading to them, and volunteering in schools are linked to students' positive academic and behavioral outcomes (Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2001), many parents believe that these practices are often times insufficient to boost the achievement of low-income children in troubled schools. Parents in these failing schools realize that although they are responsible for supporting children's learning, schools are responsible for providing a quality education (Zachary & Olatoye, 2001). With this in mind, during the first half of the 20th century, Felicita and

Gonzalo Mendez dedicated their lives to organize other parents to fight against Mexican American school segregation (McCormick & Ayala, 2007). Outraged by the disparity of treatment between their dark skinned children and children of lighter complexions, a group of parents acting in the interest of the entire Mexican American community filed a lawsuit against Westminster County (McCormick & Ayala, 2007). This lawsuit and the parents' efforts to secure their children's right to an equal education led to the end of *de jure* segregation in the schools of California. However, nowadays many parents continue to engage in community organizing to transform low-performing schools and to fight against *de facto* segregation, which continues to be a persistent issue across the nation (McCormick & Ayala, 2007).

Extracurricular Activities

In addition to parental involvement, participation in extracurricular activities is another factor that positively influences academic achievement. Research indicates that participation in extracurricular activities is associated with increased educational achievement and attainment, reduced problem behavior, improved attitudes toward educational and occupational goals, positive psychosocial adjustment, and decreased likelihood of dropping out (Peguero, 2011). Furthermore, research findings reveal that racial and ethnic minority students who get involved in extracurricular activities are more likely to improve their self-esteem, grades, test scores, and educational retention (Peguero, 2011). Nevertheless, despite all the benefits associated with extracurricular activities, research also shows that there is a significant difference in participation among different racial and ethnic groups. For instance, in a study conducted by Peguero (2011),

Asian American first-generation students were more likely than Latino first-generation immigrant students to participate in extracurricular activities.

Generational Status

Generational status influences Latino students' academic performance and postsecondary enrollment decisions. Research indicates that first generation immigrants tend to have higher educational aspirations and stronger beliefs in the importance and usefulness of education compared to their more established minority peers (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010). It is believed that these educational aspirations and beliefs are attributed mainly to their parents' positive attitudes and optimism about immigrating to the United States in search of a better life. Furthermore, researchers examined immigration and family life among Latino youth in the United States, and they found that determination to succeed was based on the understanding of sacrifices made by family so that the children could have a better life (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010). Constant reminders about the value of education and the need to do well in class in order to go to college were believed by parents to make a difference in their children's educational performance (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010). Therefore, these parents often try to pass down their dreams and hopes to their children by telling them to study and become somebody (Ibanez, Kuperminc, Jurkovic, & Perilla, 2004).

Evidence-Based Programs

College Preparation Programs

In response to the low educational achievement among Latinos and other disadvantaged minorities, schools and other organizations have developed programs to help and support students who are less likely to graduate from high school and attend

college. Some of these programs include Advanced Via Individual Determination (AVID), and High School Puente (Bergerson, 2009), and Parents Teaching Parents (Downs et al., 2008). These programs provide services to students and their families to help them prepare for higher education (Huerta, Watt, & Butcher, 2013). In order to accomplish these goals, effective college access programs must include factors such as academic preparation, skills development, mentoring, nurturing aspirations, access to information about higher education and strategies to use that information to reach educational goals, an emphasis on the culture of the students, family engagement, and financial assistance (Bergerson, 2009). According to Bergerson (2009), those who can address most of the components previously mentioned will have the greatest impact on the education of young people.

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a college preparatory program designed to help students that have been historically underrepresented in colleges and universities prepare for higher education (Mendiola, Watt, & Huerta, 2010). It offers students the opportunity to develop skills that will assist them in the transition from high school to college. These skills are developed through an academic and social support elective class, tutors/mentors, and highly trained teachers. AVID also offers students the opportunity to obtain college credits before graduating from high school by preparing them for advanced placement classes, concurrent enrollment, and dual credit courses. Furthermore, AVID provides students with a variety of skills needed for academic success. Some of these skills include time management, goal setting, teamwork, and planning. According to Lozano and his colleagues (2009), research

shows that the skills and strategies learned in AVID have effectively assisted high school graduates in the transition to college.

A study conducted by Mendiola and her colleagues (2010) investigated the educational progress of Hispanic college students who participated in AVID during high school. The study also explored which components of the program had the most influence on enhancing the college experience and graduation rate of Latino AVID high school graduates. Three schools that had been implementing the program for more than four years in the state of Texas were selected for the study. Then, AVID coordinators at each of these high schools provided a list of students who graduated from the program between 2002 and 2005. Survey methodology, group interviews, and a review of high school and university transcripts were used to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The study revealed that while in high school, 73% of the AVID graduates took at least two AP courses. Most students also reported earning college credit while in high school. A majority of the students indicated that certain AVID components were still beneficial to them in college. These included using time management strategies (69%), teacher and parental involvement (73%), and attending tutoring sessions (69%). Based on university transcripts, 79% of students were on track to graduate from college.

Puente Program

Like any other early intervention or college access program, Puente's primary goal is to increase the number of students pursuing higher education. This program, however, focuses more specifically on Latino students given that they are less likely than all other ethnic groups to attend college. The primary purpose of the designers of the

program was to promote positive attitudes toward schooling and a higher sense of self-efficacy in the participants (Gandara & Moreno, 2002). Puente means bridge in Spanish, therefore the program was conceived as a bridge from one segment of education to another. The Puente curriculum focuses on the development of writing and critical thinking skills. However, the program also focuses on mobilizing resources within the Latino community to address the problems of low educational achievement. The high school Puente program emphasizes three major components: instruction in reading and writing, intensive college preparatory counseling, and mentoring through and adult who introduces and guides students to opportunities they may have never envisioned.

Students who come from bilingual backgrounds, whether or not they are bilingual, face significant difficulties in reading and writing. Therefore, the Puente program recognized the need of including a solid instructional component to help students prepare for college level reading and writing (Gandara & Moreno, 2002). The curriculum includes the implementation of writing portfolios that allow students to learn to critique writing, assess their own progress, and set high performance standards for themselves. Students are also required to read four to twelve books independently, and they consistently work in small groups, which help them to become more critical readers and listeners. In addition to the instructional component, Puente also included a mentoring and counseling component. The mentoring component allows students to establish and develop a positive relationship with appropriate mentors from the community. Mentors are encouraged to meet with the student and the student's family on a regular basis in order to learn more about the student. The counseling component is often identified as the heart of the program, because it oversees the student's progress and

ensures that any academic deficiencies are quickly identified and addressed.

Furthermore, the counseling component also ensures that students and their families are provided with the information necessary to prepare for higher education. In sum, the three Puente components are essential elements in raising the skills and aspirations of the students and increasing their opportunities to attend college.

To measure the impact of the program, researchers conducted a cohort study across the state of California. The study initially identified 1,000 Puente participants and 1,000 non- Puente students. The non- Puente students were then divided into two groups: Latino and non-Latino. At the beginning of their freshman year, 75 Latino non-Puente students were matched with 75 Puente participants. By the end of 12th grade, 144 of them remained in the sample. Then, they were followed into college to determine the long-term impact of the Puente program. The study examined the impact of Puente in attitudes toward schooling, academic achievement, college matriculation, and retention (Gandara, 2002). After high school graduation, the study revealed that 43% of Puente students were attending four-year colleges compared to only 24% of non-Puente students. Two years later, the researchers located 62 students, and they found that 75% of Puente students from the original sample were continuing in college compared with 55% the non-Puente students. When asked about the Puente program's effect on their attitudes and preparation for college, 49% of Puente students agreed that counselors influenced how hard they worked in school compared with only 16% of non-Puente students. Furthermore, 58% of Puente students disclosed that the counselor influenced their decision to go to college, and 82% of them also reported they had all the information they needed to apply for college by 12th grade. However, only 22% of non- Puente students

reported being positively influenced by their counselors, and 41% of them did not have the information necessary to apply for college (Gandara, 2004).

Parents Teaching Parents (PTP)

Given the fact that lack of familiarity with the higher education system is one of the barriers preventing students and their families from navigating the road to higher education, it is not surprising that increasing the college knowledge can be an effective approach to address the problem (Downs et al., 2008). With this in mind, researchers and educators have identified some of the key characteristics that make college knowledge programs for Latino families effective. Some of the identified characteristics include information on college requirements, financial aid, SAT and ACT preparation, and guidance through the college admission process. Additionally, research has indicated that programs are most helpful when presented in a brief and easily understandable format, and at times when parents will not need to miss work (Torrez, 2004). Once parents become members of these programs, it is important to encourage them to become involved in a leadership position such as outreach program coordinators or liaisons. When placed in leadership positions, parents are more likely to recruit other families in the community, and they can also provide information in a culturally appropriate manner. Furthermore, research shows that partnering with parents makes programs more sustainable as committed families continually work on recruiting members to ensure the long-term maintenance of the existing programs (Downs et al., 2008).

One of the existing programs aiming to increase the familiarity with the higher education system among Latino students and their families is known as Parents Teaching Parents (PTP). As the name implies, this program involves parents who volunteer to

teach other parents and community members about higher education and career preparation. The program was designed to be delivered within a 6-week time period, and by the end of the sessions, the results indicated that the course effectively met the objective of increasing the knowledge about the process and the requirements needed to access a college education. Prior to participation in the course, most parents reported that they had never received information about college entrance requirements (83%), financial aid (88%), and college testing (88%). However, following participation in the program, 100% of participants strongly agreed that the course increased their knowledge in all content areas.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that the Latino population is the largest and fastest-growing minority group in the United States, and in terms of education, they often lag behind other groups. Some of the risk factors that prevent them from attending and succeeding in college are the language barriers, their immigration status, the lack of familiarity with the higher education system, their socioeconomic status, and the segregated schools they attend. Although there is no single solution to these problems, programs such as Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Puente, and Parents Teaching Parents (PTP), have been implemented to help underrepresented students on their way to college. As previously discussed, some of the essential elements that make these programs effective are academic preparation, financial assistance, nurturing aspirations, mentoring, and parental involvement (Bergerson, 2009). Programs including these elements are likely to have a positive impact on bringing down the barriers standing in the way of postsecondary education for Latino immigrant students

and other minority students. Therefore, if funded, the program will include many evidence-based components of existing college preparation programs, but it will additionally address specific problems experienced by Latino immigrant students such as language barriers, immigration status, and lack of familiarity with the United States education system.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Target Population

The target population for this program is the Latino immigrant community at Estancia High School. Estancia High School is located in the City of Costa Mesa, California. Its student population in the academic year 2013-2014 was composed of 1,271 students. Almost 20 % of these students were English learners, whose primary language was Spanish (California Department of Education, 2014). The dropout rate among Latino students, both immigrant and nonimmigrant was significantly higher than the dropout rate for non-Hispanics. Therefore, the grant is intended to serve the Latino immigrant population due to their high instances of low academic achievement (Center for Immigration Studies, 2010). The purpose of the grant is to expand the service capacity of Estancia High School through additional funding for staff positions and operational costs for the proposed program.

Needs Assessment and Collection of Data Needed for the Grant

Databases such as the United States Census, the California Department of Education, and the County Quick Facts from the U.S. Census Bureau were accessed. The literature reviewed revealed that services addressing language barriers, immigration status, and lack of familiarity with the United States school system were needed in order to address some of the problems experienced by Latino immigrant students. The literature reviewed also indicated that almost 20% of the student population at Estancia

High School was in need of the services. To further assess the need for the program this grant writer used different methods of data collection including a thorough review of the available literature and other additional studies.

Identification of Potential Funding Source

In order to identify a potential funding source, this grant writer completed an extensive Internet search. Search engines such as Google and Yahoo were used in addition to the links and resources provided by the library at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) Social Work page. Key words for the Internet search included grants, high school students, education, immigrants, college preparation, and Latino students. No applicable information was gathered from searches using the key terms “education grants” and “grants for Latino’s education.” Therefore, in order to obtain more relevant information, a second search was conducted using different parameters.

Keeping in mind that the proposed project had components similar to the AVID program, this grant writer utilized the Google search engine to look for AVID funding sources. One of the top results was the official website of the AVID program, and it provided a detailed description of the variety of funding sources to pay for components of the AVID system. It explained that every school district had its own internal protocols and systems to identify potential funding sources. Some of the potential funding sources included district funds, title funds, and foundations and corporations. The website provided a link to the list of the potential funding sources, but it also suggested to search for local funding sources in the community. Therefore, this grant writer narrowed down the search by using the terms “California AVID funding sources.” One of the top results was the AVID Center California funding resources, which provided a list of private and

corporate foundations that had provided grants to fund the AVID program in California. The list included the name of the foundations, a short description of their mission, the areas where they fund, and the average amount of money they have given in the past.

Criteria for Selection of Actual Grant

When looking at the different foundations for grant opportunities, this grant writer researched program information, which included all qualifications and restrictions on funding. The foundation selected offered grant amounts equal to or exceeding the amount needed for the proposed program, and it provided funds to different organization and institutions, including public schools. The foundation had an accessible application process, information on past grants allocated, and a description of new and upcoming grants. Based on the information provided online, other organizations such as the Weingart Foundation and the College Access Foundation also qualified as potential funding sources. However, the selected foundation was the closest fit that could provide funding for the proposed program, considering the category of the population and the foundation's mission and funding priorities.

The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation

Description of the Foundation

The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation is an international organization dedicated to improving student performance and increasing access to education so that children and adolescents around the world have more opportunities for life-long success (Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, 2014a). The organization funds education-related programs in South Africa, India, and the United States. According to the foundation, in the United States, there is a persistent achievement gap among students from different economic and

racial backgrounds. Therefore, to close this gap and increase graduation rates among historically underrepresented students, they fund programs that focus on performance-driven education, human capital, quality school options, academic and after-school programs, and college preparation and completion. The foundation believes that a college degree can be the springboard out of poverty given that it increases job opportunities and potential earnings, but the foundation is also aware that many low-income and minority students have less opportunities to earn a college degree due to the educational achievement gap. For that reason, they fund college preparation and completion programs that support disadvantaged high school students as they work toward their college acceptance and graduation.

Application Procedures

The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation accept unsolicited proposals for education, health, and microfinance programs in the selected countries where they work. To get started, grant seekers must check the organization's eligibility. During this process, grant seekers will be asked a series of screening questions. If they are eligible, they will be able to start the application process. The foundation recommends grant seekers to be prepared to provide them with contact and financial information for their organization, as well as a detailed description of the project for which they are seeking funds. Furthermore, grant seekers also need to specify the amount they are requesting, the project budget, the number of children the project will reach, a problem statement with a limit of 500 characters, a project description no longer than 1,500 characters, a brief description of how the requested funding will be used, and a brief description of

proposed evaluation/success metrics. All this information must be entered into the online grant proposal via their website (Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, 2014b).

In order to prepare to fill out the online grant proposal application, grant seekers are encouraged to prepare their answers by using the Grant Planning Worksheet. The online grant proposal consists of three different sections including organization information, request information, and contact information. After completing the online application, applicants will receive a confirmation email, and Michael and Susan Dell Foundation staff will proceed to review the request. If the staff determines that the proposed project aligns with the mission of the foundation, applicants will be contacted within six weeks to submit a complete grant application.

Alignment of Proposed Program with Mission of the Foundation

The proposed program as a means of increasing high school graduation and college enrollment and completion rates aligns well with the mission of the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation given that the foundation strongly supports programs that work to increase the graduation rates among historically underrepresented and low-income students (Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, 2014c). The literature review previously conducted revealed that the Latino immigrant student population is one of groups with lower academic performance and higher dropout rates. Therefore, working with youth to close the achievement gap and increase access to higher education through participation in college preparation programs is a common goal of both the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation and the proposed program.

CHAPTER 4
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Statement of Need

Upon entrance to most public schools, speaking Spanish at home triggers language assessments designed to determine English proficiency and language classification (Zarate & Pineda, 2014). If students are classified as English Learners (EL), research indicates that they are more likely to have negative high school outcomes. For instance, there is evidence that language classification influences how students are tracked in high school. In a study conducted by Gonzalez and colleagues (2003), Latino students that were classified as English learners often felt stuck in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes without access to college preparatory courses. There is also evidence that EL students are more likely to attend segregated schools with high concentrations of English learners, which limits their opportunities to interact with fluent English speakers and can result in lower English proficiency and academic achievement. These findings are relevant to the proposed project given the fact that California is the state that educates the largest number of English learners in the United States (O'Sullivan, 2015).

During the academic year 2013-2014, Estancia High School, located in Costa Mesa California, served a total of 368 English learners (California Department of Education, 2014). Out of the 368 students, 95.65% of them were Spanish speaking. In

2013, 83 out of 106 English learners in their senior year graduated. In 2014, 88 English learners took the English Language Arts California High School Exit Exam, which is a requirement for high school graduation, but only 45% of them obtained a passing score compared to 95% of English proficient students. Furthermore, 45% of English learners failed the Mathematics exam compared to 97% of English proficient students. When looking at college enrollment, the California Department of Education reported that in 2007 only 54% of English learners were enrolled in California public postsecondary institutions (California Department of Education, 2014).

Although some English learners are long-term ELs who have attended U.S. schools for many years, it is widely known that a large number of them are recent arrivals that came to the United States as immigrants (Onchwari, Onchwari, & Keengwe, 2008), and often times they do not take advantage of existing college preparation programs due to their limited English proficiency. Therefore, given that a large number of Estancia High School students are English learners and potential immigrants, it is important to develop a program responsive to their linguistic and cultural needs. Additionally, in an era in which education is the tool for success, it is extremely important to prepare these students for high school graduation and postsecondary education.

Description of Project

The proposed program will prepare Latino immigrant youth for high school graduation and college readiness through education, mentoring, and parental involvement. The program will provide students and their families with an opportunity to work together toward personal and academic growth. In order to accomplish this goal, students and parents will engage in weekly activities such as educational workshops,

mentoring sessions, college tours, and financial aid advising. Through these activities and interventions, the program will provide students and their families with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in high school and postsecondary education. The program will operate throughout the academic year, and services will be provided during school and after school hours. Participation in the program will be voluntary.

Program Goals and Objectives

The literature review revealed that immigrant students face specific challenges that may prevent them from completing high school and accessing a college education. These challenges include language barriers that can impact students' performance in the classroom and on standardized testing; limited social capital that limits students' access to information and resources; lack of financial aid knowledge needed to accurately estimate college costs and make informed decisions; and lack of parental involvement, which has indicated to play a significant role in students' college aspirations and academic performance. Therefore, based on these findings, the ultimate goal of the proposed program is to increase high school graduation rates and college readiness among Estancia High School English learners through: (a) the delivery of linguistically and culturally relevant information and resources, (b) the establishment of partnerships with successful role models, (c) the provision of adequate financial aid advising, (d) the exposure to higher education institutions, and (e) the promotion of parental involvement.

Objective 1: Deliver linguistically relevant information and resources.

1a. The literature review revealed that limited English proficiency is one of the main factors negatively influencing parental involvement (Hill & Torres, 2010). Therefore, in order to improve service delivery, staff and mentors will provide

interpreting services in English and Spanish during educational workshops, individual advising sessions, college tours, school meetings, and any other type of events.

1b. Immigrant students have limited opportunities to participate in regular classes due to language barriers (Kim & Diaz, 2013), therefore, students in the proposed program will be assigned peer mentors that will guide them and answer questions in an unobtrusive manner.

Objective 2: Establish partnerships with successful role models.

2a. Research indicates that one of the components of successful college preparation programs is the connection between students and appropriate mentors (Bergerson, 2009). With this in mind, the proposed program will designate a mentor liaison that will be in charge of identifying appropriate college mentors and matching them with students participating in the program.

2b. In order to develop a strong and productive mentoring relationship, the mentors and students participating in the program will meet at least once a month to identify individual goals and ways to achieve them. This relationship will increase students' access to social capital, which is one of the factors that helps Latino students to be more engaged in school and improve their academic achievement (Shoji et al., 2014).

Objective 3: Provide adequate financial aid advising.

3a. Lack of financial aid knowledge among Latino immigrant families was found to be one of the most significant factors influencing students' decisions to apply for college (Zarate & Burciaga 2010). Therefore, students and parents participating in the proposed program will participate in at least three educational workshops or individual

advising sessions to learn about scholarships, loans, and other forms of financial aid so that they are aware of the options available to them for financing higher education.

3b. Given that the legal status of immigrant students is different on a case-by-case basis, and this significantly influences the types of financial aid they are eligible for, twelfth-grade students in the proposed program will submit their FAFSA or California DREAM Act application with the support of a professional financial aid advisor or mentor. If students are not able to submit any of these applications, they will obtain additional support to develop an effective financial plan.

Objective 4: Expose students to higher education institutions.

4a. In a study conducted by Cates and Schaeffle (2011), students reported that one of the most influential program elements impacting their decision to go to college was the participation in activities designed to welcome them in a college environment and provide them with specific information about college and future planning. Based on these findings, the proposed program will increase students' exposure to higher education institutions by organizing at least three campus tours to local universities and community colleges.

4b. Students participating in the proposed program will participate in at least one campus tour, and they will obtain relevant information regarding the application process, the admission requirements, and the different majors offered at that campus.

Objective 5: Promote parental involvement.

5a. Research on parental involvement revealed that parents in leadership positions are more likely to recruit other families in the community given that they can provide information in a culturally appropriate manner. Therefore, a Latino parent will

be hired to serve as a part-time outreach coordinator, and he/she will participate in staff meetings to provide mentors and staff with valuable information regarding ways to increase parental involvement.

5b. Research indicated that when parents are involved in their children's education, college aspirations and academic preparation are higher (Gonzalez et al., 2013). With this in mind, parents of students participating in the proposed program will participate in at least three activities, events, or individual sessions sponsored by the program.

Program Activities/Methods

Focus Groups: Two different focus groups will be conducted as part of the program implementation. The first group will be composed of English Learner (EL) students, and the second group will consist of parents. The groups will be conducted with the purpose of obtaining detailed information about people's feelings, perceptions, and ideas regarding the proposed program.

College Readiness Workshops: The college readiness workshops will take place once a month for eight months. Therefore, there will be a total of eight college readiness workshops throughout the school year, and the topics will include: goal setting, time-management, A-G requirements for high school graduation, the benefits of Advanced Placement coursework, the importance of SAT and ACT scores, different types of higher education institutions, the college application process, and the different types of financial aid available to students. In order to make the workshops more convenient for students and working parents, the meetings will take place in the evening, and student volunteers that need community service hours will provide childcare.

College Tours: Estancia High School currently has campus tours to Orange Coast College, Santa Ana College, and Golden West Community College. Therefore, students in the program will be highly encouraged to attend those tours. In addition to the tours previously listed, the program will sponsor a tour to the two closest California State Universities and a tour to the University of California, Irvine. If the number of students that want to attend a campus tour is larger than the bus capacity, students in their junior and senior year will be given priority. Parent volunteers will be invited to attend in order to increase parental involvement, and they will be asked to help supervise students during the trip.

Mentoring/Peer Mentors: Students in regular classes will be assigned a peer mentor that will help them in an unobtrusive way whenever they have difficulty understanding some of the material due to language barriers. Peer mentors will receive an incentive to participate in the program. The incentives can include hours of community service, extra credit points, or discount coupons for participating stores. If peer mentors' grades are compromised as a result of participating in the program, students will be assigned to a different peer mentor. In addition to the in-class peer mentors, all students in the program will receive one-on-one mentoring from volunteer college students. Mentoring services will be based on the students' school grade.

Financial Aid Advising: In addition to the financial aid workshop for parents and students, program participants will be able to schedule individual and group appointments to meet with the financial aid advisor. These meetings will provide students and their parents with the opportunity of asking questions specific to their individual situation.

Staffing

Program Director: This will be a full-time position to be staffed by a bilingual social worker with a Master's degree (MSW) and a Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) Credential. The program director will work in collaboration with staff to ensure that activities and services are consistent with the mission of the program. Additionally, the program director will supervise and train staff to ensure the program maintains a high level of quality. The program director will also be responsible for monitoring progress and providing evaluation results to staff, program participants, and sponsoring agency.

College Readiness Coordinator: This will be a full-time position to be staffed by a bilingual social worker with a bachelor's degree in social work and experience working in a school setting. The college readiness coordinator will prepare and facilitate educational workshops and campus tours to assist students and their parents with creating and implementing goals and action plans consistent with their individual needs. Additionally, he/she will serve as the preceptor of the mentor liaison and the parent outreach coordinator.

Financial Aid Advisor: This will be a part-time position for a bilingual financial aid advisor who will be in charge of conducting the financial aid workshop for parents and students. Additionally, the financial aid advisor will meet one-on-one with all students participating in the program to create an individualized plan designed to help students finance higher education. The financial advisor will also schedule individual appointments to answer specific questions regarding financial aid and scholarship applications.

Mentor Liaison (MSW Intern): The duties of the mentor liaison will be performed by a MSW intern completing his/her internship hours at Estancia High School. The mentor liaison will be responsible for contacting college organizations or clubs interested in mentoring high school students. Once college mentors have been identified, the mentor liaison will match them with EL students based on similarities between the mentor and the student. Additionally, the mentor liaison will be responsible setting up and overseeing the mentoring relationship between EL students in the program and peer mentors. This will not be a paid position.

Peer Mentors (Volunteers): This will be a position for volunteer high school students with good academic standing that want to participate in the program for extrinsic or intrinsic motivations. These mentors will be responsible for assisting EL students in their regular curriculum classes by helping them understand what they are supposed to do in class. This will not be a paid position.

College Mentors (Volunteers): College mentors will provide on-going one-to-one guidance and support to all students participating in the program. They will also be responsible for participating in activities to help students discover personal interests, skills, and potential career options. In contrast to peer mentors, college mentors will not provide in-class support. This will not be a paid position.

Parent Outreach Coordinator: This will be a part-time position to be staffed by a parent participating in the program. This parent will be responsible for reaching out to other parents in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways in order to increase parental involvement. The parent outreach coordinator will also be required to attend all staff

meeting to provide feedback and ideas on how to provide better services and resources to students and their parents.

Timeline

1-2 Months (August-September): The school principal will hire a program director, a college readiness coordinator, and a financial aid advisor. Once all background checks are conducted and cleared, the program director and the college readiness coordinator will begin recruiting EL students and parents to participate in the program. By the end of the second month, the focus groups will be conducted to gather relevant information and feedback from parents and students. Then, the program director will hire a parent outreach coordinator. Additionally, students and their parents will be given a college-knowledge pre-test.

3-5 Months (October, November, December): The college readiness coordinator will prepare and facilitate the first three educational workshops. The financial aid advisor will facilitate the third workshop and begin conducting individual appointments with students. On October, the mentor liaison will conduct individual assessments and interviews to match students in the program with appropriate mentors. The parent outreach coordinator will develop and implement a plan to recruit parents. The first campus tour will take place on November.

6-8 (January, February, March): Three more educational workshops will take place during this time. Eligible students will begin filling out financial aid forms and applications, and they will submit them by March. The program director will monitor progress and provide supervision for all staff members. The financial aid advisor will continue conducting individual appointments with students and their parents. The mentor

liaison will assess the relationship between mentors and mentees to determine goodness of fit and progress made. The second campus tour will take place on February.

9-11(April, May, June): During April and May students will continue participating in educational workshops, mentoring sessions, and individual financial aid advising. The third campus tour will take place in April. Then, during the month of May, the program director and staff members will conduct program evaluations. Parents and students will be asked to take a college-knowledge post-test and a quantitative and qualitative survey. During the first week of June all staff members and program participants will be invited to attend a closing ceremony to celebrate students' successes and recognize mentors and parents for their support.

Program Evaluation

In order to determine the extent to which the program is meeting predetermined goals and objectives, different evaluation methods will be used throughout the year. All parents and students participating in the program will take a college-knowledge pre-test that will measure their starting point or the amount of pre-existing knowledge they have on the topic. Then, at the end of the year, pre-test results will be compared with post-test results to measure college knowledge gained as a result of participating in the program. The program director and the college readiness coordinator will also collect quantitative data on students' enrollment and academic progress in regular curriculum classes, number of participants attending the educational workshops, attendance to college campus tours, and number of meetings with college mentors and financial aid advisor. Additionally, parents and students will be asked to provide qualitative feedback to gain a better understanding about the perceptions of parents and students regarding service

delivery. The combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods will allow program staff and participants to understand program processes and outcomes. Finally, data will be collected by the end of the year to determine the number of financial aid and college applications submitted by students participating in the program.

Budget Narrative

Refer to line item budget in Appendix

Personnel

The program will include one bilingual program director with a master's degree in social work and a Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) credential. The salary for this position will be \$ 56, 177 plus benefits at 21%, which adds up to a total of \$67,974 for the year. One college readiness coordinator will be needed to assist with the implementation of the program. This will be a full-time social worker with a bachelor's degree in social work. The salary for this position will be \$31,620 plus benefits at 21%, which adds up to a total of \$38, 260. The program will also require a part-time financial aid advisor to provide parents and students with adequate information and the skills needed to navigate the financial aid system. The total for this position adds up to \$15, 120. Additionally, one parent outreach coordinator will be included in the program, and this will be a part-time position for a parent participating in the program. The total for this position add up to \$10, 500. The total amount requested for personnel adds up to \$131, 854. The mentor liaison position will be an in-kind cost to the program.

Operations and Expenses

An estimated \$800 dollars will be spent on transportation for the three college campus tours. This will include the fee for the bus, the bus operator, and the

administrative fee. Approximately \$2,000 dollars will be spent on snacks and refreshments that will be provided during workshops and college tours. In addition, an estimated \$2,400 dollars will be needed to purchase office supplies including paper, ink, pens, and folders. Approximately \$2,500 dollars will be spent on travel expenses such as mileage reimbursement for conducting outreach. Finally, \$2,900 dollars will be spent on two computers and a printer. The school site will provide in kind office and meeting space, access to the Internet, and access to the computer lab. Telephone, fax, and mailing will also be provided in kind by the school site. The total amount requested for operations and expenses adds up to \$ 10,600.

CHAPTER 5

LESSONS LEARNED

Analysis of Application Process

Identification of Need for Proposed Program

Upon arriving to the United States as an immigrant student, this grant writer encountered many obstacles and academic challenges throughout her high school education. In addition to dealing with the emotional stress associated with separating from family and friends and adjusting to the new environment, the grant writer had to cope with the need to learn a new language and adapt to a new system of cultural norms and expectations. The level of psychosocial pressure and tension that she experienced as a result of these stressors led to feelings of anxiety and depression that often times interfered with academic functioning. During her first three years of high school she did not consider the idea of attending college, because it seemed like an unattainable dream due to her limited English proficiency, citizenship status, and financial situation. However, during her last year of high school, she had access to different forms of social capital and resources that allowed her to pursue a college degree. However, an alarming majority of students in her ESL classes did not make it to college, and many of them did not even obtain a high school diploma.

With this in mind, this grant writer began to wonder if her experiences were exclusive of that population or if the issue was relevant to a larger segment of the

population. Therefore, she reviewed local, state, and national data to determine the number of Latino immigrant students in the United States. Then, she conducted some research to learn more about their academic and personal experiences. Once she obtained sufficient information, it became evident that her personal experiences were not unique but common across the United States. Therefore, she was eager to develop a program responsive to the needs of these students at the local level.

The Literature Review

The process of reviewing the existing literature was exhausting but very educationally enriching. At first, it was difficult for the grant writer to identify effective key terms to begin the research and gather relevant information regarding college readiness for Latino immigrant youth. However, receiving guidance from the thesis advisor allowed this grant writer to develop a more solid idea about the potential risk factors and protective factors associated with the topic. Identifying some of these factors was very helpful because they served as key concepts that were used to begin the academic search. When entered into the database search engine, some of the key terms generated valuable information about existing programs that have been implemented to prepare Latino students for college. One of these programs was the Advancement Via Individual Determination program, which served as one of the main models to develop the proposed program.

The research on Advancement Via Individual Determination and other college preparation programs highlighted some of the components that make college access programs effective. Therefore, this grant writer utilized that information to conduct further research and gain a better understanding about ways to effectively incorporate

these research-based components into a program responsive to the cultural and individual needs of Latino immigrant students. The literature review also allowed this grant writer to learn about the historical background and the demographics of Latino immigrant students living in the United States. Throughout this process of conducting and analyzing research, being organized and setting daily goals was essential for this writer to successfully complete a thorough review of the literature. In addition, this writer had to be very creative to perform at her maximum level on developing the proposed program while also having to balance schoolwork, internship, and family relationships.

The Host Agency

The process of selecting a host agency was not complicated due to the connections established in the past. Having a direct connection with Estancia High School students and staff allowed this grant writer to discover the value of direct observation, because instead of relying on self-reported information, the grant writer actually observed and experienced many of the challenges encountered by immigrant students. Additionally, as a former student and volunteer at Estancia High School, this writer was able to establish a professional relationship with the School Community Facilitator, who provided her with more valuable information about the immigrant Latino population. Therefore, the host agency was selected based on the needs of its population.

Identification of Funding Source

Locating a potential funding source was a completely new experience for the grant writer. At first, it was difficult to find appropriate funding organizations using general terms such as immigrants, education, and college readiness. Therefore, the grant writer utilized other approaches to obtain more useful information. One of these

approaches consisted of reviewing the funding sources of Advancement Via Individual Determination, given that it was a program with components and goals similar to those of the proposed program. Utilizing this strategy was very helpful because it provided the grant writer with excellent information about potential funding sources for college readiness programs at the local and national level. Once the closest match between the purpose of the funding organization and that of the proposed program was determined, the grant writer learned that it was also very important to find out if the organization funded public schools, given that the host agency was a public school.

Strategies to Enhance the Likelihood of Funding

Programs or services designed to address the needs of the immigrant population often find opposition from a large number of citizens and politicians who argue that undocumented immigrants are a huge economic drain because of the costs associated with law enforcement, education, and the use of state and federal social services (Becerra, Androff, Ayon, & Castillo, 2012). Therefore, in order to enhance the likelihood of funding when applying for the grant, it is extremely important to clearly justify the need for the proposed program. Additionally, it is essential to delineate the goals and objectives of the program in a clear and concise manner to help the funders and the general population understand the potential positive outcomes associated with investing in the education of all students living in the United States. Finally, it is imperative to have a well established and reliable evaluation plan to determine the effectiveness of the program and justify current program funding.

Limitations

When looking at the information presented in the literature review it is important to keep in mind that research on the Latino immigrant population often included people from all ages and generational status. Therefore, it was difficult to sort out information specifically related to Latino immigrant youth. With this in mind, the grant writer was very careful when analyzing and interpreting research findings in order to avoid making wrong generalizations. Additionally, another limitation of the proposed program is that it does not include mental health services to help immigrant students cope with trauma and feelings of anxiety and depression resulting from their immigration experiences. However, this component can be provided by referring students to local mental health agencies in the community.

Relevance to Social Work Practice and Policy

The National Association of Social Workers policy statement declares that immigration and refugee affairs are relevant to the profession of social work, because many clients are affected by immigration policies or practices either directly or indirectly (NASW, 2009). Additionally, it states that immigration concerns issues of social justice and human rights, which are essential elements at the heart of the social work profession. Therefore, the NASW (2009) supports immigration and refugee policies and practices that promote social justice and avoid racism and discrimination. Furthermore, the organization promotes access to public education, emergency health care, and mental health services for undocumented immigrants. Based on these policy statements and declarations, it is evident that providing support and services to the immigrant population

should be a priority for all social workers committed to the profession's core values of social justice and human rights.

With regards to education, the National Association of Social Workers is in favor of educational reforms and practices that recognize the diverse needs of students, particularly those with multiple barriers that could prevent them from meeting their highest potential (NASW, 2015). Therefore, the proposed program is relevant to the social work profession, because it is designed to address many of the educational needs of Latino immigrant students who often encounter multiple barriers including discrimination, lack of English proficiency, acculturative stress, and poverty. If unaddressed, these barriers have the potential of thwarting the goals and aspirations of young people and putting them at greater risk for truancy, school dropout, low-wage jobs, and risky behaviors.

APPENDIX
LINE-ITEM BUDGET

APPENDIX

Line Item Budget

Estancia High School				
Hispanics Organized to Promote Education				
One Year				
	Project Effort	Total Cost	In Kind	Requested Amount
PERSONNEL COSTS				
Program Director	100%	\$ 56,177		\$ 56,177
Benefits @ 21 %		\$ 11,797		\$ 11,797
College Readiness Coordinator	100%	\$ 31,620		\$ 31,620
Benefits @ 21%		\$ 6,640		\$ 6,640
Financial Aid Advisor	50.00%	\$ 15,120		\$ 15,120
Parent Outreach Co.	50.00%	\$ 10,500		\$ 10,500
MSW Intern 600 hours		\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	
PERSONNEL SUBTOTAL		\$ 149,854	\$ 18,000	\$ 131,854
DIRECT OPERATING COSTS				
College Tours		\$ 800		\$ 800
Refreshments		\$ 2,000		\$ 2,000
Office Supplies		\$ 2,400		\$ 2,400
Travel/Mileage		\$ 2,500		\$ 2,500
Utilities/phone/fax/internet		\$ 3,600	\$ 3,600	
Offices & Meeting Space		\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	
Computer & Printer use		\$ 2,900		\$ 2,900
DIRECT OPERATING SUBTOTAL		\$ 21,700	\$ 11,100	\$10,600
TOTAL COSTS		\$ 171,575	\$ 29,100	\$ 142,454

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