Leveraging Student Strengths to Support Success

UTSA College Completion Academy
Session III

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Agenda

• Purpose
  – Review of what works to foster success with a focus on Latin@ students (TG Study)
  – Identify student assets and how to leverage them

• Graduation Gift!
What Works for Latin@ Student Success

**Academic Development**
- Pre-College Prep—Dual enrollment, early college high school
- Support programming *(supplemental instruction*, living learning communities, TR Center, tutoring, math labs, service-focused sororities)
- Diverse pedagogy—active learning, *applied learning*, group work, field trips, internships, Honors College, Archer Program, etc.
- Faculty interactions—role models, *support & validation*

**Personal Development**
- Advising & mentoring—need clear sense of direction *(how choose college, value of degree, how choose major, connect major to profession, consequences of attending for profits)*
- Peer support networks—friends, roommates, spiritual leaders
- Meaning and purpose in personal lives
- Spirituality/faith
- Counseling & Guidance—how to *deal with microaggressions and cultural pressures*
- Organizations & extracurricular activities—student government, table tennis, student government, etc.
What Works for Latin@ Student Success

Instrumental Knowledge

- College literacy—how navigate world of college, transition to college
- Guidance for native and transfer students—access information and resources
- Costs, benefits and consequences of attending and not attending college (especially for males)
- Make assistance prominently visible on campus

Financial Aid

- Access to opportunities and diverse forms of aid
- Suitable financial aid package
- Affordable

Awareness of Gender Differences

- Males—career advising (work vs. college), role of males in family as bread-winners, view that males expected to give support, while females receive support, realistic long-term financial advising and career goals—think long vs. short term
- Females—deal with stereotypes about Latinas, role of women in Latino families as caretakers, cultural pressures to get married and have children
What Works for Latin@ Student Success

Campus Climate
- Welcoming
- Diverse
- Accepting
- Place of opportunity
- Sense of pride
- Resembles “home”/ sense of community

In-and Out-of-Class Validation and Support
- Affirmation and support from family, peers, faculty and staff

Interactions With Diverse Cultures
- Learn new ideas and exposure to new perspectives
- Diversity is a value
What Works for Latin@ Student Success

**Human Element: Being Treated as a Person**

- Latino/a faculty who are friendly, have been through the college completion process, and provide encouragement and support

**Exposure to Latino/a Role Models**

- Exposure to faculty, mayor, community leaders who have succeeded
Operating in Multiple Worlds

Entre Mundos

Navigating the College World

- Separating from Family/Transition to College--Endings & New Beginnings
- Academic Completion
- Renewal & Transformation
- Psychological Transformation
- Liminality
- Positive and Negative Aspects of Operating in Multiple Worlds
- Academic and Social Engagement in College

Native Country

Barrio y Community

Family

Peers

Work

Spiritual

El Choque
LEVERAGING STUDENT ASSETS FOR SUCCESS

• WHAT ARE KEY STUDENT ASSETS?

• HOW CAN THESE ASSETS BE LEVERAGED TO FOSTER STUDENT SUCCESS?
Tara Yosso’s Community Cultural Wealth Model

- Cultural Capital
- Navigational Capital
- Resistant Capital
- Linguistic Capital
- Aspirational Capital
- Social Capital
- Familial Capital

Community Cultural Wealth
## LEVERAGING LATIN@ STUDENT ASSETS

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| **Aspirational** | • Set high aspirations  
• Recognize value of education | • Education plans  
• Mentoring, counseling and advising  
• Internships  
• Accelerated Readiness Programs |
| **Linguistic**  | • Use of two or more languages | • Peer language tutoring  
• Study abroad experiences  
• Intergroup Dialogues and cross-cultural communication |
| **Familial**    | • Recognize value of consejos, respeto, testimonios, educación  
• Validation & encouragement from siblings, parents, relatives | • Family events  
• Using “familia” study groups (Puente Project)  
• Living-Learning Communities |
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| Social         | • Create Social Networks  
• Make new friends  
• Form new relationships                                                                                                                                                    | • Study groups  
• Peer tutoring & advising  
• Learning communities  
• Student organizations  
• Ethnic-themed dorms  
• Research with faculty member |
| Navigational   | • Operate in liminal spaces  
• Traverse multiple worlds  
• Function with multiple consciousness as they maneuver diverse geographical and educational contexts                                                                 | • Chicano Studies & Feminist Studies  
• Dual Enrollment Programs  
• Peer mentoring, advising, counseling                                                                                                                                  |
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| **Resistant** | • Ability to resist and combat negative stereotypes & microaggressions  
               • Ability to overcome hardships such as poverty, lack of resources | • Peer Mentoring  
               • Counseling  
               • Faculty and staff validation, encouragement and support  
               • Cultural ethnographies  
               • Office of Multicultural Excellence |
| **Resilient** | • Inner strength, self reliant, determination, drive                                    | • Career Preparation  
               • Faculty and staff validation, encouragement and support  
               • Validating pedagogy |

**Resistant**: 
- Inner strength, self reliance, determination, drive

**Resilient**: 
- Ability to resist and combat negative stereotypes & microaggressions
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| **Ethnic Consciousness** | • Cultural pride  
• Pride attending HSI  
• Collective consciousness  
• Commitment to Latino community/“giving back” | • Service learning in underserved communities  
• Liberatory pedagogy rooted in social justice—focus on challenging societal issues  
• Ethnic themed learning communities such as Puente Project  
• Ethnic Studies |
| **Spirituality/Faith**  | • Faith in God or higher power  
• Sense of meaning and purpose  
• Humility  
• Compassion | • Faith-based organizations  
• Contemplative pedagogy  
• Service learning  
• Capstone Courses |
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| **Pluriversal** | • Operate in multiple worlds (college, peers, work, family, native country)  
• Operate in diverse geographical contexts  
• Operate in two or more educational institutions (transfer students)  
• Hold multiple & competing systems of meaning in tension | • Peer mentoring  
• Advising  
• Advising to explore educational pathways |
| **Adaptational** | • Ability to dislocate & relocate  
• Ability to operate in liminal (in-between) spaces  
• Breakthroughs/Figure things out | • Peer mentoring  
• Advising |
Developing An Asset-Based Framework

• Asset-Based Framework to permeate entire institution
• Asset-Based Framework employed in the classroom
• Asset-Based Framework employed out of class
Developing An Institution-Wide Asset-Based Framework

• What is an Asset-Based Framework?
  – **Shatters paradigm** where deficits about students are emphasized such as viewing students as “problems,” “incapable of college-level work,” “lost cause,” “bad news,” “too overwhelming.”
  – Student **assets are recognized** and worked with both in and out of the classroom. These assets may include:
    – Family
    – Language
    – Navigational
    – Resilience
    – Spirituality/Faith
    – Ethnic consciousness
    – Adaptability
    – Pluriversal
Developing An Institution-Wide Asset-Based Framework

– Asset-based perspectives **permeate the culture of the entire institution** including mission statement, faculty development workshops, training for student affairs administrators, etc.

– **Asset-based theories** are employed to guide thinking about designing interventions and strategies that promote student success.

– **Research** that supports conditions favorable to student success is employed to guide thinking about making access and college completion strategic, attainable goals.
Developing An Institution-Wide Asset-Based Framework

• **Guiding principles** are developed for the organization, and all faculty, staff and students are called to embrace them, for example:
  
  – All students have **potential** and possess **diverse forms of knowledge**.
  
  – With proper support, guidance and information students can be academically successful.
  
  – The focus will be on **possibilities** rather than problems, on **strengths** rather than weaknesses, on what is **working well** rather than what has yet to be accomplished, on **enthusiasm** rather than despair.
  
  – **Successes** will be documented and celebrated.
Developing An Institution-Wide Asset-Based Framework

- Transformational language that **reframes deficit-based perspectives** is employed, for example:
  - **Deficit-Based**: All low-income, first-gen students are not ready to learn.
  - **Asset-Based**: Low-income students can achieve high levels of excellence with proper support, guidance and information.
  - **Deficit-Based**: Low-income parents care little about their children’s education.
  - **Asset-Based**: Low-income parents care very much about their children and need support, guidance and information to decipher the K-16 educational system to help their children succeed.
  - **Deficit-Based**: We’ve tried this idea before and it didn’t work.
  - **Asset-Based**: Let’s remain open to new ideas and give them time to work before moving on.
Leveraging Student Strengths In the Classroom: Creating Asset-Based Pedagogy

• **Student Focused**
  – Based on a recognition of student’s community cultural wealth
  – Teaching & learning attends to the education of the whole person

• **Equity-Minded Curriculum**
  – Culturally relevant, Inclusive curriculum—developed around student backgrounds, strengths, ways of knowing

• **Validating Pedagogy**
  – Relationship-centered
  – Invites student voice, experience, perspectives
  – Gives students agency
  – Validation-rich classroom context
  – Contemplative Practices (journaling, quite moments, use of music, art, poetry, etc.). Provision for deep, reflective learning experiences and the emergence of a critically aware, socially responsible person
  – Inviting and engaging—active, applied learning
Leveraging Student Strengths Out of Classroom

• **Validating, supportive peer interactions**
  – Study groups—opportunities for students to teach and learn from each other
  – Student organizations—provide safe space, supportive space (family-like; make friends)

• **Relationship-centered student affairs programming**
  – Really get to know student journeys
  – Authentic, validation, caring, listening and support
  – Mentors, advisers—set high expectations; give students clear, comprehensive information

• **Supportive academic programming**
  – Tutoring, math and writing labs
World Café Group Assignment

• What high-impact practices can leverage student assets?
• Groups (except group leader) will move after five minutes
• All groups will have opportunity to comment on the following assets: Navigational, Resilient, Ethnic Consciousness, Spirituality/Faith, Adaptability
• Group leader will make a list of the high-impact practices associated with each asset and share with workshop participants