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Chicano Ph.D. Pipeline

Submitted by Scott Jaschik on July 12, 2005 - 4:00am

Community colleges have long been seen as key institutions in the push to get more minority students into higher education. A new study suggests that for one minority group -- Chicanos -- the importance of community colleges extends up through the production of doctorates.

Nearly one-fourth of Chicanos with doctorates started their higher education at a community college, according to a new [report](#) [1] by the Chicano Studies Research Center at the University of California at Los Angeles. The report found that the proportion of Chicano doctorate holders who started out at a community college (23 percent) is more than twice that of doctorate holders who are white (11 percent), black (10 percent), Puerto Rican (6 percent) or Asian American (3 percent).

The only ethnic or racial group to come close to Chicanos in this regard is Native Americans (19 percent).

"For Chicana and Chicano students, the community college is the most critical gateway to postsecondary education," said Daniel Solórzano, a professor of education at UCLA and associate director of the Chicano Studies Research Center.

As a result, he said, if educators and policy makers want to have more Chicano professors, they need to pay more attention to community college issues, and especially to efforts to help students at community colleges transfer to four-year institutions. Surveys have found that more than 70 percent of Latino students who enter a community college want to eventually transfer to a four-year institution, but fewer than 20 percent actually do so.

The UCLA findings come at a time that other students have found serious gaps in Ph.D. attainment by Latinos, compared to the rest of the population. For example, Chicanas make up 6.7 percent of the age cohort that typically earns Ph.D.'s, but receive only 1.1 percent of doctorates awarded to women. Chicanos make up 7.9 percent of their equivalent age cohort, and earn only about 1 percent of doctorates awarded to men.

The impact of attending a community college on earning a doctorate appears to vary by discipline. According to the UCLA study, Chicanos who started their educations in community colleges were most likely to earn doctorates in education and the social sciences. Education, for example, was the discipline of 40 percent of Chicano doctorates who started in community colleges and only 26 percent of Chicanos who started elsewhere.



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Chicano doctorates who didn't start at two-year institutions. For
received doctorates in the life sciences, compared to 11
y colleges.

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[1] <http://www.chicano.ucla.edu/press/briefs/current.html>