Hispanic Transition to Post-Secondary Education in Greater Phoenix

By Lilibeth Santiago

Background
This research examines existing partnerships between high schools and post-secondary education institutions targeting Latino students. The aim is to assess what programs are available and how they are communicated to the Hispanic community. Programs such as Achieving a College Education (ACE) and Maricopa-ASU Pathways Program (MAPP) aimed towards retention of Latino students attending their institutions.

Methods
A qualitative approach was used in this research study. The content of their web pages were evaluated. The study was conducted in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area. Three of the ten Maricopa Community Colleges within the district were assessed for this study. South Mountain Chandler Gilbert and Estrella Mountain Community College. These colleges were selected based on the Latino student population.

The student, staff and directors were interviewed in person or via phone regarding information regarding policies and retention rates. Online websites were analyzed to see how helpful information was being channeled to the Latino students that were currently enrolled, prospective students, and towards the community.

Results
Maricopa Community Colleges retention programs and recruitment have strengths and weaknesses. Gathering data from their webpages, interviews, and demographics available from the webpages the information was analyzed

Program Retentions within South Mountain (SMCC), Chandler-Gilbert (CGCC), and Estrella Mountain (EMCC).
- A Hoop of Learning
- Achieving a College Education (ACE)
- Destination College
- Maricopa-ASU Pathways Program (MAPP)
- ASU Alliance
- NAU Connect
- UA Bridge
- Strengths and Wellbeing

Strengths and Challenges:
The retention programs available are accessible to enrolled students. Language translator powered by Google give access to 58 languages. However, many prospective students are not aware of the programs until they have met one on one with a counselor. Each webpage gives certain information about programs while others do not.

Conclusions
South Mountain, Chandler- Gilbert, and Estrella Mountain Community College are dynamic colleges each offering students diversity. In order the colleges that presented clear and concise and valuable information to prospective students would be as follows: Chandler-Gilbert, followed by South Mountain, and lastly Estrella Mountain.

Retention programs were strongly highlighted by all three colleges. However, the accessibility of information most evident within webpages and interviews done were within CGCC. This college had the strongest partnership with students and community. ACE had the advantage of being more accessible at CGCC due to it being their head quarters. Nonetheless, the Maricopa Community Colleges are giving accessible information to Latino students, staff, and community alike.

Recommendations
The retention programs for Maricopa Community colleges would be all that more successful if they were to offer these recommendations based off my analyzes of their web pages and interviews.
- Spanish and English presentation available to parents/students regarding the MAPP program.
- ASU Alliance, NAU Connect, and UA Bridge have helpful information but if a ticketing program were available online the transition for students and parents towards the programs would be more attractive.
- Offer more online workshops for students to strengthen their connections with other Latino students on campus.
- Bilingual written information sent home to parents of students in ACE explaining the commitment and cost of the program.

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