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Latino Alumni Giving at a Major Southwestern University

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Latino Alumni Giving at a Major Southwestern University

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Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at Austin
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

May, 2003
Dedication

This paper is dedicated to all of my brothers and sisters whom I love very much: Becky, Buddy, Mandy, Art and Eva, to all my nieces and nephews, and especially to my parents, Alejandro and Elida Palomo who taught me so much about giving and sharing. As well, this dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Andy Gonzalez, for his patience and support throughout this process. Similar thanks are in order for Sylvia Trevino, my Mother-in-law, for her love and support. And, I also dedicate this paper to Michele Wiley, my dear friend, and Dr. Chris Johnson, a friend and a mentor. Finally, I dedicate this paper to Paulina Garcia, Purita Gonzalez, Martina Palomo and Abel Trevino, who were also with me in spirit every step of the way. I wish you were still with us.
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge all of the members of my dissertation committee for their assistance in this project. My sincerest thanks to Dr. Ellen Riojas Clark, Dr. Marilyn Kameen, Dr. William Lasher, and Dr. S. Craig Watkins. Special thanks to my dissertation chair, Dr. Jim Scheurich, for his guidance and suggestions throughout the process. As well, I would like to acknowledge the work of all those that have conducted research in Latino philanthropy for their efforts provided the groundwork for this study.
Institutional advancement officers are targeting Latino college graduates for alumni gifts and finding that it is more difficult to secure support from these alumni than from their mainstream counterparts. Some speculate that Latino giving traditions favor support of family over higher education. On the other hand, it may be that Latinos have familial and financial responsibilities that limit giving capacity. Finally, while institutional involvement and satisfaction with the collegiate experience are generally associated with alumni giving, research suggests that Latino students often have a poor institutional experience. The purpose of this study was thus to uncover the factors that influence Latino alumni giving. The study, which employed an interpretivist paradigm and a race-based perspective, was patterned after a study of minority alumni giving conducted at a predominantly white, private institution. A four-part survey instrument was mailed to the 1995
graduates at a major southwestern university in order to develop a philanthropic profile of the alumni. Thereafter, follow-up interviews were conducted with five randomly selected survey respondents. As the findings suggest, the Latino graduates in this study have both the financial capacity and the charitable propensity to support the university. While some alumni had a less than perfect institutional experience, most had other positive experiences that outweighed the negative. Many, likewise, support the university because they have pride in their degree or because they received a quality education. Even among those that had a positive experience, a large number report that Latinos remain underrepresented at all levels of the university. Some thus view their contribution as a means of increasing Latino representation at the institution. As for the alumni association, the findings suggest that communication with Latino alumni is key. It may be beneficial, moreover, to have Latino graduates solicit other Latino alumni for gifts. Meaningful participation such as raising funds in support of academic programs or Latino student scholarships may also help to increase Latino alumni giving. Finally, alumni association programs that demonstrate a true commitment to Latino students may do more to stimulate Latino alumni philanthropic involvement than the creation of a group-specific alumni association, in and of itself.
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Chapter I

Introduction

Colleges and universities are increasingly seeking funding from private sources (Hueston, 1992). Historically, alumni donors have served as a significant source of funding for private support for higher education (as cited in Stutler & Calvario, 1996). In fact, alumni contributions comprised almost 25% of the $23.9 billion generated in private support for colleges and universities in 2002. Still, for the first time since 1988, giving to higher education dropped slightly, largely because of the effects of a poor economy and a dismal stock market performance. The biggest factor contributing to the decline, moreover, was a sharp dip in alumni contributions (Council for Aid to Education, 2003). As institutions of higher education struggle to raise private funds during difficult economic times, understanding the factors that encourage alumni giving is thus critical.

At the same time, it may be equally important for alumni association officers to bring new alumni donors into the philanthropic fold. To be sure, as some evidence suggests, institutional development officers are beginning to recognize the increasing number of minority college graduates in recent decades as an emerging alumni donor pool (Gaiter, 1991). Latinos, moreover, are among the fastest growing minority group in the nation. According to the Strategy Research Corporation, it is estimated that by 2006, Latinos will surpass African-Americans as the largest minority group in the United States and by 2010; Latinos will makeup
13.5% of the population at large (as cited in Nichols, 1996). While Latinos remain the nation’s poorest ethnic minority group, they are gaining economic strength; the number of middle class Latinos is on the rise (Nicklin, 1997). Moreover, Latinos are increasingly pursuing higher education. In the late 1990s, an estimated 1.3 million Latinos attended colleges and universities. Latinos are, likewise, predicted to make up a large and increasing number of the 20% rise in college student enrollment that is projected to occur between 1999 and 2011 (Fry, 2002). Finally, some research suggests that education plays a key role in Latino philanthropy. Educated Latinos tend to earn more and have more disposable income than their non-educated counterparts and are thus more capable of philanthropic participation (Wagner & Figueroa Deck, 1999; Wagner & Rodriguez, 1997).

To be sure, there is evidence that college and university fundraisers are beginning to view Latino alumni as prospective donors. Institutional development officers at some predominantly white institutions are creating programs and forming minority alumni associations in an effort to target Latino and other minority graduates for contributions (Gaiter, 1991; Nicklin, 1994). Posits Gaiter, “those [Latino] alumni are getting older--and earning more money. True to tradition, the universities want some of that money” (1991, p. 31).

Statement of the Problem

While institutional advancement officers may be targeting Latino alumni for gifts, they are having mixed success for their efforts (Nicklin, 1994). Development
personnel are finding that “tapping minority graduates is often tougher than putting the squeeze on white alumni,” (Gaiter, 1991, p. B1). In its eight-year existence, Colgate University’s Alumni of Color Organization, as an example, raised only $10,000. The group was forced to cancel a black-tie fundraising event because only 65 of the 564 minority alumni invited to the dinner agreed to attend. At the University of Arizona, where Latino alumni constitute 4% of the institution’s graduates, the Hispanic Alumni Club raised $300,000 in nine years--no small amount--yet, a far cry from the $1,000,000 goal set by alumni and development officers (Nicklin, 1994).

Some fundraisers argue that the dismal support from Latino alumni stems from a lack of tradition of giving to higher education (Nicklin, 1994). Others suggest that Latinos are simply not as generous as others. As Rivas-Vasquez argues, it appears that the notion that Latinos “don’t give” prevails within the philanthropic community (as cited in Morgan, 1999). Perhaps because the needs are so great within their communities, minorities are often viewed as the recipients of charitable dollars and rarely as prospective donors (Hall, 1997; “Hispanic Leaders Vow,” 1990; Smith, Shue, Vest & Villarreal, 1999).

Moreover, the findings from some national philanthropic research studies have generally lent support to the view of Latinos as relatively uncharitable. Surveys conducted by the Independent Sector, a national organization dedicated to promoting philanthropic activity and voluntary action, suggest that Latinos are less
likely to give than both Caucasians and African-Americans (Cortes, 1995; Wagner & Rodriguez, 1997). Some critics argue, however, that such studies often rely on self-reporting methods to gather data and thus may underreport Latino giving. A more important limitation may be that national studies of philanthropy measure formal giving, namely time and money to organized charitable institutions. Because such studies narrowly define philanthropic activity, they likely discount less formal types of giving such as the giving of one’s time or money to those within one’s community or extended family (Cortes, 1995; Fischer as cited in Nichols, 1997). If Latinos prefer to give informally, then studies that measure formal giving may have a built-in bias that discounts their philanthropic activity (Cortes, 1995).

Ethnic philanthropic researchers argue, however, that although people of color are often characterized as less generous than mainstream donors; there has been little research in minority giving to support this notion (Smith, Shue & Villarreal, 1992; Smith, Shue, Vest et al., 1999). In other words, because philanthropic activity has been regarded as the prerogative of those with wealth, historical and scholarly research efforts have focused on the generosity of a select few. Only recently have scholars begun to look seriously at the philanthropic activity of women, working class peoples and racial or ethnic minorities. Indeed, outside of the aforementioned national studies, which suggest that Latinos are relatively uncharitable, research in Latino philanthropy that might counter the
prevailing view of Latinos as “ungenerous” or at least, shed more information on Latino giving patterns is scant (Cortes, 1995).

In an effort to understand the giving patterns of heretofore largely unexplored groups, Smith, Shue et al. (1992) and Smith, Shue, Vest et al. (1999) conducted two cross-cultural ethnographic studies among communities of color and found a preference for informal giving. In other words, minorities, including Latinos, give and their gifts are significant, yet giving is tied informally to family and friends in ways that may be more culturally appropriate. Because such giving primarily occurs on a direct basis from one person to another, it likely goes unrecorded in traditional philanthropic surveys (Smith, Shue et al., 1992; Smith, Shue, Vest et al., 1999).

Moreover, Cortes (1995) cautions that culturally-driven, informal giving may be so qualitatively unlike the traditional giving measured in national studies, that the quantitative comparisons suggested by some philanthropic surveys may be of little value. Still, while national studies may have their limitations, they may reveal a disturbing fact: It appears that there is a tendency for upwardly mobile Latinos and their children to disengage themselves from conventional philanthropy. Perhaps as Cortes (1999b) argues, “Invisibility is a two-way street,” (p. 33). Indeed, research suggests that Latinos are often underserved by the traditional nonprofit sector. For one, Latino organizations receive a disproportionately small share of private foundation grants (Cortes, 1991; Ramos & Kasper, 2000). The
philanthropic community, similarly, lags behind in employing Latinos. Finally, Latinos are underrepresented as decision makers for grantmaking institutions (“Hispanic Leaders Vow,” 1990; Nuiry, 1992; Ramos & Kasper, 2000; Sanchez & Zamora, 1999). If, as some observers suggest, traditional philanthropy has largely ignored the Latino community, perhaps this serves as a disincentive that inhibits more widespread Latino philanthropic involvement.

*Latino Alumni giving.*

What of Latino alumni? Are there disincentives that interfere with Latino alumni support for their alma maters or are the dismal levels of such support the result of a lack of tradition of giving to higher education among Latinos, as some have suggested? Are there other factors that influence Latino alumni giving? Philanthropic researchers have varying opinions about the subject. Nichols (1990) argues, for example, that administrators and development officers at four-year institutions must first address the larger issue of Latino student retention before fundraisers can begin to concentrate on cultivating Latino graduates as potential donors. To be sure, the reported growth in Latino student higher education enrollment often fails to take into account that most Latinos use the community college as a path to a four-year degree. Some 44% of all 18 to 24-year old Latino undergraduates are enrolled in two-year institutions as compared to about 30% of their white and African-American counterparts. Evidence has shown, however, that college students that enroll in two-year colleges are less likely to earn baccalaureate
degrees than those that begin their collegiate experience at four-year institutions (Fry, 2002).

For those Latinos that successfully negotiate the path to higher education, many find that academe is still largely a non-Latino environment. The dearth of a “critical mass” of Latinos as board trustees, administrators, faculty and students in higher education has been well documented (Brown, 1994; de Los Santos & Rigual, 1994). As some institutional development officers argue, the underrepresentation of Latinos in higher education, particularly in key roles as board members and administrators, likely thwarts efforts to forge links with influential members of the Latino community that might foster giving (Nicklin, 1997). Similarly, few of those “making the ask” in institutional fundraising are Latinos. According to the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, a national organization of development professionals, less than 6% of the nation’s higher education fundraisers are people of color (as cited in Nicklin, 1994). The number of Latino fundraisers is likewise miniscule (Nicklin, 1997).

A more critical factor that likely interferes with Latino alumni giving may be institutional experience. As some anecdotal evidence suggests, African-American, Asian and Latino alumni that felt alienated at traditionally white institutions may harbor feelings of resentment toward their alma maters, rather than fond memories (Nicklin, 1994). Posits Gaiter (1991), “while the cheery fund-raiser tries to evoke warm memories of college life, the alumnus may remember mostly . .
. painful alienation” (p. 28). Indeed, as one study of the factors that encourage or deter minority alumni giving at a predominantly white, church-related institution found, alumni cited the lack of connection to the university as the most common reason that they failed to give (L. J. Smith, 1998). Moreover, alumni of color forty years of age and older who may be in the best position to give to the institution, may be those that harbor the greatest resentment and thus, hold the greatest reluctance toward giving (Nicklin, 1994).

*Latinos as subgroups.*

Clearly, there has been much speculation about Latino philanthropy. Some argue that Latinos are less generous than other groups. Others suggest that societal disincentives may discourage Latino giving (Cortes, 1995). On the other hand, some philanthropic researchers posit that Latinos give, but in ways that fall outside the conventional model and are therefore often unrecorded in traditional studies of philanthropic activity (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). Finally, some non-profit leaders, citing changing demographics, posit that the growth in the Latino population coupled with economic gains and increasing educational attainment signal that members of this minority group are in an increasingly better position to make charitable gifts now than in the past (Nichols, 1990).

The reported Latino demographic trends can be misleading and must be considered carefully, however. Latinos are experiencing unprecedented growth in political influence and consumer buying power. The number of Hispanic-owned
businesses is, likewise, on the rise according to a report prepared by the United States Department of Commerce News (as cited in Ramos & Kasper, 2000). Still, when compared to other U.S. residents, Latinos tend to live in poverty and to be concentrated in low-skilled, low paying jobs. The high school dropout rates among Latinos are also the highest in the nation, ranging anywhere from 40% to 60% in urban areas (Cortes, 1995; Wagner & Rodriguez, 1997).

Perhaps the inconsistencies in the reports about Latino economic growth stem from the use of the term, “Latino.” Latino has become an umbrella term used to categorize as one group what is actually a collection of diverse subgroups. Each of these subgroups has distinct social, religious, linguistic, geographic, economic and philanthropic traditions (Cortes, 1995; Nichols, 1990; Wagner & Rodriguez, 1997). Cuban Americans, for example, make up the smallest subgroup, about 5%, of the Latino population; yet have the highest family income and educational attainment levels in comparison with other Latino subgroups (Cortes, 1995). Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans, on the other hand, are among the most economically disadvantaged of the subgroups. They also account for the largest percentage of the Latino population (Nichols, 1990). Finally, another 14% of Latinos are persons from Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador (Cortes, 1995).

Rationale for the Study

Are Latinos less charitable than other groups? In his research on communities with a culture of generosity, Wolpert (1995) found that persons from
some regions of the country were more likely to be generous than individuals from other areas. Wolpert cautions however that, “To leap to the conclusion that some communities are inherently generous while others are just plain stingy would be a gross oversimplification,” (p. 18). Placing this notion within the context of Latino philanthropy--to argue that Latinos “don’t give”--is to reduce a complex issue to grossly narrow terms. Additionally, as Cortes (1995) argues, there is much we don’t know about Latino giving. Limited research funding resources should not be wasted while we “belabor the question of whether Latinos are more or less charitable than other U.S. populations,” (p.37). Rather, philanthropic research efforts should be used to identify and test those strategies that would likely increase Latino philanthropy.

In view of the above, the purpose of this research project is to uncover the factors that promote or limit giving among Latino graduates. Specifically, the following question will be explored:

1. What are the self-reported factors that promote or deter Latino alumni giving at a Research I Level University in the southwest?

The proposed research question should be of value to philanthropic scholars, in particular, those interested in promoting a more inclusive view of charitable activity that recognizes the contributions of working class peoples, women, and racial or ethnic minorities. There is likewise an interest within the higher education development arena in cultivating Latino and other minority
donors (Gaiter, 1991; Nicklin, 1994; Nicklin, 1997). Institutional development officers seeking to understand the factors that might predispose Latino alumni giving should thus find the results useful. Finally, to the extent that Latino alumni giving is a reflection of satisfaction with the institutional experience, university administrators interested in increasing Latino student retention rates may be interested in the results as well.

In an effort to gain a better understanding of the research topic at hand, the following chapter provides a review of the literature about Latino giving and alumni giving. The methodology used in the study to uncover the findings is then presented in the third chapter. A review of the findings of this study is reported, thereafter, in chapter four. The final chapter in this paper presents the conclusions of the study and suggestions for areas of future research.
Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Introduction

A review of the literature about alumni giving to higher education may help to explain the factors that motivate alumni giving among the 1995 Latino graduates at a major southwestern university. Although as Taylor and Martin (1995) argue, alumni giving is a source of income to higher education that has not been well developed, nor is it generally well understood. In a country where over 50% of the population pursues some form of higher education, the task of locating and tracking alumni is daunting; many institutions have outdated data systems that limit alumni donor research (Melchiori, 1988). Because of the competitive nature of institutional fundraising, moreover, college and university development officers are often reluctant to discuss their fundraising efforts and successes (Yoo & Harrison, 1989). Finally, what little has been conducted in the way of empirical research has been conducted primarily at the institutional level (Okunade, 1996; Okunade & Berl, 1997) or by doctoral students (Okunade & Berl, 1997; Taylor & Martin, Jr. 1995).

If the alumni giving literature is scant, research in the area of Latino alumni giving is almost nonexistent. Anecdotal evidence suggests, however, that it is more difficult to solicit alumni gifts from Latino and other minority graduates. Some attribute this lack of Latino support to a tradition of giving that favors support of family, not higher education (Nicklin, 1994). Others suggest that Latino and other
minority students may not support their alma maters after graduation because they harbor unpleasant memories of their institutional experience rather than fond memories (Nicklin, 1997; L. T. Smith, 1987; L. J. Smith, 1998). Finally, despite the increasing educational attainment of some Latinos, Latinos are still disproportionately underrepresented in four-year institutions. Institutional development officers seeking to bring these alumni into the institutional philanthropic fold must therefore first address the issues of recruitment and retention (Nichols, 1990).

In short, in order to gain a better understanding of Latino alumni philanthropy given the dearth in the research, the literature review will explore these key areas. That is, the review of the literature begins with a summary of the research about alumni giving. Thereafter, the literature specific to minority and Latino alumni giving is presented. Empirical research and anecdotal evidence about Latino philanthropic activity, in particular, the cultural and economic factors that influence giving follow. Research findings about Latino institutional experience are then presented. Finally, the review concludes with a summary of the literature and the implications for the subject at hand, Latino alumni giving.

Alumni Giving

As suggested earlier, surprisingly little is known about the factors that predispose alumni giving (Okunade, 1996). While some graduates like their alma maters, alumni involvement is hardly universal (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Whereas
some colleges and universities have alumni participation rates that exceed 60%, other institutions have participation rates that range from only 5 to 20% (Stutler & Calvario, 1996). Yet, college and university administrators may be increasingly dependent upon alumni gifts to generate unrestricted operating revenue for their institutions (Bristol, 1990). Indeed, as some scholars of alumni giving suggest, “the growing importance of alumni funding of higher education is projected to continue, as the fragility and uncertainty of state subsidies for education intensify,” (Bollag’s studies as cited in Okunade, 1996, p. 214). As development officers in higher education seek to increase alumni gifts, understanding the factors that encourage or deter alumni giving is thus critical (Ade, Okunade, Wunnava, & Walsh, Jr., 1994; Taylor & Martin, Jr., 1995; Willemain, Goyal, Van Deven & Thukral, 1994).

As Stutler and Calvario (1996) argue, two factors are critical in alumni giving: the alumnus must have the financial capacity to give and the desire to give. But what motivates alumni to give? Some research suggests that graduates make contributions to their alma maters because their peers and predecessors support the institution. In other words, social pressure motivates alumni giving (Margolis, 1982). Another factor that is often associated with alumni giving is altruism. That is, motivated by an altruistic spirit; the alumnus contributes to his or her alma mater because the institution is in need of financial support (Harrison, Mitchell & Peterson, 1995). Yoo and Harrison (1989) note, however, that few donors give anonymously. If altruism was the primary motivation for giving, then college and
university development offices would not spend such vast sums to maximize alumni fundraising efforts (Harrison et al., 1995).

*The econometric or exchange model of alumni giving.*

Proponents of the econometric or exchange model, on the other hand, suggest that it is not social pressure or altruism, but self-interest and specifically, the desire for recognition that motivates alumni to give. In other words, alumni are “consumers of recognition” that demand “income” in the form of tangible rewards such as periodic visits and honorary degrees, or intangible benefits like recognition and prestige from institutional development officers in exchange for their contributions (Yoo & Harrison, 1989, p. 369). Indeed, one long-term study conducted at thirteen colleges found a statistically strong relationship between donation size and the supply of recognition (Yoo & Harrison, 1989). Another study similarly found that alumni relations’ expenditures were the single largest influence on the amount of alumni donations at eighteen colleges and universities (Harrison et al., 1995).

Underlying the exchange model is the notion that alumni identify to some degree with the mission, history and culture of their alma maters. Graduates thus harbor fond memories and feelings of respect for these institutions that elevate their desire to receive recognition from the institution and provide the motivation for philanthropic support (Harrison et al., 1995). With this in mind, one study sought to operationalize an otherwise intangible measure—an institution’s ability to generate
fond memories, which will likely result in alumni donations. As the findings suggest, a student’s level of exposure to and connection with the institutional environment appears to be a powerful determinant of alumni giving. Students in sororities and fraternities, for example, are more likely to be integrated into the fold of university life and, accordingly, more apt to support the institution as alumni. Part-time students, on the other hand, are less integrated into institutional life and less inclined to make gifts after graduation (Harrison et al., 1995).

In another study conducted at a Research I, public university, Taylor and Martin (1995) similarly found that institutional involvement, during college and afterwards as an alumnus, is a predictor of alumni support. Graduates are, therefore, more apt to make gifts to their alma maters if they remain involved as alumni and read alumni publications regularly. A high-gift donor is similarly more likely to be involved with the institution as an alumnus or to have been a member of a departmental club or the Greek system as a student. At the same time, graduates who perceive that the university has a strong need for alumni support are more likely to make gifts and to make larger contributions. Finally, the study suggests that family income is the most important demographic factor distinguishing donors from nondonors, high donors from low donors (Taylor & Martin, Jr., 1995).

At a large metropolitan public university, on the other hand, involvement in Greek organizations had a negative effect on alumni support although involvement in non-Greek social clubs did not have the same effect. Ade et al. (1994) speculate
that Greek alumni continue to identify with the campus chapters or national foundations of their fraternities and sororities after graduation, rather than the institution at large. Honors graduates were similarly less inclined to make gifts than their non-honors counterparts. Finally, alumni of the College of Business and Economics gave significantly more than graduates from other colleges, presumably because the former have higher average income levels than the latter (Ade et al., 1994).

Whereas most studies of alumni giving explore the giving patterns of students after graduation, Stutler and Calvario (1996) analyzed the giving intent of seniors preparing to graduate. The researchers found a strong relationship between satisfaction with the collegiate experience and intent to provide alma mater support. Stutler and Calvario (1996) thus posit that all students are “alumni in transition.” Institutional development officers and administrators alike must, therefore, “focus on connecting and integrating students within the institution, because it is this membership and degree of satisfaction that appears to have the highest impact on giving from future alumni” (p. 13). Creating lifelong ties with alumni that will result in institutional support, moreover, is a process that begins while the student is in college and involves every employee on campus (Stutler & Calvario, 1996).

Minority Alumni Giving

Yet, what of minority graduates? Do the factors that encourage mainstream alumni giving apply to alumni of color as well? It is difficult to say with any
certainty because few studies have explored minority alumni giving. A thorough review of the literature yielded only two studies of the giving patterns of alumni of color. L. T. Smith (1987), for one, explored the relationship between environmental factors and alma mater support and, more important to the subject at hand, if these factors differ for black and white alumni. As the study found, black and white graduates alike attributed their financial support of a public university to the positive experiences they had as undergraduates while enrolled at the institution. On the other hand, black nondonors were more likely than their white counterparts to attribute their lack of alma mater support to a negative institutional experience. In addition to perceived racial tension and a lack of institutional commitment to minority students, black nondonors cited their own lack of connection to the institution as factors contributing to the decision not to provide alma mater support (L.T. Smith, 1987).

In another study, L. J. Smith (1998) sought to identify the factors that promote or limit support among participants of a program designed to recruit and retain low-income, first-generation minority students at a predominantly white private religious institution. As the study found, African American, Asian American, Native American and Latino graduates were motivated to support the institution by a desire to “give something back to society,” especially to organizations that helped them in some way (L. J. Smith, 1998, p. 116). While fewer alumni had a strong sense of loyalty to the university at large, alumni had a
very strong sense of loyalty toward the minority recruitment program. The alumni further expressed an interest in supporting other minority students through their contributions. Finally, a large percentage of the graduates were proud of their degree from the university, another factor that motivated them to provide financial support to their alma mater. On the other hand, when asked what most interfered with the decision to support the university philanthropically, minority alumni cited the lack of feeling like a part of the institution and a perception of racial harassment as the primary factors. Somewhat paradoxically, however, L.J. Smith adds that fundraisers should not assume that students that hold negative perceptions about the institution are not potential supporters. While the factors that deter minority alumni giving may be present to some degree, other factors such as a desire to give something back to society and having pride in their degree from the university often outweigh the negative (L.J. Smith, 1998).

*Latino Alumni Giving*

While the Marquette University study is important to the topic at hand, only a handful of Latino subjects were included in the study. Moreover, when it comes to cultivating Latino alumni donors, practitioners may have a more basic issue to address before institutional experience even begins to factor into the decision to give or not to give. That is, despite recent enrollment increases, Latinos are still not well represented in four-year colleges and universities (Nichols, 1990). Latinos make up only about 6.6% of the total enrollment in higher education, a far cry from
the proportional representation of Latinos in the total U.S. population, particularly in the 18 to 24 year-old age range (de los Santos & Rigual, 1994). Development officers thus seeking to bring Latinos into the alumni philanthropic fold must first address the problem of Latino student retention (Nichols, 1990).

One reason for the underrepresentation of Latinos in higher education is that, when compared to all other major U.S. groups, the high school dropout rate for Latinos is among the highest in the nation. In addition, those Latinos that do graduate from high school often find they are ill prepared for college level coursework. Latino high school students are concentrated in overcrowded, inner-city schools that are characterized by *de facto* segregation, deteriorating infrastructures, and limited resources. Rather than an advanced-level college preparatory curriculum, many of these schools offer low-level coursework so that the Latino students that graduate from high school often find they lack adequate academic preparation for college courses (Perez & de la Rosa Salazar, 1997).

Even when Latino high school graduates have college aspirations, many are often scared away by soaring costs. A 1994 report issued by the American Council on Education suggests that almost one-half of Latino college students come from families with incomes below $20,000. Whereas middle income families use their own resources to fund college expenses, low income families often rely on financial aid for support (Churaman, 1992). The shift in federal aid away from grants and toward loans has also disproportionately affected minority families.
Financially, many are unable to commit to borrowing such large sums (Tifft, 1989). Some Latino families thus simply conclude that college is not an affordable option for their children (Brown, Santiago, & Lopez, 2003).

Strapped by financial limitations and faced with tuition increases, many Latino students opt to attend two-year institutions. In addition to the low cost of two-year colleges relative to four-year institutions, Latino students are often attracted to community colleges because of proximity and the increasingly liberal admissions policies (de los Santos & Rigual, 1994; Fry, 2002). Latino students are thus disproportionately enrolled in community colleges and proprietary schools (Churaman, 1992; Fry, 2002; Hauptman & Smith, 1994; Olivas, 1994; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Perez & de la Rosa Salazar, 1997). Many, as well, attend on a part-time basis (Fry, 2002). Yet, evidence suggests that part-time enrollment is a factor often associated with dropping out. According to a report issued by the U.S. Department of Education National Center on Education Statistics, moreover, students that begin their collegiate experience at two-year institutions are less likely to persist and earn a baccalaureate degree than their peers that enroll at four-year institutions (as cited in Fry, 2002).

In short, Latino students in higher education are overwhelmingly concentrated in two-year institutions. While the large number of Latinos in these institutions represents a growing alumni donor pool for community colleges (Nichols, 1990), only a small number of two-year college graduates may be in a
position to provide philanthropic support to their alma maters even if they earn an associate’s degree. Many community college alumni find jobs in vocational employment after graduation. Few end up in high-paying careers, another factor that may interfere with Latino alumni giving, as one community college institutional advancement officer notes (as cited in Nicklin, 1997).

Yet, it may be that even bringing those Latinos that successfully navigate the educational pipeline and graduate from four-year institutions into the philanthropic fold is a challenge. While development officers are soliciting the growing numbers of Latino and other minority college graduates for alumni gifts, many are finding that such alumni contribute less often and make smaller donations than their non-minority counterparts. One reason for the dismal level of Latino alumni philanthropic support may be that Latino patterns of giving traditionally favor support of family members, not colleges and universities (Nicklin, 1994). Additionally, some argue that socioeconomic barriers often preclude more advanced Latino involvement in organized philanthropy (Ramos, 1999). The situation may be even more precarious for recent Latino graduates. Young upwardly mobile Latinos often have little disposable income for making charitable contributions as they strive to establish their careers and families after graduation (Peterson Royce & Rodriguez, 1999). Latino and other minority alumni likewise often come from lower income families than their non-minority counterparts. Such alumni tend to have more college-loan debt and to bear greater financial obligations
to the family than mainstream graduates (Nicklin, 1994). In short, it is not uncommon for Latino graduates to have financial limitations that inhibit more widespread alma mater support.

At the same time, some in institutional development argue that it is easier to solicit minority alumni and create links with the Latino community that facilitate fundraising when there is diversity on the boards of trustees and alumni associations, and if the fundraisers are people of color (Nicklin, 1994; 1997). Yet, the dearth of a “critical mass” of Latinos as board trustees, administrators, faculty and students in higher education has been well documented (Brown, 1994; de Los Santos & Rigual, 1994). In institutional development, likewise, few of those “making the ask” are Latinos (Nicklin, 1994). In 1997, of some 15,965 members enrolled in the National Society of Fund Raising Executives, a national organization of development officers in higher education and other non-profit agencies, only 95 were Latino. Furthermore, there is a growing concern that increasing anti-affirmative action measures will further hinder fundraising efforts within the Latino community (Nicklin, 1997).

Finally, another obstacle to Latino alumni support may be a poor institutional experience (L. J. Smith, 1998). As evidence suggests, some Latino alumni do not provide alma mater support because they harbor feelings of alienation and resentment, rather than fond memories of college life (Gaiter, 1991; Nicklin, 1994). As one institutional development officer explains in an article by
Gaiter (1991), “‘Black and Hispanic alumni at a variety of predominantly white schools just didn’t take ownership of their university,’ in the past. ‘‘They didn’t feel like full partners for a variety of reasons, and most of them are legitimate’’ (p. 2). A statement, which suggests that development professionals at some predominantly white institutions, may have to work very hard to regain the loyalty of Latino and other minority graduates to bring them into the philanthropic fold (Gaiter, 1991).

*Increasing Latino alumni philanthropic support.*

In an effort to tap the growing prospective donor pool of Latino and other minority alumni, some institutional development officers are asking alumni to assist with programs to recruit and mentor minority students (Gaiter, 1991). Likewise, some colleges and universities have established minority alumni associations supported with funding and staff from the larger institution. At Syracuse University, for example, the development office created a separate entity for alumni of color in the 1980s. Fundraisers then held a series of reunions designed to bring black and Latino alumni together, and created an alumni newsletter specifically for minority alumni. As a result of these efforts, $1.3 million was collected from graduates of color at Syracuse University for minority college scholarships (Nicklin, 1994).

Raising funds from Latino graduates for Latino scholarships is, in fact, a strategy that advancement officers at some institutions of higher education are
employing with some success. At Loyola Marymount University, for one, the Mexican-American Alumni Association sponsors an annual dinner to raise funds for Latino student scholarships. The group’s scholarship endowment fund now exceeds $200,000 (Nicklin, 1997). Similarly, over a four-year period, UCLA’s Latino Alumni Association minority scholarship program grew from one annual $500 scholarship to eight annual scholarships--one for $3,000 and seven for $1,000 (Blackburn, 1996).

While some institutions are raising funds for scholarships through minority alumni associations, other college and university officials have been reluctant to establish such organizations out of concern that further segmentation between minority and non-minority graduates may result. Alumni board members at the University of California at Irvine, for example, debated for a full year before allowing the minority graduates to establish a separate chapter of the alumni association (Nicklin, 1994). As one fundraising expert suggests, development officers grappling with the decision to establish a minority alumni association should seek input from constituencies before making any decisions that will affect them. It may be more beneficial to identify Latino alumni and seek their input in making the institution more inclusive of Latino needs and concerns, as a first step toward involving Latino graduates philanthropically (Nichols, 1990).

Moreover, despite the fundraising success stories at a few institutions, many colleges and universities are having “mixed results” with programs targeted
specifically for minority alumni (Nicklin, 1994, p. A30). Development officers at Colgate University, for example, sought to increase minority graduate contributions by soliciting funds in support of its multicultural center. The results, however, were not dramatic. While the percentage of minority alumni supporting the institution increased from 18% to 20% over one year, in comparison, about 48% of white alumni support the university philanthropically (Gaiter, 1991). At the University of Arizona, the Hispanic Alumni Club held black-tie fundraising events and created special newsletters for Latino graduates. The organization raised $300,000 in nine years as a result—no small amount—yet, a far cry from the $1,000,000 goal set by the institution’s development officers (Nicklin, 1994).

Some development officers suggest discarding the traditional alumni programs altogether when targeting Latino or other minority students for philanthropic contributions. As Osborn (1990) argues, nontraditional alumni, many of who are older and people of color, tend to have weaker ties to the institution and hold a greater sense of allegiance to their employers than to their alma maters. Programs “geared toward remembering college days” such as “reunions, homecomings and class agents,” thus often “have limited success” with the growing numbers of nontraditional graduates (Osborn, 1990). Likewise, the institutional practice of waiting until senior year to introduce such students to the alumni relations department, may not be enough to instill an understanding of the value of alma mater support (Baker, 1996). Rather, shaping the impression that
such students hold after leaving the institution and educating them about the importance of supporting the institution as alumni, is a process that begins with the first contact with the institution and continues until the day of commencement. Baker (1996) suggests a comprehensive student advancement model wherein students of color are exposed to the alumni relations office as early as possible, perhaps during the admissions process. Institutional advancement and alumni officers should thereafter enlist the support of the academic and student affairs divisions of the institution to implement programs that invest in the welfare of non-traditional students while they are on campus. Programs that ease navigation of the admissions process or promote student-faculty interaction during the collegiate years, for example, might be part of such a comprehensive model. As well, alumni relations officers should take an interest in and financially support cultural and ethnic student programming on campus, although this requires careful planning so that the support for diverse groups is fair and representative, argues Baker. During senior year, alumni officers should, likewise, have a plan for assisting students with navigating the graduation process, and finding employment after graduation. If the alumni office serves as a resource to help with these senior year challenges, students may remember this assistance and opt to provide financial support to the institution after graduation. Although such a comprehensive advancement program may be costly to implement, particularly in times of fiscal constraint, investing in
the welfare of nontraditional students while they are on campus is easier than trying to “pursue them through the mail” after graduation (Baker, 1996, p. 129).

In summary, few studies have expressly explored minority and Latino alumni giving. Some in the development arena suggest, however, that the heretofore standard alumni programs may not be enough to bring Latino alumni into the philanthropic fold (Baker, 1996; Osborn, 1990). Rather, a comprehensive advancement model, which begins the first day a student is on campus and spans the student’s entire collegiate experience, may help build student affinity although such programs are costly to implement (Baker, 1996). Some institutional advancement officers, on the other hand, are raising funds from Latino graduates by forming separate alumni associations and raising funds for Latino scholarships; however, even these programs are having mixed success (Nicklin, 1994). It may be that, as suggested in the literature, cultural traditions and economic limitations coupled with an often times poor institutional experience discourage more widespread Latino alumni involvement (Gaiter, 1991; Nicklin, 1994, 1997).

A review of the literature about Latino giving at large, in particular the cultural and economic factors that likely influence charitable giving, may be helpful in further understanding Latino alumni philanthropy. The following section thus explores the literature about Latino giving. Clearly, however, like the research in Latino and minority alumni giving, there is a dearth in the literature about Latino philanthropy (Campoamor & Diaz, 1999; Cortes, 1995; Miranda, 1999; Ramos,
1999; Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). As Campoamor and Diaz (1999) suggest, given the size and socioeconomic status of the U.S. Latino population, Latino philanthropic activity is an area of inquiry that is “highly understudied” (p. 7). As a result, little is known about the giving traditions of the Latino community, and as Cortes (1995) argues, there are “missed opportunities to develop Latino philanthropy” in ways that benefit Latinos and the larger society (p. 27).

**Latino Philanthropy**

Perhaps, as some philanthropic researchers posit, Latino giving has been largely overlooked as a field of inquiry because, until recently, few Latinos had the means to make significant charitable contributions (Ramos, 1999). Proponents of ethnic philanthropic research offer another explanation, however. That is, at the core of most philanthropic research has been an emphasis on elite or institutional philanthropy (Smith, Shue, Vest et al., 1999). Such giving “typically involves individuals of great wealth making discrete gifts of money to favored major nonprofits where they often serve as board members or advisors,” (Berry & Chao, 2001, p. 8). Because charitable activity is generally perceived as the prerogative of a wealthy few, the charitable behavior of a number of groups--women, the poor, minorities and immigrants--has largely been excluded from most philanthropic studies. While, in recent years, some philanthropic researchers have begun to explore the giving patterns of women and immigrants, little attention has been afforded to the giving patterns of people of color (Smith, Shue, Vest et al., 1999).
As a result, “Minority people are often portrayed as takers rather than givers, significantly less generous than white Americans,” although there has been little research to substantiate this characterization (Smith, Shue, Vest, et al., 1999, p. 1).

Indeed, until recently what scant research has been conducted in the area of Latino philanthropic activity suggests that Latinos are “relatively uncharitable” (Cortes, 1995, p. 25). One national survey conducted in 1992 by the Gallup Organization for the Independent Sector found that only 53% of Latino households made charitable contributions compared to 72% of all U.S. households. Moreover, Latinos were likely to give a smaller percentage of their household income than non-Latinos. Finally, even affluent Latinos gave only about one-half of what their affluent Caucasian and African-American counterparts gave according to the survey results (Cortes, 1995; Wagner & Figueroa Deck, 1999; Wagner & Rodriguez, 1997).

Some researchers argue, however, that philanthropic surveys may have limitations that make it difficult to measure Latino charitable giving in any meaningful way. For one, IRS data is often used to assess nonprofit participation. Accessible national data, due in part to classifications and government record keeping, is still largely unavailable for Latino groups (Campoamor & Diaz, 1999). As well, critics charge that the number of minority respondents used in philanthropic studies is often too small to yield reliable results (Carson, 1989). Self-reporting may be yet another limitation of some national surveys (Cortes,
1995). As Rodriguez and Quern found in a study of Latino philanthropy in Chicago, respondents generally associated the term philanthropy with foundation and corporate giving or as “a social thing” or something that was “good for business”; few participants viewed their giving as philanthropic (as cited in Wagner & Rodriguez, 1997, p. 5). Another study, similarly, found that respondents were more apt to use terms like sharing and helping to describe their charitable activity rather than terms such as “charity” or “contributions” that are commonly used in national surveys (Smith, Shue, Vest et al., p. 6). In short, if the concept of philanthropy is not well understood within the Latino community (Wagner & Rodriguez, 1997) and self-reporting is often used in philanthropic surveys, one can see how Latino giving is likely under measured (Cortes, 1995).

Some national studies, as well, fail to report on informal types of giving that may be prevalent in the Latino community, yet are qualitatively different from that of the mainstream (Cortes, 1995). According to Berry and Chao (2001), people of color often give on a personal or communal level to family and friends, or to ethnic voluntary associations. Such charitable vehicles are not measured in mainstream philanthropic studies like those conducted by the Independent Sector or Giving USA. As a result,

There are some who believe that communities less familiar with or to mainstream organized philanthropy are not givers and do not participate in the voluntary actions that underpin civil society. Nothing could be further
from the truth. Some people of color give and some do not, just like white Americans. (p. 8)

In short, aside from some philanthropic surveys, which may have technical limitations, research about Latino giving has been largely overlooked and, as a result, little is known about the size and scope of Latino philanthropy. It is thus difficult to determine if outside of differences that result from wealth, income and population size, Latino philanthropic activity is measurably different from that of other groups (Cortes, 1995). At the same time, the lack of research in Latino philanthropic activity is detrimental to the interests of Latinos and the non-profit sector alike. Because research fails to account for the “particularities of Hispanic culture, experience and motivation” (Campoamor & Diaz, 1999, p. 8), Latinos are often misunderstood within the mainstream non-profit community in terms of giving potential and practices. Non-profit leaders thus fail to develop effective strategies, which might engage Latinos as donors and volunteers as a result (Campoamor & Diaz, 1999).

To be sure, some evidence suggests that Latinos are not asked to give or volunteer at the same rate as mainstream donors. According to data collected by the Independent Sector, although the average charitable contribution from Latino households jumped 55% between 1987 and 1995, only 44% of Latino households were solicited for donations compared to 64% of their majority counterparts (as cited in Fernandez, 1998). Some development professionals have been slow to
solicit Latino prospects because of cultural differences and language barriers. Others view Latinos as recent immigrants and thus “too poor to give,” suggests Dundjerksi (1996, p. 33). Of more concern, however, are the fundraisers that do not cultivate ethnic donors altogether because they hold the perception that minorities don’t make charitable contributions or, at the very least, are less charitable than non-minorities (Panas, 1998). Indeed, because the needs are so great within the Latino community, Latinos are often seen as beneficiaries of charitable donations and not as benefactors (“Hispanic Leaders Vow,” 1990). As Herman Gallegos, one of the forefathers in the Latino giving movement notes, even Latinos often view of themselves as recipients of charitable dollars rather than as donors (Estrada as cited in Ramos & Kasper, 2000).

In an effort to uncover the giving patterns of some groups that have heretofore been overlooked in national studies, Bradford Smith and his associates conducted a cross-cultural ethnographic study of philanthropy in five Asian and Hispanic communities in the San Francisco Bay area in 1992. A follow-up study in 1999, explored the giving patterns among African-American, Korean and Salvadoran participants. As the study found, most giving within these communities of color occurred informally on a personal level within families as well as between neighbors and church members. Outside of the church, moreover, there was little giving of time or money to organized nonprofit institutions--the type of giving that
is traditionally measured in mainstream philanthropic research. As Smith and his associates (1999) suggest:

It simply did not make sense to support mainstream charitable agencies while there were such pressing needs in one’s ‘family’ and community. Charity was not a matter of the best use of discretionary income; it was a matter of the survival of loved ones. (p. 147)

Such findings are consistent with what some scholars of ethnic philanthropy describe as a “philanthropic continuum.” (Berry & Chao, 2001, p. 13). In other words, as people in communities of color struggle to overcome poverty, discrimination or cultural isolation, they often band together to provide mutual assistance. The survival of the community is thus dependent on a highly personal form of giving that occurs within one’s immediate social circle. As members of the community begin to have a stronger sense of financial stability, giving slowly shifts to a more structured type of giving--one that helps those that are less fortunate and those outside one’s immediate circle until it begins to resemble elite philanthropy. Even then, however, the charitable interests of such groups often remain very different from those of the mainstream.

In the same way, Smith and his associates (1999) argue that philanthropic behavior within communities of color is shaped by the unique cultural patterns and traditions within that community, although as groups assimilate and acculturate, these giving practices often weaken (Smith, Shue & Vest et al., 1999). Indeed,
some scholars of ethnic philanthropy and fundraising practitioners posit that African-American (Fairfax, 1995), Jewish-American (Kosmin, 1995) and Asian-American communities (Shao, 1995) hold giving traditions that are unique to their respective cultures, and unlike that of the mainstream. Nonprofit groups that utilize a standard fundraising approach may thus find that these groups are less responsive to their efforts, not due to a lack of charitable intent, but rather because the approach is incompatible with their philanthropic traditions (Carson, 1994).

A Latino culture of giving.

But, what of Latino philanthropy? Is there a unique Latino culture of giving? Some philanthropic researchers argue that contrary to the myth that “Latinos don’t give,” Latinos give and give generously, however, in unique ways that are consistent with Latino culture. As Rivas-Vasquez, (1999) argues:

It is too frequently said that ‘Hispanics don’t give’ as a summary dismissal for why many nonprofits in the United States have not been successful as they would like in raising funds from this increasingly expanding and affluent group. However, this myth ignores a cultural framework where giving has different meaning and expression than it does in Anglo culture, and belies the fact that few nonprofits have developed effective strategies designed to reach Latino donors. (p. 115)

Unlike mainstream giving which may be driven by tax or other charitable incentives, it appears that Latino philanthropy is driven by cultural and familial
factors; specifically, out of a sense of responsibility for one’s family and community. Much, if not most, of Latino giving therefore occurs in the form of small gifts and cash remittances to family and extended family. Latino cash remittances to family and extended family in Mexico alone are said to exceed $3 billion a year—an amount almost equal to the country’s annual tourism revenue. Latino giving, as well, often occurs in the wake of both natural and economic crises, in particular, when the crisis affects the donor’s community or country of origin (Ramos, 1999). Because such informal gifts generally fall outside the conventional model of U.S. philanthropy, they are often not reported as tax deductible charitable donations (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999; Ramos & Kasper, 2000). Latino giving therefore often goes unmeasured in conventional philanthropic surveys. Nevertheless, such gifts provide a means of support that is relied upon by family and friends in much the same way that those in the mainstream rely upon support services from nonprofit institutions (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999).

Some research likewise suggests that Latinos hold strong religious convictions, which are closely tied to giving (Wagner & Rodriguez, 1997). Perhaps for this reason, until recently, most formal giving within the Latino community has been directed at the church and other religious institutions (Cortes, 1995; Ramos, 1999; Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). As Berry and Chao (2001) argue, “Many Latinos consider giving to the church so natural that they do not even include it among their ‘charitable’ interests, rather as an ongoing obligation or expectation,” (p. 33).
Because over 70% of Latinos are of the Catholic faith, the Catholic Church has been the primary beneficiary of Latino religious giving (Ramos, 1999). Giving is rarely reinforced in Catholic sermons or scripture; however, it is therefore difficult to predict the amount of money that will be raised from Latino parishioners (Peterson Royce & Rodriguez, 1999; Wagner & Rodriguez, 1997; Wagner & Hall-Russell, 1999). At the same time, an increasing number of Latinos are flocking to the Protestant Evangelical Church where tithing is both expected and reinforced through scripture (Peterson Royce & Rodriguez, 1999). The Evangelical Church is thus growing dramatically in the numbers of its Latino followers and in the volume of their charitable giving (Ramos, 1999). The churches making the largest philanthropic gains, Evangelical or Catholic, may be those that appeal to the Latino sense of spirituality while offering opportunities for meaningful ownership, self-governance and self-promotion, however (Miranda, 1999).

Outside of the church, Latinos are often described as “relative newcomers” when it comes to participation in organized philanthropy (Ramos, 1999, p. 151). One reason may be that many Latinos have origins in areas where the church or government entities rather than foundations and organized non-profit institutions assume a primary role in providing for societal needs (Berry & Chao, 2001; Ramos, 1999; Ramos & Kasper, 2000; Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). Latinos may be uncomfortable with some of the concepts that are central to organized philanthropy in the U.S., as a result. As an example, the charitable tax incentive is rooted in early
17th century English law and the notion that “government foregoes tax in return for services it would otherwise have to provide,” (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999, p. 127). Under the Napoleonic code, which has shaped most Latin American systems, however, the charitable tax deduction does not exist. Unlike with mainstream donors, the tax incentive does not therefore play a prominent role in the Latino donors’ decision to give (Ramos, 1999; Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). At the same time, because of the lack of acculturation to traditional models of U.S. philanthropy, Latinos may be unfamiliar with other vehicles that are common to organized philanthropy, such as endowment funds or planned gifts (Ramos, 1999; Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). Latino donors may thus find such charitable tools have little appeal.

On the other hand, it may be that socioeconomic conditions prohibit more widespread Latino involvement in conventional philanthropy. In one study, De la Garza and Lu (1999) found that, in the aggregate, Latinos had lower giving and volunteering rates than Caucasians. However, when analyzed on an individual level, differences in giving and volunteering were not statistically significant. Even recent immigrants, moreover, a group with lower overall giving and volunteering rates than native-born Latinos, appear to incorporate mainstream giving patterns within one generation. The researchers thus conclude that differences in giving and volunteering are a reflection of differences in socioeconomic status and citizenship, not cultural values (de la Garza & Lu, 1999).
Ramos (1999) similarly suggests that because so few Latinos in the United States control real wealth, until recently, only a small number of Latinos have had the capacity to participate in high dollar philanthropy. The number of Latinos participating in organized philanthropy is, likewise, disproportionately small in comparison with the larger pool of prospective Latino donors nationwide due primarily to the severe socioeconomic disadvantages that face so many Latinos even today. The poverty rate for Latinos, as an example, is among the highest in the nation (Ramos, 1999). Although the number of Latinos in the labor force is high, Latinos are concentrated in low-skilled, low paying jobs. Annual incomes thus tend to be much lower than those of non-Latino households (Cortes, 1999a; Wagner & Figueroa Deck, 1999). When compared to all other major U.S. groups, the high school dropout rate for Latinos is, likewise, among the highest in the nation (Perez & De la Rosa Salazar, 1997).

At the same time, somewhat paradoxically, Latinos are among the nation’s most dynamic consumers (Ramos, 1999). Latinos represent $228 billion in domestic purchasing power (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999) and although household income for other groups has remained relatively flat, income in Latino households is increasing more than 5% annually (Ramos, 1999). The number of Latino-owned businesses (Nichols, 1997) and the percentage of Latinos holding professional or managerial employment positions are, similarly, on the rise (Nichols, 1990, 1997). Moreover, Latinos are among the fastest growing minority group in the country

In other words, the annual purchasing power of U.S. Latinos coupled with “uncounted billions in remittances” sent to family members in their countries of origin suggest that the “Latino potential to contribute resources to help expand the philanthropic pie is real and significant,” (Campoamor & Diaz, 1999, p. 8). Indeed, some members of the Latino community are beginning to reposition themselves socially, economically and accordingly, philanthropically (Ramos, 1999). While individually these gifts may be modest at best, sheer numbers suggest that the giving potential of the Latino population is immense (Nichols, 1990). As Dundjerski (1996) notes, a report issued by the Chronicle of Philanthropy suggests that after controlling for inflation, the average donation by contributing Latino households increased 22% between 1993 and 1995. Giving among middle and working class Latinos, namely in the form of small to medium cash gifts aimed at Latino nonprofit agencies or mainstream nonprofits that address Latino needs, appears to be on the rise as well, according to some anecdotal evidence (Ramos, 1999).

Thus, although much of Latino giving still occurs informally, in recent years secular giving has surfaced as an important aspect of organized philanthropy for some within the Latino community. “Latino giving now reflects an increasingly wider spectrum of vehicles and practices and includes the full range of
conventional social investment options in the United States” (Ramos, p. 158, 1999). Yet, research suggests that even Latino giving to organized charitable institutions may be shaped by cultural values. In interviews with sixty wealthy U.S. Latino donors, Rivas-Vasquez (1999) found a strong identification with ethnic and national identity, and a desire to preserve cultural heritage over assimilation—findings, which are significant because they signal the importance of culture in all aspect of the donors’ lives, including their charitable giving. Latinos take pride in their culture and traditions, for example. Organizations that celebrate and expose larger audiences to the Latino arts therefore appeal to Latino donors (Ramos, 1999). In Latino culture, the family is likewise central. Latinos donors thus prefer to support projects geared toward family, such as youth development and education programs. Latino donors, similarly, often prefer to support Latino-serving institutions, although it may be that Latinos are simply asked more often to support such agencies through established networks or personal connections, rather than because of an inherent preference for this type of giving (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999).

In fact, an emphasis on personal relationships may well be the most important characteristic of formal Latino giving (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). Donors will thus typically support a project if they have a personal connection with a specific cause, or if the person making the request is a respected leader in the community—Latino or non-Latino. On the other hand, Latino donors are less inclined to fund equipment, research or administrative overhead (Ramos, 1999).
Giving campaigns to raise capital or endowment funds may likewise hold little appeal to Latino donors who are more accustomed to helping others on a more direct, personal level (Berry & Chao, 2001). Finally, Latino donors may be less drawn to planned giving because of a preference for addressing the more immediate needs of the Latino community (Ramos, 1999).

To be sure, it appears that giving so as to assist the Latino community is of central importance to Latino donors. In one study, Ramos (1999) found that wealthy Mexican American, Puerto Rican and Cuban American donors alike were motivated to give by “a sense of personal responsibility--a desire to give back to the Latino communities from which they came, and, in the process, to help accelerate Latino community rights and opportunities within the U.S. society,” (p. 163). Recent policy developments that have diminished public support for Latinos in bilingual education, affirmative action and immigration rights likely reinforce these sentiments, posits Ramos. While equally likely to support Latino nonprofits as mainstream institutions that address Latino issues, projects that address the needs of the Latino community or build institutional capacity within the Latino community are particularly salient to these donors. For this reason, support for educational projects aimed at Latino and other disadvantaged youth is at the core of most Latino donors’ charitable giving programs (Ramos, 1999).

In short, Latino giving is characterized by a preference for giving to family and friends and a significant lack of acculturation to organized giving, outside of
the church (Ramos, 1999). Because Latino giving often occurs outside the
traditional philanthropic model, it is often unrecorded in traditional surveys.
Nevertheless, such gifts are relied upon by the recipients in much the same way that
other beneficiaries rely upon support from organized non-profit agencies (Rivas-
Vasquez, 1999). In recent years, however, secular giving has emerged as an
important part of giving within the Latino community. Still, some studies suggest
that even secular giving within the Latino community is shaped by cultural values.
Development officers seeking to raise funds from Latino donors should therefore
be aware of the donor’s cultural giving behavior and respect his giving traditions
and motivations (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). Prospective Latino donors must likewise
be approached in ways that are consistent with the Latino community’s strong
desire to “direct their giving in ways that achieve a personal connection with their
gifts, close identification with their culture and focus on issues related to family
and country of origin” (Ramos & Kasper, 2000, p. 23). Finally, an emphasis on
personal relationships may be the most critical aspect of Latino giving. Fundraisers
must, therefore, be patient when cultivating Latino prospects. Establishing a
personal relationship that will lead to Latino philanthropic support is a process that
takes time (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999).

Still, involving Latino donors in traditional philanthropy remains a
challenge, due in part, to socioeconomic conditions. Despite the growing wealth of
some in the Latino community, large numbers of Latinos continue to live in
poverty. Thus, “even under the best of circumstances, the value-added of expanded Latino philanthropic engagement may be offset substantially by the continuing, significant Latino community needs that stem from persistent poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage,” (Ramos, 1999, p. 154). At the same time, it seems possible to foresee a time, in the not too distant future, when a substantial number of Latinos may be in a position to participate in organized philanthropy (Ramos, 1999).

*Latinos and organized philanthropy.*

Indeed, some observers argue that the next twenty years will be a critical time for the cultivation of Latino donors (Dundjerski, 1996). As Latinos stand ready to emerge as one of the most significant new donor constituencies in many areas of the U.S., the nonprofit sector and Latinos alike will benefit from expanded Latino philanthropic involvement (Ramos, 1999). Evidence suggests that increasing Latino membership in nonprofit organizations has the capacity to increase Latino involvement in other aspects of mainstream civic life (Ramos, 1999; Ramos & Kasper, 2000), including political participation (Diaz, 1996). Expanded Latino participation in traditional philanthropy thus has the potential to serve as an important, yet largely untapped means by which Latinos can shrink the gap in disparity between poor and wealthy (Ramos & Kasper, 2000). While nonprofit leaders look increasingly to the growing numbers of upwardly mobile Latinos to sustain their fund development needs, however, the extent to which
Latinos become involved in organized philanthropy depends largely upon how successful non-profit leaders--mainstream and Latino alike--are in promoting expanded Latino participation (Ramos, 1999).

Yet, as some research suggests, conventional philanthropy may be falling short in its commitment to the Latino community. The underrepresentation of Latinos in all areas of traditional philanthropy--foundation grantmaking, nonprofit employment and board representation--is one example (Cortes, 1995, 1999b; “Hispanic Leaders Vow,” 1990; Nuiry, 1992; Ramos, 1999; Wagner & Rodriguez, 1997). In grantmaking, while foundations in the U.S. awarded $16 billion to non-profit institutions in 1997, only 2% of these grant funds were designated for Latino nonprofits (Ramos & Kasper, 2000). Moreover, almost 75% of all the foundation support designated for Latino groups and causes came exclusively from seven major funders and one-half of that funding from a single source, the Ford Foundation (Ramos, 1999; Ramos & Kasper, 2000). Some philanthropic leaders counter that reports often underestimate foundation support of minority communities because they fail to include grants to mainstream nonprofits that operate largely for the benefit of persons of color (Anft & Blum, 2002). To be sure, foundation grants awarded to mainstream nonprofit institutions substantially benefit Latino constituents. That point notwithstanding, the low levels of support aimed at Latino groups and issues, suggests an ongoing disconnect between
conventional philanthropic funding and the needs of the Latino community (Ramos & Kasper, 2000).

In addition, although Latino representation on foundation and corporate boards has increased significantly over the last decade and in meaningful ways, participation rates lag behind in comparison to the growth of the Latino population. While Latinos make up almost 10% of the nation’s population, Latinos make up less than one-half of one percent of the nation’s foundation and corporate board representatives (Sanchez & Zamora, 1999). Non-profits, as well, fall short in employing Latinos. According to the Independent Sector, Latinos make up 6.4% and 8.6% of the workforce in the government and private sector, respectively. In comparison, 5.3% of those employed in the nonprofit sector are Latinos (as cited in Cortes, 1999b).

One reason for the dearth of Latinos in leadership positions in the philanthropic community is the lack of mainstream awareness of qualified candidates. The institutional practice of recruiting individuals whose values and economic status are reflective of peer board members serves to limit the pool of candidates even further. High profile candidates often receive invitations to serve on multiple boards, which places an enormous burden on such individuals, while keeping other well qualified, lesser-known candidates from being considered (Sanchez & Zamora, 1999). Without more Latinos in true decision-making roles within the non-profit sector, however, there may be few individuals in a position to
advocate for the Latino community. In the absence of such leaders, there is growing concern about the level of interest in and funds that will be earmarked for the Latino community (Ramos & Kasper, 2000).

Moreover, as Ramos (1999) argues, the “seasoned” few Latinos that obtain positions as trustees within the nonprofit community “are often pressed with (often unrealistic) expectations of accessibility and responsibility to other Latinos” (p. 168). As some evidence suggests, board prospects with the capacity to raise funds from influential donors often live in affluent communities and are thus too far removed from disadvantaged areas to offer information about the needs of the greater minority community. On the other hand, prospective board members that are likely to be connected with the community typically do not have access to those in affluent circles that facilitates fundraising. Non-profit administrators seeking to recruit lesser-known Latinos for board membership should thus look to leaders within local parishes, social serve agencies and cultural centers as well as editors of ethnic newspapers for recommendations. At the same time, adapting board requirements, in particular, minimum contribution levels may be helpful in increasing diversity within the non-profit community (Berry & Chao, 2001).

Furthermore, although perhaps well intentioned, it may not be enough for foundations and philanthropic organizations, “to invite diverse individuals to serve on boards and advisory committees. A philanthropic organization may need to increase its grant programs serving community causes and visit community groups
to hear their concerns and dreams,” (Berry & Chao, 2001, p. 17). In interviews with thirty Latino foundation, corporate and educational board members, Sanchez and Zamora (1999) found that almost two-thirds of the respondents expressed concern that nonprofit agencies receiving the bulk of their funding from foundations and corporations are falling short in addressing Latino needs. The tendency for non-profit leaders to continue to fund the same programs they have supported historically, rather than reallocating support to reflect changing demographics and community needs, as well as the lack of time spent building relationships with the Latino community were cited as shortcomings in the non-profit community. In a number of cases, moreover, the respondents interviewed for the study reported that they were the only Latinos on their respective boards. While Latino board representation may thus help some corporations and foundations to achieve diversity goals, their presence may not result in any appreciable benefits to the Latino community (Sanchez & Zamora, 1999). As Ramos and Kasper (2000) suggest, making inroads into organized philanthropy that will champion the needs of the Latino community, requires, “more than just the assimilation of Latino leaders into established U.S. civic practices and institutions. Participation must be a process of simultaneous integration and interaction,” (p. 22). In other words, Latino leaders must hold strong to their cultural identity and maintain accountability to the grassroots Latino community while fulfilling their financial and leadership commitments to those in the larger non-profit sector (Ramos & Kasper, 2000).
In short, while there have been significant increases in Latino philanthropic participation over the last decade, Latinos clearly remain underrepresented in organized philanthropy and there are far too few Latinos in the pipeline to assume leadership positions in the future (Sanchez & Zamora, 1999). An important point suggests Ramos (1999) because with increased Latino participation as trustees and staff members in philanthropic institutions comes greater understanding of the “vocabulary of organized philanthropy” and the “field’s standard practices, mores and decision-making processes” (p. 173). By implication then, the dearth of Latinos as trustees and staff members within the philanthropic community limits Latino exposure to and comfort levels with organized philanthropy and thus deters widespread formal institutional giving (Ramos, 1999).

Cortes (1999b) offers another explanation: “Invisibility is a two-way street” (p. 33). In other words, if Latinos are largely underrepresented in organized philanthropy, then it should not be surprising that few Latinos see the conventional nonprofit sector as a means for addressing the needs of the Latino community. As he adds, “Many--probably most--nonprofit organizations in the United States ignore Latino communities and clientele. Are these the sorts of organization to which Latinos would want to give?” (p. 33). Moreover, as he argues, “whenever any racial or ethnic minority is underrepresented in public and private policymaking bodies and prosperous segments of the economy, it is also underrepresented in mainstream philanthropic and nonprofit institutions” (Cortes,
Such groups are thus often left to “seek alternative ways of expressing humankind’s universal philanthropic impulse” (Cortes, 1999b, p. 33). In the same way, Ramos (1999) argues that some of the significant advances that Latinos have made in organized philanthropy in recent years have been the result of this disengagement from the traditional philanthropic processes.

*Latino alternative funds and nonprofit organizations.*

In an effort to ensure that Latinos have a space in the philanthropic landscape, some individuals have begun to create alternative philanthropic vehicles aimed at increasing the amount of public support targeted toward the Latino community. The emergence of Latino focused funds in cities around the U.S. over the last few years is one example (Ramos & Kasper, 1999). Such funds often generate donations through annual workplace giving drives much like the campaigns conducted by United Way of America. Some were, in fact, created as a means of providing an alternative to mainstream campaigns, which critics argue have been slow to respond to the needs of communities of color. Funds raised through these alternative campaigns are then distributed as grants to a small pool of established community-based Latino nonprofit organizations or to emergent institutions (Ramos & Kasper, 2000).

On the other hand, some Latino leaders have joined forces with leaders at community foundations to establish Latino-specific “field of interest funds” that fall under the umbrella of a larger community foundation (Ramos & Kasper, 1999,
Unlike traditional community funds, these focused funds generate public philanthropic support for Latino causes, and then direct funds back to Latino groups, in particular, areas that are poor and underserved. Although grantmaking decisions generally rest with a board comprised of area Latino leaders, ultimately, the final grantmaking authority falls under the auspices of the board of the larger foundation. While some community foundations have been criticized for being unresponsive to the needs of people of color, as Ramos notes, “‘Dedicated funds for ethnic groups within these foundations are starting to change that,’” (as cited by Anft & Blum, 2002, p. 13).

Proponents of Latino focused funds argue that such vehicles benefit Latino and conventional philanthropy alike. For one, alternative funds provide a means whereby Latinos learn about the importance of nonsecular giving to both Latino and mainstream nonprofits. Such funds, likewise, increase the number of Latino leaders in organized philanthropy while encouraging collaboration among Latino nonprofits. Executives at focused funds often conduct needs assessments of the Latino community that increase awareness of the issues important to Latinos within mainstream philanthropy, as well. Finally, Latino-specific funds offer greater flexibility and responsiveness to Latino nonprofits by providing support for emergency needs, infrastructure development, operating expenses and capacity-building initiatives that traditional grantors are often reluctant to fund (Ramos & Kasper, 1999; Ramos & Kasper, 2000). In the same way, whereas mainstream
funders generally avoid projects that address political or controversial issues (Anft & Blum, 2002), Latino-specific funds provide support for community organization, immigrant advocacy and voter registration (Ramos & Kasper, 1999; Ramos & Kasper, 2000).

Still, critics charge that Latino-focused funds are often plagued by excessive administrative costs and lacking in experienced leadership--factors which do little to justify mainstream support. There is likewise some concern that Latino-specific funds afford too little attention to program development and evaluation, which makes it difficult to measure the impact of grantmaking initiatives in any meaningful way (Ramos & Kasper, 2000). As some observers argue, most Latino focused funds are dependent primarily upon corporate and foundation support for funding. Few have succeeded in drawing a broad base of support from within the Latino community, in particular, from established Latino leaders (Ramos & Kasper, 1999).

Of more concern, however, is the issue of separatism. Some nonprofit leaders view Latino and other ethnic-based community funds, as “essentially separatist entities and therefore harmful to integrationist models of inclusion” (Ramos & Kasper, 2000, p. 14). Proponents of Latino funds argue, on the other hand, that such funds provide Latinos--a group that has heretofore been largely underserved by traditional philanthropy--with a culturally appropriate, community-based, self-help vehicle through which they can participate philanthropically in
organized giving. Moreover, while some leaders of the Latino fund movement agree that attempts to bring diversity to organized philanthropic institutions have resulted in positive gains for the community, Latinos still remain underrepresented in mainstream institutions. It therefore seems unlikely that mainstream institutions will be able to address the needs of the growing Latino community in the short term. Latino focused funds thus complement rather than detract from traditional philanthropic institutions. Still, while such “funds appear to be adding value to philanthropy and/or expanding opportunities for inclusiveness in the field in various ways,” Latino funds have fallen short in attracting grantors in greater numbers largely because of concerns about institutional shortcomings (Ramos & Kasper, 1999, p. 190). Latino focused fund executives are tasked, therefore, with convincing foundation and corporate grantors that such funds are worthy of support (Ramos & Kasper, 1999).

Like Latino focused funds, Latino nonprofit organizations are voluntary associations or tax-exempt institutions “whose missions focus on Latino community problems or aspirations” and are, “controlled or led by Latino community members” (Cortes, 1999a, p. 19). While there may be compelling anecdotal information about the merits of Latino nonprofits, there is clearly a dearth in the quantitative research in the area--a situation, which does little to generate a convincing case for external support of such agencies (Cortes, 1991). At least one preliminary study, however, suggests that the news on the Latino
nonprofit front is both good and bad. For one, it appears that Latino nonprofits, in particular newly formed nonprofits, exist in substantial numbers (Cortes, 1999a). On the other hand, it appears that the Latino nonprofit sector may be falling short in addressing the most important, yet largely unmet, educational, economic and social issues facing the Latino community today. Most Latino nonprofits engage in veterans’ activities, educational activities or promotion of business and commerce. Few target activities that may be more relevant to the Latino community such as consumer advocacy, environmental conservation, and legislative or political advocacy. The problem may be rooted in funding. Most Latino nonprofits are not well endowed and thus largely dependent upon public support. As Cortes (1999a) speculates, “Resist though they might he argues,” Latino nonprofits, not unlike other “‘public charities,’” are “drawn to program priorities that donors favor” (p. 40).

In summary, aside from giving to the church, most giving within Latino communities occurs informally in the form of small gifts to family and friends (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). Latinos are thus relatively new to organized philanthropy (Ramos, 1999). Some observers suggest that Latinos may be uncomfortable with concepts that are central to traditional giving because Latinos often have origins in countries without a strong philanthropic tradition (Ramos, 1999; Ramos & Kasper, 2000; Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). Others argue that Latinos are underrepresented in all areas of conventional philanthropy (Cortes, 1995, 1999b; “Hispanic Leaders Vow,”
1990; Nuiry, 1992; Ramos, 1999; Wagner & Rodriguez, 1997), which does little to promote expanded Latino philanthropic involvement. To be sure, evidence suggests that the foundation community has lagged behind in terms of funding for Latino nonprofits. Without Latinos as true decision makers in the nonprofit sector, moreover, there is a growing concern that needs of the Latino community will remain largely unmet (Ramos & Kasper, 2000). On the other hand, some Latino leaders have joined forces with community foundation leaders to establish funds that are Latino-driven and often more responsive to the needs of the community in terms of providing funds for capacity building and infrastructure that other grantors are reluctant to support (Ramos & Kasper, 1999; Ramos & Kasper, 2000). Latino nonprofit organizations created by Latinos to help Latinos are, likewise, forming in substantial numbers. Still, preliminary evidence suggests that Latino-focused funds remain plagued with questions about institutional viability, and Latino nonprofits often steer away from activities that might otherwise address some of the most important issues facing the Latino community today (Cortes, 1999a).

*Latino Alumni Giving in the Context of Latino Philanthropy*

Returning to the topic at hand, it may be that Latino alumni giving is not unlike Latino giving. One can thus look to the research about Latino philanthropy, albeit scant, to make inferences about Latino alumni giving. One barrier that is thought to interfere with Latino alumni support, for example, is a culture of giving that favors support of family and friends, not higher education (Nicklin, 1994).
Indeed, as the philanthropic literature suggests, Latinos prefer to give informally to family and friends, or formally to the church. Recently, however, as an increasing number of Latinos have begun to participate in secular organized philanthropy, projects that address the needs of the Latino community especially youth and education, are particularly salient to donors (Ramos, 1999). Such findings suggest that Latino alumni may be more likely to support their alma mater, if the gift will benefit other Latinos. To be sure, fundraisers are having some success in soliciting Latino alumni for Latino student scholarships at some institutions (Blackburn, 1996; Nicklin, 1994).

As well, the alumni giving research suggests that Latino graduates are often unable to provide institutional support because of financial constraints brought on by college-loan debt and familial obligations (Nicklin, 1994). Likewise, the philanthropic literature suggests that, until recently, few Latinos have had the financial capacity to make significant contributions to organized charitable institutions. As some Latinos begin to reposition themselves economically and philanthropically, however, giving is on the rise, even among middle and working class Latinos. Yet, fundraisers often fail to recognize that even Latinos of low to moderate income can be quite generous (Ramos, 1999); an important point when placed in the context of alumni giving, for it suggests that institutional development officers should not assume that Latino graduates, even those with limited giving capacity, are not prospective donors.
Cultural traditions and giving capacity aside, the literature suggests that the underrepresentation of Latinos in all areas of organized philanthropy hinders more advanced participation in formal giving (Cortes, 1999b; Ramos, 1999). In addition to the shortage of Latinos that serve as trustees on foundation and corporate boards, there is a growing concern among some philanthropic researchers that nonprofit agencies are falling short in addressing the needs of the Latino community (Sanchez & Zamora, 1999). Some Latino nonprofit institutions and Latino-specific community funds have thus emerged, in part, in response to a sense that organized philanthropy has not been responsive to the Latino community. While some critics charge that such institutions are separatist and harmful to integrationist models of inclusion in organized giving, proponents of Latino-specific community funds and nonprofit organizations argue that such institutions are often more responsive to the needs of the Latino community (Ramos & Kasper, 1999).

In the same way, some anecdotal evidence suggests that raising funds from Latino and other minority alumni is easier when there is diversity within the institution’s board of trustees and on alumni association board (Nicklin, 1994). Some colleges and universities have thus developed Latino alumni associations in an effort to bring Latino graduates into the philanthropic fold. Some development officers, however, fear that such associations will further segment alumni and have thus been reluctant to create minority-specific alumni associations (Nicklin, 1994). Nichols (1990) thus posits that institutional advancement officers should seek input
from Latino constituencies before making decisions that will impact giving. Enlisting the advice of Latino graduates to assure that the institution is more inclusive of Latino needs and concerns may be a first step toward involving Latino graduates philanthropically.

Finally, as suggested earlier in the literature on alumni giving, a student’s connection with the institutional environment appears to be a powerful determinant of alumni giving (Harrison et al., 1995). As well, there may be a strong relationship between satisfaction with the collegiate experience and intent to provide support as an alumnus (Stutler & Calvario, 1996). Yet, as some research in minority alumni giving suggests, graduates of color often attribute their failure to provide alma mater support to a lack of connection with the institutional environment (L. T. Smith, 1987; L. J. Smith, 1999). In view of the role of institutional experience in alumni giving, a review of the literature about the collegiate experience of Latino students thus follows.

**Latino Student Institutional Experience**

To be sure, research suggests that the collegiate experience of Latino and other minority college students may be vastly different from that of their non-minority counterparts. As Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) note:

It is clear that many of the most important effects of college occur through students’ interpersonal experiences with faculty members and other students. It is equally clear that the academic, social, and psychological
worlds inhabited by most nonwhite students on predominantly white campuses are substantially different in almost every respect from those of their white peers. On some (perhaps many) campuses, minority students feel a powerful need to band together for psychological and social support of one another . . . it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that under such conditions the educational experiences and outcomes of college for nonwhite students are probably also very different from those for white students, perhaps significantly so. (p. 644)

That is, even among Latinos that have gained entrance into academia, many argue that they feel isolated and marginalized by an inhospitable institutional climate. As Green (1989) argues, students that feel alienated from the mainstream campus are unlikely to remain at the institution or if they remain, are often unlikely to be academically successful. Most research suggests that the better the fit between the student and the institution, the greater the likelihood of academic success and personal adjustment (Nettles, Thoeny & Gosman, 1986).

Similarly, Tinto’s model of student attrition (1987) suggests that positive integration leads to persistence whereas marginalization results in decreased commitment and attrition. In other words, freshman students arrive on campus with varying personal, familial and academic characteristics that influence the level of commitment they have to their academic goals. Once in college, students interact formally and informally with the academic and social systems of the institution. If
the student’s experiences are positive, academic and social integration will occur. The student’s institutional commitment will thus increase and the student will persist. Conversely, if the interactions are negative, institutional commitment is decreased and attrition may result (Tinto, 1987). An important aspect of Tinto’s model is the notion that students undergo important transitional experiences as they move from home to college, and later from first-year to second-year in college. Students that arrive on campus less academically well prepared or that have difficulty letting go of old patterns of educational participation may find it difficult to adjust to the academic demands of college-level coursework. Other students find that social integration is challenging if they are unable to separate from past associations or if leaving home and learning to care for themselves is difficult (Tinto, 1987).

As some research suggests, Latino students often arrive on college campuses with background characteristics that place them at a disadvantage when compared to other students. Terenzini, Springer, Yeager, Pascarella and Nora (1996) found that first-generation or non-traditional students are more likely to be Latino than their non-traditional peers. Moreover, these largely Latino students are more apt to come from families with lower annual incomes, to have more dependent children and to receive less parental encouragement. Weaker cognitive skills and lower degree aspirations are other pre-college characteristics often associated with first-generation students (Terenzini et al., 1996).
Once in college, the first-year experiences of Latino and other nontraditional students likewise often differ from those of their traditional peers. Such students complete fewer semester hours during their freshman year, reportedly spend fewer hours studying and are less likely to be enrolled in an honors program. Outside of the classroom, Latino and other nontraditional students receive less encouragement from friends to stay in school and are more apt to work longer hours off-campus (Terenzini et al., 1996). An important point, because it appears that working off-campus and being responsible for dependent children, two characteristics which are common to Latino students, are pull factors that interfere with the decision to persist more than background characteristics or first-year experiences for all minority students (Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn & Pascarella, 1996).

Similarly, Hurtado, Carter and Spuler (1996) explored the transitional experiences that are common to all students as they move from high school to college and later, as they transition from the first year to the second year. The findings suggest that even when Latino students have a high potential for academic success, a number of transitional factors impede student adjustment. In fact, for Latino students first and second year transitional experiences may well be more important for adjustment than background characteristics. Students, for example, that manage their time, schedules and finances appropriately during the first-year are more likely to be academically and personally well adjusted during their second
year. Likewise, Latino students who experience less difficulty in the level and amount of coursework during the first year are more apt to report high levels of personal and academic adjustment. Interaction with advisors, academic counselors and upperclassmen is similarly associated with second-year positive adjustment, presumably because these relationships help students to feel more comfortable in the new college environment. In the same way, Latino students that perceive the administration as student-centered and that have opportunities to interact with faculty during the first-year are more academically well adjusted in year two. Finally, students that are able to “make sense of large environments by locating themselves within more manageable campus geographies” are similarly more well adjusted and connected to the institution (Hurtado et al., 1996, p. 152).

In another study, Solberg and Villarreal (1997) found that self-efficacy and social supports may be important determinants of personal adjustment for Latino students. College self-efficacy refers to the level of confidence that a student holds that he or she will be successful in accomplishing college-related tasks. To the extent that Latino students have a strong sense of their own academic self-efficacy, they may perform more effective academic-related behaviors, such as regular studying or participating in class, which reduces stress and increases adjustment, according to the study. Latino students that similarly believe they have greater social support from family and peers have lower stress levels and thus greater
personal adjustment than those that perceive fewer social supports are available (Solberg & Villarreal, 1997).

On the other hand, it may be that there are few substantive differences in the ways in which minority and non-minority students adjust. At a large research university, Eimers and Pike (1997) found that academic achievement is critical to academic integration for both groups. As well, external encouragement in the form of support from family and friends is important to minority and nonminority students alike. Finally, although minority students are more likely to perceive discrimination than nonminority students, Eimer and Pike found no significant differences in effect between the two student groups; perceived discrimination had a small negative effect on academic integration and intent to persist for both groups. Perhaps successful minority students do not allow the presence of discrimination or prejudice to interfere with academic goals, posit the researchers (Eimers & Pike, 1997).

Perceived discrimination and student adjustment.

Consistent with Eimers and Pike, some research suggests that Latino students are more likely to perceive of racial tension than other students. Terenzini et al. (1996) found that first-generation students are more apt to be Latino and to perceive racial or ethnic discrimination than traditional students. Similarly, Hurtado (1994) found that Latino students who are first generation born in this country and who rate themselves as having lower academic ability are similarly more likely to
perceive racial tension on campus. Perhaps the perception of racism may be related to the feelings of insecurity or vulnerability such students hold about their place in college, posits Hurtado (1994).

Two models have been used to conceptualize the role of perceived discrimination and its impact on minority student adjustment--the transactional model and the student-institution fit model (Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella & Hagedorn, 1999). In the transactional model, discrimination is viewed as a psychological and sociocultural stressor that leads to distress and student maladjustment. Whereas all students face chronic pressures brought on by the college student role, the transactional model posits that students of color face unique minority status stressors that exacerbate feelings of alienation and inhibit integration into the larger institutional community. Overt experiences with racial discrimination, questions about their legitimate rights to be on campus, and pressure from other students for ethnic group solidarity, for example, pose as sources of stress that are unique to minority students. These stressors confer additional risk for psychological and academic maladjustment of the minority student that are over and above the chronic pressures facing all college students (Smedley, Myers & Harrell, 1993).

Hurtado, Carter and Spuler (1996) found that the perception of racial and ethnic tension is a unique minority stressor that undermines institutional adjustment for even the most talented Latino students. Moreover, while Latino students may be
subject to overt actions of discrimination, more detrimental to Latino student
adjustment are the subtle types of intergroup dealings on campus that result in
perceived racial or ethnic tension. Latino students may thus find it more difficult to
adjust if they don’t feel like they “‘fit in’” at the institution or if they believe that
their mainstream counterparts view all minority students as special admits. Perhaps
Latino students internalize these “climate observations” (Hurtado et al., 1996, p.
152) because unlike overt acts of discrimination, it is difficult to identify and thus
sanction the “subtle intergroup dynamics” that contribute to such climate
perceptions (p. 151).

On the other hand, in the student-institution fit model, discrimination
interferes with academic and social integration into the larger institutional
community. In other words, racial intolerance is a key factor in explaining college
student maladjustment (Cabrera et al., 1999). Hurtado (1994) utilized a national
sample of Latino scholarship recipients to explore their perceptions of the
institutional climate. The study found that even among these academically talented
Latino students, almost 30% felt alienated on their college campuses and over 40%
reported that other students on campus were likely to view Latino students as
special admits. Although smaller percentages of students reported that they
experienced insults or threats because of their ethnic background or reported
hearing faculty making disparaging remarks about minorities, Hurtado (1994)
posits that Latino students continue to experience discrimination on campus to
some degree. Equally important, the findings suggest that some elements of an institutional culture continue to be unreceptive to a Latino student presence. Moreover, the study found that the college climate and structural characteristics relate to students’ perceptions of racial tension. Latino students are thus more apt to report they have experienced discrimination or racial tension on large college campuses or if the institution is located in a small college town. Highly selective institutions are similarly associated with perceived racial tension. Conversely, Latino students are less likely to report experiences of racial tension or discrimination if the institution has a sizable Latino student population or if the administration and faculty are seen as receptive to student concerns (Hurtado, 1994).

In another study, Hurtado (1992) found that no single environmental element is responsible for the perception of racial tension on college campuses. Rather, a “configuration of external influences (historical and contemporary), structural characteristics of institutions and group relations, and institutionalized ideologies” contribute to perceptions of racial tension (Hurtado, 1992, p. 564). Additionally, racial tension may be fostered when institutional priorities preserve inequalities and thus work against the development of a better campus climate. As an example, under girding the traditional notion of institutional quality is a narrow definition of quality that is rooted in student selectivity and enhancing institutional resources or reputation. Such institutional priorities “often favor elitism rather than
egalitarianism, homogeneity rather than diversity, and the unequal distribution of resources,” (Hurtado, 1992, p. 561). Institutional quality may thus have more to do with maintaining the status quo than improving the college environment. Racial tension is heightened; moreover, when faculty and students challenge actions that are shaped by such institutional priorities argues Hurtado (1992).

On the other hand, Latino students generally hold lower perceptions of racial tension at institutions that exhibit a strong commitment to diversity. Minority and non-minority students alike are similarly less apt to perceive racial tension on college campuses that are highly student-centered. Institutional size is likewise a predictor of perceived racial tension for white students, but not for minority students. It may be that for minority students, perceptions of racial tension may be more closely linked with the size of minority enrollment or the student’s ability to find his niche on the larger campus (Hurtado, 1992).

*Increasing Latino student integration.*

Some research suggests that one way that minority students create a niche on campus is through ethnic enclaves. According to Attanisi (as cited in Murguia, Padilla & Pavel, 1991), mainstream college student integration rarely occurs at the campus level. Rather, students rely on smaller enclaves—such as fraternities and sororities, as well as religious or social groups—to reduce the campus to manageable academic, social and physical environments. In the same way, students of color scale use ethnic enclaves to scale down the larger campus and socially
integrate into the larger institutional community. Thus, while some in higher education fear that ethnic enclaves further fragment the college campus (as cited in Hurtado, 1992), such units operate much the same way that Greek organizations, and athletic or religious groups serve as social enclaves for non-minority students. Administrators seeking to promote Latino student academic and social integration should thus provide support for ethnic enclaves because they are a natural feature of campus life (Murguia et al., 1991).

Likewise, institutional administrators can implement academic advising, social support and community membership programs designed to help bring Latino students into the social and academic folds of the institution. Faculty mentors, for instance, can provide guidance for students particularly during the critical transitional first-year of college. Programs that educate the larger institutional community about diversity may also be helpful in creating a more positive institutional climate (Tinto, 1993). Cabrera et al. (1999) argue, however, that because racial discrimination negatively impacts all students, broad-based policies and practices that foster a more tolerant institutional climate among faculty, students and staff are needed. Workshops that increase cultural awareness or a curriculum that supports multicultural education may be helpful. Classrooms that promote collaborative learning may also be part of larger program. In addition, faculty and administrators hold an important role in setting a campus tone that lets students know they are valued. Programs that therefore increase student and faculty
interaction and invite student input in campus decisions can help improve the general campus climate (Hurtado, 1994).

Summary

As has been suggested in this literature review, research on Latino alumni giving is scant. In order to gain a better understanding of the topic, given the limited research in the subject area, the literature review began with a summary of the research in alumni giving. While surprisingly little is known about the factors that encourage alumni giving, some research suggests that altruism or social pressure often motivate alumni to give. Conversely, proponents of the exchange or econometric model argue that alumni make contributions in exchange for recognition from the institution. Underlying the model is the notion that students identify with their alma maters and thus harbor fond memories and feelings of respect for the institution. It is this identification or connection with the institution that elevates the graduate’s desire to receive recognition from the institution and provides the motivation for alumni support. Students that are more connected or integrated into the institutional fold during college are thus more apt to provide support as alumni. At the same time, students form impressions about the institution while in college, which influence whether they will decide to support the institution as alumni. Satisfaction with the collegiate experience and connection to the institutional environment are therefore powerful determinants of alumni giving.
Like alumni giving, Latino philanthropic activity is an area that has been largely overlooked as a field of inquiry. As a result, the philanthropic traditions and practices of the Latino community are largely misunderstood by the nonprofit sector. What little is known suggests that Latinos are substantially underrepresented in all areas of organized philanthropy, and, only within the last few years, have Latinos had the means to participate in traditional high-end models of U.S. philanthropy. Moreover, some research suggests that Latinos and other minorities give and give generously, however, in ways that are culturally appropriate. Outside of the church, which has heretofore been the largest beneficiary of Latino generosity, much of Latino giving thus occurs informally in the form of small gifts to family and community. Because such charitable activity falls outside the traditional model of organized U.S. philanthropy, it is often not reported or counted although it is often relied upon by the recipients in much the same way that mainstream beneficiaries rely upon assistance from non-profit institutions.

As some Latinos begin to reposition themselves economically, however, an increasing number are beginning to participate in secular organized philanthropy, albeit in ways consistent with cultural values. Development officers at Latino and mainstream nonprofit organizations alike seeking to bring Latinos into the philanthropic fold should thus recognize that it may take more time to cultivate a relationship with Latino donors than with mainstream donors who have an already established comfort level with traditional philanthropic vehicles. The personal
connection is likewise key. An appeal by a well-known member of the community may therefore be well received. Projects that address the needs of the Latino community such as those that address education or youth development are likewise salient to Latino donors. Still, the extent to which Latinos become involved in organized philanthropy depends largely upon how successful Latino and mainstream non-profit leaders are in promoting expanded Latino participation. Even under the best circumstances, moreover, the benefits of increased Latino involvement may be offset by the needs of a community beset with persistent poverty.

If the research on Latino philanthropy and alumni giving is scant, that of Latino alumni giving is almost non-existent. A thorough review of the literature did not yield a single study that expressly explored the factors that motivate this donor group to give. Some anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that few Latino graduates may have the financial capacity to make alumni contributions. For one, Latino students are disproportionately concentrated in two-year institutions. Many fail to transfer and graduate from four-year institutions. Moreover, even those that persist and graduate tend to come from low income families and have more college-loan debt than other alumni.

Giving capacity aside, without more research that explores Latino alumni philanthropic support, it is difficult to determine what motivates such graduates to give. Some practitioners suggest that the lack of a “critical mass” of Latino
administrators, faculty, students and even fundraisers in higher education likely thwarts fundraising efforts from Latino alumni. A more critical factor, however, may be institutional experience. As anecdotal evidence suggests, many Latino and other students of color felt alienated during their college years and thus hold feelings of resentment rather than fond memories of their alma maters. Indeed, one study of alumni giving found that black nondonors were more likely to attribute their lack of alma mater support to a negative institutional experience than white nondonors. In another study of minority alumni giving, which included a handful of Latinos, respondents cited a lack of connection to the university as the most common reason that they failed to give. To the extent that Latinos feel alienated from their colleges or universities as students, such findings suggest, that they may be less likely to give to their alma maters as graduates.

To be sure, a poor collegiate experience is not uncommon for Latino students. As the literature reveals, Latino students generally arrive on campus less well prepared than other students and are less likely to have the type of transitional first-year experiences that are often associated with academic and social integration. Yet, while Latino students that manage their time appropriately, have less difficulty with coursework, and perceive of the administration as student-centered are more likely to be well adjusted, even high-achieving Latino students often report that they feel alienated on their college campuses. Perhaps this feeling of alienation stems from the perception of racial discrimination. Indeed, Latino
students may be more likely than other students to perceive of racial tension on
campus, which may be related to feelings of insecurity or vulnerability about their
place in college.

Two models have been used to conceptualize the role of perceived
discrimination on minority student adjustment--the transactional model and the
student-institution fit model. In the transactional model, students of color are faced
with unique minority stressors that compound the stress brought on by the college
student role and thus confers additional threat to Latino student adjustment that is
over and above that which all students face. Overt discriminatory acts and
questions about their rights to be on campus, for example, exacerbate feelings of
alienation and inhibit integration for even the most talented Latino students. The
more subtle intergroup dynamics that contribute to the perception of a climate of
racial tension may be even more detrimental to Latino college student adjustment
than overt discriminatory acts, however. In the student-institution fit model, on the
other hand, discrimination impedes integration into the larger institutional
community and is thus a key factor in explaining Latino student maladjustment. As
some research suggests, some elements of the institutional culture continue to be
unreceptive to a Latino presence. Moreover, college structural characteristics may
be related to perceptions of racial tension. On large college campuses or if the
institution is located in a small town, for example, students are more likely to report
they have experienced racial tension. Conversely, Latino students are less apt to
perceive racial tension if the institution has a sizable Latino population or if the student can find his niche on a large college campus. On the other hand, it may be that no single structural element, but rather a configuration of elements--institutionalized ideologies, external influences and structural characteristic--contribute to the perception of racial tension.

While racial tension can contribute to student maladjustment, the perception of social support from family and friends can relieve stress and thus promote adjustment. Other factors such as a strong sense of academic self-efficacy can likewise reduce stress. On the campus level, student-centered institutional priorities and broad-based policies that foster an inclusive institutional climate promote Latino-student adjustment. While there is little that can be done to change the physical size of an institution, administrators can provide support for ethnic enclaves to help Latino students scale the campus down into smaller units that promote integration. Programs that promote interaction between faculty and students can, likewise, improve the campus climate.

Some research similarly suggests that development officers can implement programs designed to increase giving among Latino alumni. The standard development model targeted at traditional graduates may have limited success with Latino and other minority graduates, however. The practice of waiting until senior year to introduce the student to the alumni relations office, for example, may not be enough to instill an understanding of the value of alma mater support. Rather,
strategically planned programs that invest in the welfare of Latino students from the first day they arrive on campus until the last day of senior year are more likely to encourage giving after graduation.

Still, some research on minority alumni giving suggests that it should not be assumed that students that hold negative perceptions about their alma maters are not potential supporters. While the factors that deter minority alumni giving may be present to some degree, other factors such as a desire to give something back and having pride in their degree from the university often outweigh the negative. As an example, rather than support the institution financially, minority graduates may prefer to assist other students of color. Some institutions have, in fact, established Latino alumni associations that have been successful in raising funds for Latino student scholarships. The future of this fund raising practice remains uncertain; however, as anti-affirmative action measures threaten minority scholarships in some areas. Moreover, some institutions have resisted establishing separate alumni associations for Latino and other alumni of color out of fear that they may further segment minority and non-minority graduates.

In short, it appears that the factors that predispose or encourage Latino alumni giving are complex. Some research suggests that cultural traditions inhibit Latino alumni giving. Economic factors likely play a role as well. Finally, institutional experience may be central to giving or the lack thereof. One thing is certain, however. There is a dearth of research in the subject area. Perhaps this
study, which seeks to uncover the factors that predispose or discourage Latino alumni giving at a major southwestern university, will provide additional insight into this heretofore largely overlooked area of inquiry. The methods that will be used to explore the subject area and the research paradigm that shapes these methods are outlined in the following chapter.
Chapter III

Methodology

Research Paradigm

As Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest, a paradigm may be thought of as a system of beliefs that “defines, for its holder, the nature of the ‘world,’ the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts . . .” (p. 107). It is these systems of belief or ways of thinking about the world that guide individual actions. Likewise, in inquiry, the researcher’s paradigm is comprised of the researcher’s deeply held ontological and epistemological assumptions. The researcher’s ontology can be described as his view of the nature of reality. Epistemology relates to the relationship between the knower and the known. Together, these deeply held beliefs guide the researcher’s actions in that they undergird the approach and guide the method of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Interpretivists, for example, ontologically hold that there is no absolute truth. Rather, there exists a multiplicity of socially constructed, holistic realities. These social constructs are relative. That is, they are a product of the individual’s experiences, although across cultures individuals may share similar elements of their realities. Epistemologically, in the interpretivist’s view, the knower and the known are also intricately linked. The interpretivist’s method of discovery thus requires that the researcher and the participants interact to generate a more
informed consensus within the multiplicity of realities. Because these realities unfold only through the interaction of the researcher and the participants and such actions are likely to shape the outcome, inquiry is thought to be value-laden rather than value-free. Researcher objectivity is thus, not a goal of interpretivist inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Like the interpretivist, I am reluctant to accept the notion that there is one truth that can be uncovered through value-free, objective study. Additionally, as suggested in the literature, there may be multiple realities surrounding Latino philanthropy. The findings of some national studies suggest that Latinos are relatively uncharitable, for example. On the other hand, some philanthropic researchers argue that Latinos “don’t give” because they have been largely overlooked by the traditional philanthropic community (Cortes, 1995). Some also suggest that Latinos give generously, however, in ways that are culturally appropriate (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). In recent years, secular giving has likewise emerged as an important aspect of philanthropy within the Latino community, according to some scholars (Ramos, 1999). In short, because I share the paradigmatic assumptions of the interpretivist and the topic to be studied is rooted in the notion of multiple realities, this study was conducted from within an interpretivist paradigm.

As well, in interpretivist inquiry, realities are social constructs that can only be known through interaction between the investigator and the respondents. The
role of the researcher as the primary data-gathering tool is therefore key. Only the human instrument is deemed capable of understanding the nuances that occur as he or she interacts with respondents during the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It was, thus, my role in this study to facilitate the research process, then summarize and interpret the participants’ voices. At the same time, I served as a “passionate participant” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 112). Like the study participants, I am a Latina. I am also a fundraiser. As one who is passionate about the subject and one who believes that all philanthropy should be valued, I worked with the participants to document the nature of reality.

*Research Perspective*

Whereas the study was conducted from within the interpretivist paradigm, a race-based perspective informed the study. As the philanthropic literature suggests, Latino giving often occurs informally, in culturally appropriate ways (Cortes, 1995; Smith, Shue et al., 1992). As a Mexican-American, I am thus apt to have an understanding of the cultural nuances such as the influence of family and religion that likely inform Latino philanthropic activity. Furthermore, as some scholars of color posit, one’s experiences as a Latino often afford the researcher an insider status when working with other Latinos that may increase the trustworthiness of the findings (Hidalgo, 1998). Cautions Delgado-Gaitan (1993), “Sharing the same ethnic background as the participants does not necessarily make the researcher more knowledgeable about the meanings of the participants’ feelings, values and
practices,” however (1993, p. 391). Indeed, the insider perspective is a precarious one; a number of characteristics can relegate the researcher to an outsider. For one, the education and training that affords one the role of investigator, often creates an imbalance of power between the informants and the researcher of color that contributes to an outsider status. Likewise, despite a shared ethnic background, there may be regional and national differences between the researcher and informants that hinder the insider perspective (Hidalgo, 1998). To be sure, the latter may have been the case in this study. As a Mexican-American female with a working class background, I had more in common with the lived experiences of some of the interview participants than I had with others. As an example, I felt a stronger connection with one of the respondents, an Ecuadorian female from a well-to-do family than another participant--also female and Mexican-American--perhaps because I shared a stronger sense of ethnic self-identity with the former. Throughout the study, while I was thus aware that because I shared the cultural background with the alumni in this study and likely had a more informed understanding of the some of the cultural nuances that impact giving, I was careful not to assume an insider status.

Finally, as Denzin (1994) suggests, the research paradigm or perspective often serves as a mask that the researcher wears, removes or hides behind as the story is constructed. As the researcher in this study, I was thus charged with removing this mask, “so that respondents and consumers of the research know the
context in which the research was conducted” (Manning, 1997, p. 103).

Additionally, while interpretive inquiry is by definition value-laden, during data collection and analysis, I was obligated to take precautions to uncover “unchallenged assumptions” that might threaten meaningful results (Manning, 1997, p. 105). As a means of removing my paradigmatic mask and uncovering assumptions, I engaged in ongoing meaningful dialogue with participants and colleagues familiar with the research process throughout the study.

Methods

The study employed a model adapted from research of minority alumni giving conducted at Marquette University (L. J. Smith, 1998). As well, the survey tool used in L.J. Smith’s (1998) study was adapted for use in this research. After obtaining the names and addresses of 1995 Latino graduates at the university selected for the site of the study, I mailed the surveys to the respondents. Thereafter, follow-up interviews were conducted with a small number of participants using questions developed for the aforementioned Marquette University study (L. J. Smith, 1998) in order to obtain more in-depth information about Latino alumni giving.

Sample

A large Research I Level institution in the southwest was selected as the site for the study. Because the structure of the alumni office at the selected institution differs from the conventional development model and thus could have a bearing on
the outcomes of the study, a discussion of the development structure at the
university is necessary. That is, in most colleges and universities, the alumni
relations office operates as part of the larger development office. At the selected
university, however, while the development office, which raises funds from
corporations, foundations and individuals, is part of the larger university, the
alumni relations office maintains a separate 501(c)3 non-profit status. The alumni
office thus operates independently from the institution. Because the office is a
separate entity, alumni officers are free to lobby the legislature to protect the
university’s interest. As well, the alumni office can raise funds for minority
scholarships, an activity which the larger university is prohibited from doing. Still,
the alumni association and the development office work very closely together.
While the goal of the alumni relations office is to keep graduates connected to the
university, the development office is more interested in producing monetary results.
To this end, the alumni association conducts an array of programs, produces an
alumni magazine, organizes alumni reunions, offers mentoring programs and has
regional chapters in other communities. Alumni association members pay dues to
the alumni relations office, so that they can utilize the programs and services. As
more alumni become connected and make an emotional investment in the
university, it makes it easier for the development office to ask graduates for more
formal support, namely monetary contributions (J. Boone, personal
communication, April 10, 2003). In short, unlike the traditional development
structure, the alumni office at the university selected as the site for the study is a separate entity from the development office. Finally, the University selected as the site for the study did not have a Latino Alumni Association.

After I selected the site for my study, I chose the sample for my research. In so doing, I considered a number of factors. Financial capacity, for one, is thought to be critical to alumni giving (Stutler & Calvario, 1996). As some evidence suggests, alumni must have time to re-pay student loans and establish their careers before they are likely to have the financial means to make charitable contributions (Nichols, 1990). Alumni forty years and older may thus be in a better financial position to make charitable gifts to the university than younger graduates (Nicklin, 1994). I opted, therefore, not to draw my sample from a recent graduating class. At the same time, I decided against drawing my sample from an older cohort of Latino graduates. I feared that each cohort year that I went back to draw my sample, the numbers of Latino graduates would drop off quickly, thus, reducing my overall sample size. In the end, I chose to draw the sample from Latino alumni that graduated a few years ago without going too far back. My sample was thus drawn from 1995 Latino graduates at the university.

In order to obtain the names and addresses of the 1995 Latino alumni, I contacted the university’s alumni relations office. Alumni officers provided contact information for only those 1995 Latino graduates that were already members of the alumni association. Names and addresses of Latino graduates who were not
members of the alumni association at the time were not available. According to University’s Office of Institutional Research, there were some 1200 Latino graduates at the university in the targeted year. In comparison, only 121, or approximately 10% of the Latino graduates, joined the alumni association. As a result, my sample was drawn from only a small number of the 1995 Latino graduates. Moreover, in confining the sample to those graduates that joined the alumni association, the factors that influence Latino alumni giving may not have been fully explored in this study—a significant limitation of the research, which will be discussed in the final chapter.

Data Generation

The survey instrument, a self-reporting survey, consisted of four parts (see Appendix A). The purpose of the survey was to develop a demographic and philanthropic profile of the alumni participants. Part I of the survey asked for demographic information such as the respondent’s age, ethnic identity, marital status, family background and household income. Part II of the survey related to the respondents’ philanthropic activity within the larger nonprofit community. Part III related to the graduates’ philanthropic participation at the university. Finally, the questions in Part IV of the survey addressed the factors that have been identified in earlier research as promoting or deterring alumni giving. Respondents were asked to indicate which of these factors, if any, played a role in their decision to support, or not to support, the institution.
While a survey that had been developed for a previous study of minority alumni giving at Marquette University (L. J. Smith, 1998) was used for this study, some parts of the instrument were adapted based on the findings in the philanthropic literature. As an example, Rivas-Vasquez (1999) argues that Latino donors often hold a strong identification with ethnic and national identity that shapes charitable giving. Thus, whereas the Marquette survey asked the respondents for their ethnic origin, I changed the question to, “How do you identify yourself?” As well, the original survey included a question about family structure during childhood. I felt that it was more important to the results of this study to know if the alumni had any children and, if so, if they were raising the child in a single or dual family environment. I reasoned that if an alumnus must have the financial capacity to make charitable contributions in order to support his or her alma mater (Stutler & Calvario, 1996), then those with children in a single family structure would have less capacity to give. I thus changed this question, as well. Finally, I adapted the last question of the survey, so that it was more open ended. In other words, I asked respondents to share any aspects of the institutional experience that influenced their decision to support the university.

Thereafter, three peer reviewers assessed an initial draft of the survey and cover letter. As per their recommendations, the number of pages of the survey was reduced from six to four pages by decreasing the margins and the font size. The response options in the initial draft were inconsistent, as well, according to the
reviewers. Some questions asked the respondents to rate the statement using a “poor” to “excellent” rating; others used a “very important” to “not important at all” rating system. I thus changed the response options to a rating scale from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree,” so that they were uniform, although, in a few cases, some questions in the final survey included “yes” and “no” response options. As for the cover letter, at the suggestion of one of the reviewers, I added a statement with a box that the respondents could check and return if they were not interested in participating in the study. Another peer reviewer suggested that I use the phrase Latino/Hispanic in the cover letter and survey instead of just the term Latino. She felt that some respondents might be “put off” by the latter, which could interfere with the response rate.

Thereafter, the survey and cover letter (see Appendixes A and B) urging the graduates to complete and return the materials by the due date was mailed to 120 of the 121 individuals identified by the alumni association officers as 1995 Latino graduates and members of the alumni association. I excluded one alumnus in Bogota, Columbia because the address was incomplete. Before sending out the surveys, I wrote a small number on each one in a discreet location that corresponded to a number on a roster of all the alumni. These numbers served as a means of documenting which respondents returned their surveys, while ensuring a degree of anonymity. In total, 28 surveys were returned after the initial mailing.
A second survey, identical to the first, was then sent to all those that did not respond initially. Like the cover letter included with the first survey, the second letter explained how important it was that the alumnus complete and return the survey. The tone of the cover letter expressed an even greater sense of urgency than the first, however (see Appendix C). The second mailing resulted in 29 additional completed and returned surveys. Finally, a third mailing that was sent to all non-respondents yielded 12 additional responses. Altogether, 69 surveys were returned for a response rate of 58%. One alumnus also returned the cover letter indicating that he did not want to participate in the study.

Of the 69 alumni that completed the surveys, 29 indicated that they would be willing to participate in a more in-depth personal interview. Five interview participants were selected from this group using a random numbers table. Telephone calls to the selected individuals revealed that all were still available to participate in an interview. Fortunately, the five participants selected--three females and two males--were a diverse group in terms of their economic status, institutional experience and philanthropic participation. An important point because as Patton (1990) notes, the findings of a study can be enhanced if a small number of participants that provide information-rich cases for in-depth study are utilized. Moreover, such a sample is likely to yield two equally important types of findings: “high-quality, detailed descriptions of each case which are useful for documenting
uniqueness,” and, “important shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity” (Patton, 1990, p. 172).

Subsequently, I conducted the interviews using questions developed for the aforementioned Marquette University study (L. J. Smith, 1998) as the basis for the interview format. Again, the interview questions were adapted where needed (see Appendix D). Unlike the Marquette study, however, I used a standardized open-ended interview format and an interview guide. In a standard open-ended interview, the credibility of the findings is enhanced because the researcher prepares a list of questions in advance of the interview, and all participants are asked the same questions in a specific order. On the other hand, the standardized format does not permit the researcher to explore topics outside of the interview questions. In the interview guide approach, the researcher is given the flexibility to probe areas not addressed in the questions and to explore certain subjects in more depth (Patton, 1990). In this study, because I opened the interview with a standardized format and then closed with an interview guide approach, the credibility of the findings was enhanced without compromising flexibility.

In order to enhance the fidelity of the findings, I audiotaped the interviews and used field notes. As Patton (1990) argues, the use of field notes during the interviews allows the researcher to record important events and nonverbal cues, not captured in the audiotapes. More importantly, while gathering data, it is not uncommon for the researcher to come across an idea that may be useful later during
data analysis. The field notes thus enabled me to track “analytical insights” that occurred as I collected the data (Patton, 1990, p. 378).

In addition, I used member checking frequently as a means of enhancing the trustworthiness of the interview data. In other words, throughout the interviews, I engaged in dialogue with the participants to ensure that I understood their statements (Creswell, 1994). As an example, during one of the interviews, I asked the participant if she attended any alumni events in her hometown. She said that she did not, but that she might be inclined to attend if the activity was something that piqued her interest. She then stated that, “Most of them [alumni activities] are “Happy Hours’ and things like that.” To be certain that I understood what she was saying, I asked if she meant that these were primarily social activities. She agreed and replied that the events were, “more social, than anything.” If, she explained, she was invited to a “meeting on . . . devising some kind of scholarship” she might be more apt to attend an alumni event. Again, to make sure that I understood, I asked if she meant that “meaningful participation versus just social activities” might increase her participation. She replied, “Exactly.” Finally, at the close of the interviews and as another way of ensuring the data trustworthiness, I transcribed each of the audiotapes verbatim.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

After manually tallying the survey data and transcribing the interviews, I began the process of analyzing the data in order to uncover recurring themes. Data
generated from the surveys was analyzed first. Using a manual tabulation process, I counted the number of times that each question was answered in a specific way and then determined the percentage of respondents associated with each of the responses. After compiling all of the survey data, I generated a preliminary demographic and philanthropic profile of the respondents as well as a summary of the participants’ perceptions of the institution while enrolled as students and now as alumni. Finally, a roster of the alumni interested in participating in a personal interview was derived from the survey data.

As for analyzing the interview data, as Patton (1990) notes, qualitative research yields “voluminous” data (p. 379). The researcher is charged with analyzing and interpreting these data—what Denzin describes as “making sense of what has been learned” (1994, p. 500). The process of “sense making” involves reducing or breaking down the vast amounts of data into smaller themes and categories, which are then interpreted in some manner until a larger story or picture emerges (Creswell, 1994). Thus, to begin the data analysis, I first reviewed the entire body of interview transcripts in order to “get a sense of the whole” (Creswell, 1994, p. 155). Thereafter, I reviewed the transcripts from each of the alumni interviews individually. In reviewing the data, I looked for themes that appeared frequently. After identifying the recurring themes, I grouped related themes together into categories. These categories were given a descriptor that aptly identified the data, a process known as coding. Interrelationships among the various
categories were then noted (Creswell, 1994). In some cases, smaller themes that fell under a larger thematic area were categorized as sub-themes.

One theme that emerged from the interview data was the notion that Latinos may not give as often as other donors. Within that theme, other smaller, yet related themes surfaced. As an example, one interview participant suggested that she did not feel that giving was as important within the Latino culture as it was in mainstream culture. Another reported that Latinos may not give as much as others, not because we are not as generous, but because we are less familiar with some of the practices that are common in traditional philanthropy. Another sub-theme that emerged was the idea that although Latinos may be generous, they often give time over money because they have limited financial giving capacity.

While the data analysis and interpretation process described above--reviewing the data in search of recurring themes and then coding the data--implies a formulaic process, as Denzin (1994) argues, constructing an emergent interpretation in qualitative research is “an art that cannot be formalized” (p. 512). Rather, “sense making” (Denzin, 1994, p. 503) or interpreting the data, involves making complex decisions about which aspects of the collected data will be included in the findings and how they will be represented. With that in mind, I also reviewed the data in search of a single comment or idea that might be so unique or insightful that it, too, warranted attention. One such example involved an alumnus who was an employee of a major accounting firm. As she explained, annually, one
of the partners in the firm, a graduate of the university, personally solicits other graduate-employees for an alumni contribution. A single donation from the firm at large is then forwarded to the alumni office. This solicitation method was unlike any other mentioned during the interviews. Moreover, only one of the survey respondents reported being personally asked to make an alumni gift. In my view, this finding was so unique and relevant, given that some argue that Latino giving may be characterized by its emphasis on the personal nature of giving (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999), that I selected it to be a part of the larger, final story that emerged from the data.

Finally, an additional comment about the emerging story is in order. That is, through this study, I hoped to add to the scant body of literature on Latino giving and to provide a preliminary understanding of the factors that influence Latino graduates to make alumni contributions. While I selected a single institution as the site of the study, my aim was to gain an understanding of Latino alumni giving at large. My emphasis was thus on the graduates, not the institution. For this reason, I chose not to reveal the name of the university chosen for the site of the study. The name of the institution has thus been disguised in the final report.

In summary, in order to analyze and interpret the data, I reviewed each of the interviews individually and then as a whole to gain an understanding of the larger picture. I searched the data for recurring themes and sub-themes, thereafter. At the same time, however, I also reviewed the interview data in search of some
idea that might be so unique as to warrant attention in the final document. While
the process suggests a formulaic exercise, rather, data interpretation requires one to
make complex decisions about the pieces that will eventually make up the larger
story. The final product, which contains my attempt to “make sense” of what has
been learned can thus only be considered a living interpretive document (Denzin,
1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Only after establishing the trustworthiness of the
findings did I produce a public text.

Trustworthiness and Authenticity

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that the findings of interpretivist inquiry at
best suggest tentative application; thus, trustworthiness and authenticity of the
findings, not generalizability, are the goals of such research. In this study of Latino
alumni giving, a number of techniques were employed to enhance the
trustworthiness of the data collection and the authenticity of the findings. To begin
with, two sources of information were used to collect the data, a technique known
as methodological triangulation (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The use of both
surveys and interviews, “increases validity as the strengths of one approach can
compensate for the weaknesses of another,” (Patton, 1990, p. 244).

During data analysis, other means of ensuring trustworthiness were also
employed: saturation, member checking and peer debriefing (Patton, 1990). For
one, I continued to review the data for emergent themes until the point of
saturation. When new themes no longer emerged, I compiled a preliminary report.
Two interviewees were then invited to “member check” or review the preliminary findings because, according to Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), if the audience members agree with the researcher’s interpretations, this provides the “most important form of credibility check” (p. 92). As well, three peer debriefers examined the preliminary report as a means of increasing trustworthiness (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen 1993). As Manning notes, however, even the researcher’s final report should be thought of as a “living document open to amendment and exegesis” (1997, p. 110). In other words, it should be understood that my final report yielded a finished, but not complete, document. Additional research in the area is needed in order to uncover a more complete view of Latino alumni giving to higher education.

Conclusion

In summary, consistent with my own deeply held ontological and epistemological beliefs as well as the multiple realities surrounding Latino alumni giving; I used an interpretivist paradigm to guide the methodology of this study. At the same time, as some research suggests, the researcher is often afforded an insider status if he or she is of the same race or ethnicity as the respondents. Because I am Latina and likely hold an understanding of the cultural nuances that inform Latino alumni giving, the study thus employed a race-based perspective. Throughout the study, however, I took great care not to accept my insider status as given. Similarly, I took precautions throughout, such as member checking and peer debriefing, to
uncover unchallenged assumptions that might arise from my own deeply held interpretivist beliefs. As well, these steps enhanced the trustworthiness and authenticity of the findings.

Additionally, I employed a model adapted from a study of minority alumni giving conducted at another institution. The sample was then drawn from 1995 Latino graduates at a major southwestern university. A four-part survey instrument was mailed to all the subjects followed by in-depth interviews of at least five of the survey respondents. Thereafter, I reviewed the interview transcripts in search of themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data, a process known as coding. Saturation, member checking and peer debriefing were employed throughout to enhance the trustworthiness and authenticity of the findings. This study was not without limitations, however. A few have been described herewith. In particular, the sample, which omitted Latino graduates that are not members of the alumni association, is a significant limitation of the study. Finally, I chose to disguise the name of the institution selected as the site for the study as I generated the final report.

It should be understood, however, that the findings outlined in the report are preliminary at best. As some argue, data analysis is the researcher’s attempt to “make sense” of the emergent, larger story and involves making complex decisions about which aspects will become a part of the final story. The final product can thus only be considered a living interpretive document. Thus, while the chapter to
follow outlines the findings of this study, additional research in the heretofore largely unexplored area of Latino alumni giving will help to uncover a more complete picture of the topic at hand.
Chapter IV

Data Analysis

Introduction

As suggested in the literature review, the increasing number of Latino college-graduates represents a growing fundraising pool for institutions of higher education (Gaiter, 1991; Nicklin, 1994). Yet, while alumni association and development officers are targeting Latino graduates for alumni gifts, the former are finding that it is more difficult to garner alma mater support from the latter, than from their non-minority peers (Gaiter, 1991). Some practitioners speculate that the giving traditions of Latinos do not include support of higher education (Nicklin, 1994). To be sure, the notion that Latinos “don’t give” prevails within the philanthropic community. Latinos are often viewed as the recipients of charitable dollars and rarely as prospective donors (“Hispanic Leaders Vow”, 1990; Estrada as cited in Ramos, & Kasper, 2000). Although Latino and other minorities are often characterized as less generous than mainstream donors, there has been little research to support this characterization (Smith, Shue & Villarreal, 1992; Smith, Shue, Vest et al., 1999). Until recently, most philanthropic research has emphasized the giving patterns of only a wealthy few. Little, if any, research has explored the charitable activity of others (Smith, Shue & Villarreal, 1992; Smith, Shue, Vest et al., 1999). Research in Latino giving is likewise scant and largely anecdotal (Cortes, 1995).
With the recent advent of ethnic philanthropic research, and specifically, Latino philanthropic research, scholars are now exploring the philanthropic activity of these heretofore “highly understudied” (Campoamor & Diaz, 1999, p. 7) prospective donors. These scholars suggest that, while new to the arena of organized philanthropy, Latinos give, and give generously, however, in ways that are culturally appropriate (Ramos, 1999; Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). Development officers thus seeking to raise funds from Latino donors should use fundraising strategies that are culturally consistent. Personal fundraising appeals that support projects that benefit the Latino community and causes will likely generate more response from such donors, for example. On the other hand, strategies such as fundraising for endowment campaigns may seem unfamiliar and too far removed from the immediate needs of the Latino community to generate much support (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999).

As for the subject matter at hand, Latino alumni giving, like Latino philanthropy, remains largely unexplored. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Latino graduates may be hampered by college-loan debt and familial obligations, which limits giving capacity and thus alumni contributions (Nicklin, 1994). As well, some practitioners posit that the lack of Latino representation as board members, administrators, faculty, students and fundraisers in higher education likely thwarts efforts to fundraise from Latino alumni (Nicklin, 1997). A more critical factor may be institutional experience. As some research suggests, Latino and other minority
students often have a poor collegiate experience (Green, 1989; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Those Latino graduates that felt alienated from their college campuses may harbor feelings of resentment rather than fond memories of their alma maters. They may be less likely to provide philanthropic support as alumni, as a result (Gaiter, 1991; Nicklin, 1994).

On the other hand, research on minority alumni giving, albeit extremely limited, suggests that one should not assume that graduates that hold negative perceptions about their alma maters are not potential supporters. While the factors that deter alumni support may be present to some degree, other factors such as a desire to give something back and having pride in one’s degree from the university often outweigh the negative (L. J. Smith, 1998). With this in mind, the purpose of the research project at hand was to explore the factors that promote or limit Latino alumni giving. This study examined the giving patterns of Latino graduates at a major southwestern university. Specifically, the question to be addressed is as follows: What are the self-reported factors that promote or deter Latino alumni giving of the 1995 graduates at a Research I Level university in the southwest? A review of the findings of the study, beginning with a summary of the results of the survey, thus follows.

**Philanthropic Profile of the Alumni**

I began the analysis of the survey data by tallying the demographic information in Part I of the survey. Such information may be helpful in
understanding the philanthropic involvement of the alumni or the lack thereof. The age of the graduates, for example, may have a bearing on giving. Older alumni presumably have a greater financial capacity to give than younger graduates because they have fewer financial obligations. On the other hand, they may be those that bear the greatest resentment rather than fond memories of their institutional experience, and thus have the greatest reluctance toward giving (Nicklin, 1994). However, as the results of this survey found, few of the respondents in this study were older Latino graduates, a finding that was not unexpected as these were graduates from 1995. As shown in Table 1, 47 (68.1%) of the respondents were 30 years old and younger, 13 (18.8%) were 31 to 35 years of age and six (8.7%) were 36 to 40 years old. Only three were 41 years old or older (4.4%). As for the gender of the respondents, 37 (53.6%) were male and 32 (46.4%) were female (see Table 2).

The age and gender of the respondents aside, some research in alumni giving suggests that family income may be the single most important demographic factor, which distinguishes donors from nondonors (Taylor & Martin, Jr., 1995). To that end, the survey included a question about household income. As the survey found, four (5.8%) respondents had household income levels of $25,000 or less, another four (5.8%) had income levels of between $25,001 and $35,000, and 12 (17.4%) had income levels between $35,001 and $50,000. Thirteen (18.8%), likewise, had household incomes between $50,001 and $75,000 while 21 (30.4%)
had income levels between $75,001 and $100,000. Finally, 11 respondents (16%) had income levels of $100,001 to $150,000 while four (5.8%) had income levels from $150,001 to $200,000. Not one of the respondents had income levels in excess of $200,000 (see Table 3).

Still, if over half of the alumni in this study had reported household income levels in excess of $75,000, then the Latino graduates in this study may be in a better financial position to make charitable contributions than the average college graduate. According to some estimates, the median annual income for male and female four-year college graduates in 1999 was $52,985 and $37,993, respectively (United States Department of Education, 2002). On the other hand, perhaps the reported income levels were higher than those of the average college graduate because over 40% of the respondents in this study held advanced degrees. As shown in Table 4, although all respondents were 1995 graduates of the institution, not all were undergraduate degree recipients. Some received an undergraduate degree from another institution and earned a second Bachelor’s degree or a Master’s degree at the university. In total, 18 of the alumni in the study held graduate degrees in addition to their undergraduate degrees; 10 likewise held professional degrees.

As well, there may be another reason that the reported household income levels in the study seemed unusually high. That is, perhaps they were a reflection of a dual income household. Indeed, the majority of the respondents in this study, 37
(53.6%), were married. In comparison, 28 (40.6%) were single and had never been married. Four (5.8%) were separated or divorced (see Table 5). As for family structure, 14 of the alumni (20.3%) had children. Of these 14, nine (13.1%), three (4.3%) and two (2%) had one, two and three children, respectively (see Table 6). All fourteen were dual parent families (see Table 7). Such findings may be important within the context of alumni giving because some anecdotal evidence suggests Latino giving practices often include a preference for giving to family over other areas, including higher education (Nicklin, 1994).

In addition to family structure, the survey sought to reveal other information about the respondents that might shape alumni giving. Ethnic self-identity, for example, may have a bearing on Latino giving as Rivas-Vasquez argues (1999). Accordingly, alumni were asked how they self-identify. As the results of the survey showed, 27 (39.1%) of the respondents ethnically identified themselves as Hispanic followed by 25 (36.2%) that identified as Mexican-American. On the other hand, three (4.3%) respondents reported they were Cuban-American and two (2.9%) noted they were Puerto Rican. Only one (1.5%) respondent identified as Latino and one as Chicano (1.5%). Finally, 10 (14.5%) of those alumni surveyed indicated that they identified themselves ethnically as “other” (see Table 8). That ethnic self-identity likely influences philanthropic activity as the literature suggests (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999) resonates in the remarks of at least one female alumnus. As she explained in the survey, although she identified herself as Latina/Mexican-
American, she now considers ethnic identity to be a family matter as her husband is half-black. As a family, she and her spouse now sometimes choose to make contributions to organizations that assist the black community.

If ethnic identity likely influences giving, the literature suggests that religion often plays a role in Latino giving, as well. In fact, until recently, most formal giving within the Latino community has occurred within the church and specifically, the Catholic Church (Cortes, 1995; Ramos, 1999; Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). The Protestant Evangelical Church has gained a large Latino following in recent years, and by implication; the number of Latinos making contributions to the Protestant church has grown as well (Peterson Royce & Rodriguez, 1999; Ramos, 1999). To this end, the survey included a question about religious affiliation. As the study found, the alumni were overwhelmingly Catholic (75.4%) as compared to Protestant (4.3%), Baptist (4.3%) and Methodist (2.9%). Eight of the respondents (11.6%), however, noted that they were of an “other” religious affiliation (see Table 9).

In short, Part I of the survey revealed that over 50% of alumni respondents had household income levels in excess of $75,000. Such findings suggest that a large number of the graduates in this study may have the financial capacity to make alumni gifts. While about half of the alumni surveyed were married and half were single, most did not have children. All were college graduates, although some held graduate and professional degrees in addition to their undergraduate degrees. As
well, three-fourths of the alumni ethnically identified themselves as Hispanic or Mexican-American. A smaller number ethnically identified as Cuban-American, Puerto Rican or Chicano. Likewise, three-fourths of the alumni were of the Catholic faith. These results are important because as, the literature suggests, ethnic identity, religious affiliation, familial status and financial income may have a bearing on charitable activity. Perhaps the impact of these factors, or the lack thereof, may be found in the following summary, which analyzes the results of the survey and participant interviews.

Alumni Philanthropic Involvement

One means of exploring the factors that impact alumni giving among the 1995 university graduates may be to understand their participation in charitable activity. In other words, are the alumni philanthropic, and if so, what institutions are they likely to support? As shown in Table 10, 84.1% of alumni reported that it was important to them and to their family members to make charitable contributions as compared to 10.1% that disagreed with this statement and 5.8% respondents that did not know. Moreover, outside of their undergraduate and graduate alma maters, respondents cited a wide array of organizations, which they supported philanthropically including political actions groups as well as educational and religious institutions. Specifically, the graduates named the following organizations, which are listed alphabetically and not in order of any giving preference, as recipients of their charitable dollars: M.D. Anderson Cancer
Center, Amarillo College, American Indian Running Strong, American Red Cross, Arthritis Foundation, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Chicago Cares, Goodwill Industries, Humane Society, Leukemia Society, Medina Children’s Home, Partners of Youth, the Salvation Army and the United Way.

Just as the alumni supported a wide range of philanthropic institutions, the factors that motivated them to make charitable contributions were likewise varied. Alumni surveyed were not limited to one response, but rather, asked to note all of the reasons that they make charitable gifts. The largest number of alumni (49) reported that they made charitable contributions to help those less fortunate. The second most commonly identified reason for philanthropic activity (44) was to give back to society. Because I have the financial capacity to give (37) and out of a sense of obligation (27) ranked as the third and fourth most commonly cited reasons for giving, respectively. Fewer alumni (16) reported that they made charitable contributions to give back to the Latino community and not one alumnus indicated that peer pressure influenced his or her charitable activity. Finally, 11 respondents said that they had “other” reasons for giving, which included belief in the work of the organizations they support, to find cures for diseases through medical research, or because their religious beliefs fostered tithing--to name a few (see Table 11). One respondent, as mentioned previously, added that she made charitable contributions to give back to the Latino/Hispanic and Black communities. More relevant to the subject at hand, two respondents reported that
the “other” reasons they gave were to “give something back to my alma mater” and “to give back to the University’s student programs.”

Additionally, 58 (84.1%) respondents indicated that it was important for them to identify with the organizations to which they contribute (see Table 12). On the other hand, alumni were not as certain that it was important for them to support organizations that have Latino/Hispanic representation. Only 24 (34.8%) graduates reported that such representation was an important factor in their philanthropic decisions. In comparison, 28 (40.5%) did not agree and 16 (23.2%) reported that they did not know (see Table 13).

In short, as the survey revealed, the Latino alumni in this study were philanthropic. The graduates made contributions to a wide range of charitable causes and institutions. The reasons that they gave--to help those less fortunate, to give back to society and because they had the financial capacity to do so--were likewise varied. At the same time, alumni wanted to identify with the agencies they supported although Latino representation in such organizations was not as important for some.

Yet, while the Latino alumni in this study were charitable, they did not necessarily view the larger Latino community as philanthropic. When asked if philanthropy is an important part of Latino culture, while 50.7% of the alumni agreed, 28.9% reported that they did not know and 18.9% disagreed altogether (see Table 14). The uncertainty about the importance of giving in the Latino culture is
further illustrated by the comment of interview Participant S, a female alumnus. As she stated, “I mean just from the feel that I get, I don’t think that the Hispanic culture emphasizes philanthropy and encourages philanthropy in the way that it does in the American culture.”

One reason for the confusion among alumni about the importance of giving in the Latino culture may stem from the use of the term, philanthropy. As the literature suggests, the concept of philanthropy is not well understood within the Latino community (Rodriguez & Quern’s study as cited in Wagner & Rodriguez, 1997). In fact, some scholars of ethnic philanthropy argue that national studies, which rely on self-reporting measures often underreport Latino charitable activity because they utilize the term philanthropy. Giving and sharing are terms that are more commonly used within the Latino community to describe charitable behavior (Smith, Shue, Vest et al., 1999). On the other hand, until recently, few Latinos have had significant means to make substantial contributions (Ramos, 1999); accordingly, alumni may not perceive of philanthropy as being an important part of Latino culture. Indeed, the idea that philanthropy is practiced exclusively by an elite few is clearly reflected in the following statement by Participant S:

I think traditionally when you think of philanthropy, it’s people that are more well off that are giving to big foundations. I would say on a smaller scale, on an individual scale, I wouldn’t necessarily call it philanthropy if you were just giving money . . . $10 to an organization. It does seem like
it’s a lot, you know, a major amount of money, a major contribution to some organization.

In fairness, however, the respondent prefaced this statement by stating that, “tithing in a way is philanthropy.” A point, which suggests that even those with limited means can participate in charitable activity, yet, further illustrates the ambiguity that surrounds the term, philanthropy.

Some philanthropic research suggests that Latinos give and give generously; however, Latino giving may be characterized by a preference for informal giving to family and extended family (Ramos, 1999). With this in mind, alumni were asked if they consider giving to family and friends to be a form of philanthropy. Approximately one-half of the survey respondents, or 52.2%, agreed that such informal assistance is a form of philanthropy (see Table 15). Interviewee M, a female alumnus originally from El Salvador, for example, regarded giving to family as simply another means of philanthropy. She recalled that at one time she helped her father when he was laid off. As she explains, “A good judge starts with his own house, so yes, I would say it’s [giving to family] another way. . . . It’s not only to strangers. ”

Another alumnus, Participant J, the son of migrant farm workers, shared a similar view. When asked if he recalled if his parents were philanthropic when he was growing up, he stated,
The only thing I can think of is that the family helped each other out. You know, when somebody needed money to make a car payment . . . people were able to help out. When we needed [sic] when someone was sick, people were always there to come and help out.

Still, Participant J made a distinction between giving and philanthropy as shown in the following statement. “I’m not sure if it’s [giving to family] philanthropy. I look at it [philanthropy] more as someone that’s not related to you. But to your immediate family, I would think of it as giving.”

While over half of the respondents considered financial assistance to immediate and extended family to be a form of philanthropy, 42% of alumni respondents disagreed (see Table 15). As Participant B, a graduate originally from west Texas stated,

I think if my brother joined some kind of organization or association that was specifically for people that were in need and some kind of contribution was made to that organization, yes, then I think that would be philanthropy, but if my brother needs a loan because he’s fallen on hard times, I wouldn’t really consider that philanthropy. I would just call that helping out or giving a loan, or something.

As well, he added, “I think true philanthropy is a person that you don’t know, something that you can’t put a face with.” Finally, Participant A, who was employed in the development field and defined philanthropy as “the giving and
sharing of one’s resources—whether it be money, time or knowledge—just to help better society in anyway possible,” likewise, did not equate financial assistance to family, immediate or extended, with philanthropy.

On the other hand, some respondents argued that Latinos are less likely to participate in institutional philanthropy because of a lack of financial capacity. Latinos are thus more likely to give of their time, rather than their money. As Participant J stated, “I think it’s more a factor of the . . . lack of financial resources. I think giving is a part of the Hispanic culture, but what it comes down to is that what we’re able to give is our experience and time, rather than money.” When asked to describe the charitable giving patterns of the Latino culture, another alumnus, likewise, concurred that giving of time over money was something that she witnessed within her family while growing up. As Participant S recalled:

As far as my parents go, no, I don’t really recall them ever, ever giving. If I look at my relatives, I don’t ever recall them giving to a specific organization. If there is something that they do give, it’s their time . . . so giving back in their time rather than just money

While some alumni argued that, because of socioeconomic limitations, Latinos are often confined to giving of their time over money, at least one graduate, originally from El Salvador, noted that Latino giving is not solely driven by financial capacity. As an example, when it comes to supporting the church, even the poorest of Latinos find a way to share. As Participant M stated:
Socioeconomic, I would say, not really. Because you know . . . religion is a very big influence. And if you go to church, like I do recall in Latin America [sic], an even some churches here, that the mass is in Spanish [sic], they give 5¢. They give something. They give. They--they do give.

Likewise, when asked if she thought Latinos were uncharitable, Participant A explained that Latinos are generous, especially during times of crisis. As she replied:

I think that if anything ever happens, everybody comes forward. Like you know, here [in Houston], when the flooding came, when we had that big flood, when there has been earthquakes in Central America and Mexico, I mean, you hear it all over the news, people giving. I mean everybody goes and takes truckloads of things, clothes, and you see it and its people of all colors--of all . . . economic backgrounds, too. So, I know that, you know, we like to give.

Moreover, Participant A, who was employed as a prospect researcher in the field of development thus may have had a more informed understanding of the nuances of Latino giving than the average alumnus, argued that a lack of familiarity with organized giving practices may further limit Latino participation in traditional philanthropy. As she stated:

I don’t think Hispanics are very--are very familiar with . . . philanthropy, and maybe that’s why they don’t do it as often as maybe they should . . .
don’t want to stereotype or anything, but maybe because of . . . our knowledge of giving--like tax breaks and everything that comes along with giving that other people that have always been used to having money or hearing about--maybe that’s one of the reasons. The other reason is maybe they just don’t understand the whole concept and there’s a whole . . . legitimate establishment . . . that you give to and they are not going to be corrupt in giving . . . . And maybe that’s, that’s why, since they’re not familiar with all that because maybe some of them . . . are first generation here or immigrants or something.

Another interviewee, Participant M, echoed these sentiments. She reported that Latinos often mistrust organized philanthropic institutions. As an example, people in her native country of El Salvador often hold the perception that their charitable dollars will not be used to help the disadvantaged. As she stated, “So the problem, I think, is most like they have their doubts about does the money really go to the less privileged or stay in the . . . administrative expenses . . . of these people that are just asking for the money.”

In short, it appears that the Latino alumni in this study had differing opinions about the role of philanthropy in the Latino community. The majority of the alumni agreed that philanthropy is important to them and to their families. Indeed, a large number gave to a wide range of charitable institutions. Still, almost half of the respondents reported that philanthropy is not an important aspect of
Latino culture. Some interview participants, on the other hand, argued that Latinos
give generously within their immediate circles, such as family or church, or in
times of crisis. Others suggested that Latinos are generous, but because of financial
constraints they often give of their time rather than money. A lack of familiarity
with formal philanthropic practices may further hamper Latino giving, according to
at least one alumnus. While such findings suggest an uncertainty about the
importance of giving within the Latino culture, of more relevance, given the
research topic at hand were the findings, which suggest that the alumni respondents
perceived themselves as charitable. In other words, if graduates viewed themselves
as charitable and reported that they participate in traditional philanthropy, in what
ways, if any, does this impact alumni giving? A review of the findings about the
graduates’ philanthropic involvement at the university may provide the answer.

Factors that Influence Alumni Giving at the University

Some practitioners in the institutional advancement field argue that Latinos
are less likely to make contributions to their alma mater than mainstream alumni
(Gaiter, 1991). One reason for the lower levels of institutional support may be that
Latino graduates often come from lower income families than other students. As
well, some evidence suggests that Latino alumni have more college-loan debt and
bear greater financial obligations to their families than mainstream graduates, a
situation that limits giving capacity and thus, alumni support (Nicklin, 1994).
Anecdotal evidence likewise suggests that Latinos traditionally favor support of
family members, not colleges and universities (Nicklin, 1997). To be sure, the survey comments of one alumnus lend credibility to this argument. As she noted, “I consider the needs of my family paramount and would make sacrifices for my family first before giving to the university.”

Contrary to the anecdotal evidence about Latino graduates, however, 75% of the alumni in this study reported they had made a contribution to the university (see Table 16). Moreover, 70% of the respondents reported they had neither obligations to their families nor students loans that interfered with giving (see Tables 17 & 18). Such a situation is not surprising since 50% of the alumni reported that they had household income levels in excess of $75,000. What is perhaps more surprising is that 25% of the graduates reported that they had financial obligations that interfered with support for their alma mater. On the other hand, when alumni report that financial obligations prevent them from supporting their alma mater, perhaps what they really mean to say is that financial obligations prevent them from providing ongoing support or gifts of a more significant size to the university, at the current time. Indeed, at least two alumni reported that although they have financial obligations, which interfered with giving at the time of the study, they planned to contribute in the future when their financial situation improved. As one respondent argued, “I am a poor resident doctor, but when I do earn a stable income, I do plan on contributing more regularly.” Similarly, Participant B added, “I’ll get to a point in my life when I have money, and I’ll be able to give, but not right now.”
If financial obligations interfere with alumni giving, other factors may limit support as well. Alumni may simply have other giving preferences, for one. As noted earlier, the respondents in this study supported a wide array of charitable institutions. While clearly a sign that Latino alumni have the motivation and the financial capacity to make contributions, such evidence suggests that alumni have other areas of philanthropic interest that likewise compete for their charitable dollars. Support for the church is one such example. As Participant S argued, given the choice between supporting the university or the church, she would choose her church. She explained:

Because there is just a connection that you have with church, and not only that but with God and kind of just your spiritual core, that you don’t--that I never felt with my alma mater, maybe other people did.

Another interviewee, participant B, similarly preferred to support his church over his alma mater because the church helped him out when he was a student, and more importantly, because he felt that with the church, unlike at the university, he could “see where the money is going.”

On the other hand, some alumni felt more strongly connected to their alma mater than the church. Participant J was one such example. Brought up in the Roman Catholic faith, he was “not a member of a specific religion” at the time of the study, although he considered himself religious. Given the choice, he would support his alma mater because “I think it had a bigger impact on my life than
church has.” Likewise, participant A, who described herself as a non-practicing Catholic, stated that she would likely prefer to support the university because “I’m not that close to the church.” Such findings suggest that, while the church may play a key role in Latino giving, some Latino graduates do not have strong ties to their church. These alumni may thus prefer to support their alma mater.

**Institutional Experience and Alumni Giving**

While giving preferences may influence alumni giving, the literature suggests that, when it comes to alma mater support, satisfaction with the institutional experience is likely a key factor (Stutler & Calvario, 1996). To this end, the survey used in this study included a number of questions aimed at capturing the graduates’ perceptions about the university both as students, and later, as graduates. According to the survey results, the majority of respondents felt connected to the institution as students, and continued to do so, as alumni. As an example, 92.7% of the graduates surveyed were happy while attending the institution (see Table 19), and 82.6% reported that they felt like the institution had made an effort to make them feel comfortable about being there (see Table 20). As for loyalty, 95.6% of the respondents had a positive sense of loyalty to the university as students (see Table 21). Moreover, 98.5% of the respondents, respectively, continued to have both a positive sense of loyalty (see Table 22) and a positive general attitude toward the institution as alumni (see Table 23). Finally,
88.4% of the graduates agreed that, if they had to do it all over, they would choose to attend the university again (see Table 2).

If the survey found that most graduates had a positive institutional experience, the participant interviews produced similar results. Again, as stated earlier, such findings should not be surprising since all of the interviewees are members of the alumni association. What is perhaps more telling is that so many of the respondents reported that they had a positive institutional experience, given that the literature suggests that Latino and other minority students often report that they feel isolated and marginalized by an inhospitable institutional climate (Green, 1989). In fact, as Pascarella and Terenzini argue (1999), the institutional experiences of minority students may be significantly different from that of their white peers. At the same time, research suggests that Latino freshman often arrive on college campuses with background characteristics that impede their ability to integrate academically and socially into the university environment (Terenzini et al., 1996). First and second-year transitional experiences frequently hamper Latino student adjustment, moreover, even when Latino college students have a high potential for academic success (Hurtado, Carter & Spuler, 1996). Moreover, as the literature suggests, students that have negative experiences as they integrate into the academic and social systems of a college are more likely to have a decreased institutional commitment; marginalization and attrition often result (Tinto, 1987).
With this in mind, the interviews conducted in this study sought to uncover the background and transitional experiences of the Latino graduates in order to understand what role, if any, they played in institutional experience. Moreover, for the purposes of this study, the interviews explored how these institutional experiences influenced alumni giving. Fortunately, because the interview participants randomly selected for this study were a diverse group, they arrived at the institution with a wide range of background characteristics and transitional experiences that may have influenced their academic and social adjustment, and thus institutional commitment. A review of the findings of each of the participant interviews follows.

Participant A.

The mother of Participant A was from El Salvador. Her father, on the other hand, was born in Mexico. Her parents likely had only an elementary education. She grew up in Houston, Texas. Her father worked as a longshoreman and her mother worked at home, raising the family. She recalled that since she was a child, her parents always stressed the importance of education. They believed it was the only way you could progress in life. Participant A, however, was the only one in her family that pursued and completed a degree in higher education.

As Participant A observed, while she knew since she was in middle school that she wanted to attend college, she never thought much about where she would attend until her senior year. When two friends suggested that they apply to the
university, she applied and was accepted. Because she had always lived in the same area and was raised in a close-knit family, her parents were reluctant to see her go. In fact, “they didn’t like it at all, but . . . they never really said, ‘Don’t go’,,” perhaps, she argues, because they had always emphasized how important it was to obtain an education.

Participant A found her first year at the university particularly difficult. Although she had been in honors classes in high school, she quickly realized that she was academically less well prepared than her fellow classmates. On the recommendations of an advisor, moreover, she enrolled in a heavy course load during her freshman year. She was devastated when she failed one of her classes. However, she “hung in there” and vowed that she would take the course again--at the university--not over the summer at a local community college. She did and made a “B”. As for interaction with professors, she interacted with her instructors only “to a certain extent” because she was more of a “sit back and listen” type of student.

Clearly, by her own admission, this first-generation college student arrived on campus with weaker academic skills, relative to her counterparts. Moreover, while her parents emphasized the importance of a college education and did not stop her from attending the institution, one could argue that given the fact that she was away from home for the first time, the parental encouragement she received may have been tenuous. According to the literature, students who experience less
difficulty in coursework during their first year and who have positive interaction with faculty are thought to be more personally and academically well adjusted in the second year of college (Hurtado et al., 1996). Because Participant A experienced academic challenges and had limited contact with faculty during her freshman year, she could be described as a student with negative second-year transitional experiences, which might have stood in the way of her academic and social adjustment.

To be sure, she had mixed emotions initially. After attending a high school that was 95% Latino and living in the same neighborhood all her life, she explained that she enjoyed her first year at the university because she had the opportunity to see so many things for the first time. Still, the experience was both “eye-opening” and “scary,” as she recalled:

My friends and I always joked about it--that we felt like little brown people in a sea of Barbie and Ken dolls. You know? That’s just mainly what you see. You see lot of fraternity and sorority people and they just have a certain look to them, so you kind of feel like, ‘Wait a minute, where am I?’ . . . so that’s my first impression of it.

Indeed, as she noted, she had few Latino friends at the university. Although she wanted to make some Latino friends because she wanted to speak Spanish, she found that she made few such friends, possibly because of the classes in which she enrolled.
Yet, Participant A had a very positive experience at the university. She was particularly struck by the diversity at the university, especially in the range of courses available to students. As she stated:

I liked the diversity in it, all the cultures, all in one place. I liked all the classes that they had. I mean it was just amazing to me . . . Because I like . . . non-traditional classes like the Arts and Mexican-American civilization classes . . . so when I would look through the coursebook, I would be just like, ‘Wow’ . . . just the possibilities of what you could learn.

As for how this impacted her giving as an alumnus, the fact that she had a positive institutional experience played a very important role in why she chose to support her alma mater. That is, because she had such fond memories of the institution, she gave because in so doing, she made it possible for other students to have a similar experience. As she explained:

I give mainly because I want the costs to stay down. I mean, I know they’re not going to stay down all the way, but just so other people will have a chance--like something that’s reachable, attainable for other people because I want them to have the same experience that I had when I went. And, I mean . . . it’s not 100% perfect, but still to be exposed to something like that, I think it is important for anyone to be able to get.
Participant B.

Like Participant A, another interviewee experienced academic challenges during his first year in college. Raised in an upper middle class neighborhood in Odessa, Texas, Participant B’s father owned a tortilla and tamale factory. Both of his parents were college graduates. There was thus no question that he would attend college. He and his only sibling, a brother, were both graduates of the university.

As Participant B recalled, three days after graduating from high school, he found himself sitting in a classroom at the institution. While he was impressed with the university, in particular its size, he did not want to be there initially. As he stated, “It was kind of like a larger than life kind of thing for me, being from west Texas. But, I kind of didn’t want to be here, so it wasn’t . . . like I came with open arms because I had a real steady girlfriend . . . and I wanted to stay with her.”

A student with a “prominent GPA in high school,” during the second summer session, only a few weeks into his collegiate experience, he enrolled in Psychology and Biology at the same time and “that was a big mistake.” Shortly thereafter, he found himself on scholastic probation. A business major, he recalled that he was taking courses and then going home to apply what he learned in the classroom to his father’s business. Still he was not happy with the “weed-out” courses that sometimes had as many as three hundred and fifty students. Eventually, he changed his major and “got to the Music School and that’s when my GPA started to skyrocket . . . so, after the first year, everything was great.”
As for his interaction with faculty, Participant B argued that some professors hid behind their tenure and that, in particular, he had a bad experience with one professor, after he graduated. On the other hand, he “got along more with the young professors” most likely because they identified more with the students than the older ones did, he noted. Initially, Participant B joined a fraternity largely because his brother had also been a member of a social fraternity. However, he later joined a professional musician’s fraternity and “that was the best luck. That was the one I really felt part of.” As such, he often played music at the University Catholic Center, which helped him feel further connected to the institution because he had always been active in his church. Although he was contacted by the Chicano Business Association and attended a few events, he changed his major to Music and did not continue to attend any of the functions of that organization.

Like Participant A, Participant B reported that one of the things he liked most at the university was the diversity, especially all the student organizations. As he noted:

I loved the organizations. You know, if you can’t find an organization to be a part of in a college, there’s something wrong with you because there’s so many . . . There was anything if you wanted to do, you could find it. All different kinds of people with all different kinds of interests and all different kinds of organizations, that’s what I loved, the diversification.
When asked how he felt about the university at the time of the study, Participant B stated, moreover:

It was a wonderful experience. It was a great learning experience. When you’re in the experience, you’re thinking, God, am I ever going to graduate? You know and you can’t ever see the light at the end of the tunnel and then when it finally gets there, it’s like I want to go back.

Still, he reported that he had both positive and negative experiences at the institution. Perhaps for this reason, he argued that, “the way that I look at it is that I would rather give something to the music school than to give something to the university.” Specifically, he would like to make a gift to the percussion department to purchase badly needed equipment or to help other students.

*Participant M.*

Another interviewee, Participant M, was the daughter of a dentist and a successful businesswoman. Raised in a well-to-do neighborhood in El Salvador, she recalled, that from very early on, her parents strongly emphasized how important it was that she obtain a college education. After getting married, she and her husband moved to the United States so she could attend the university. She was drawn to the institution because of the reputation of the business school as one of the best in the nation.

Almost immediately, she was struck by the campus, especially the libraries because they were “humongous” and had so many books. As well, she found that
“everybody was so helpful” and friendly, from her counselor to other students. She still held three of her professors in high regard and thought of them as “good friends.” Likewise, Participant M argued that the university’s location is very diverse, with people of all races and from all over the world. Her first year at the university, however, was “very hard, very competitive.” As she noted, there was one big difference between the university and what she had experienced in her native country,

In El Salvador, you cannot challenge a teacher. You get an ‘F.’ Here, you can challenge a teacher and you have a friend. Because if you make him [professor] think about what you’re talking about, what your point of view is and you have something to support it, they respect that.

Moreover, Participant M reported that she missed so many things about her alma mater now that she had graduated. She wished she could go back to the institution, which she described as, “my second Mother in some ways.”

When asked if the fond memories she held of her experiences at the university likely influenced her support as an alumnus, Participant M agreed. An employee at an accounting firm, she explained that some of the partners at the firm were also graduates of the university. Each year, the partners personally asked other employee-graduates of the institution, to make an alumni gift. One large itemized donation was then forwarded to the alumni association. According to Participant M,
the partners evoked fond memories in the employees when “making the ask” for an alumni gift. As she argued,

He appeals to our emotions and feelings . . . the football games, the cheerleaders, everything that can arise a sentiment in us. Yeah, he appeals to basically feelings and emotions and if they are positive--as I told you, I feel nostalgic sometimes. I say . . . I remember . . . And then, if that’s the right time of the month and the year . . . yes we go.

In her opinion, it was not so much that an alumnus would withhold support if he or she did not have fond memories of the institution. Rather, the amount and frequency of donations would be increased if one had stronger emotions.

*Participant J.*

Unlike Participant M and the other interviewees, Participant J, transferred to the university after attending another institution for two years. The son of migrant farm workers, he grew up on a ranch in north Texas. Each year, he traveled with his family, sometimes out of state, to pick fruit and cotton during the summer. While his parents understood English, they were not fluent in the language; however, they read and wrote Spanish. Participant J was unsure of the level of schooling his parents obtained. Perhaps, for this reason, his parents stressed the importance of obtaining a high school education, not a college education. As Participant J stated, “high school education at that time was really the big thing” that his parents emphasized, “Because nobody in the family had ever finished high school.”
A student with both hearing and visual disabilities, Participant J’s first impression of the university was simply that, “I liked it. It was big. There were a lot of things to do.” Aside from all of the social activities that the university had to offer, specifically attending basketball games and meeting girls, he liked the fact that professors “were willing to talk to you.” Still, he admitted that he may have been simply more likely to speak with professors at the university, than he was at the first institution he attended. He was likewise comfortable attending classes and interacting with his peers at the institution. Most of his friends were Anglos because “that’s who was there.” The only challenge he faced at the university was related to his hearing disability. He found it difficult to hear his instructors, particularly in large classrooms.

As an undergraduate at the institution Participant J joined a service fraternity. The members of the fraternity often gathered socially, so that he had an active social life as a student. The organization helped him to feel connected to the larger university community because the members “were very welcoming.” In his words, “It helped a lot because instead of . . . trying to find a place to fit in, I was already accepted as part of a group.” A doctoral student at the university at the time of the study, when asked how his undergraduate institutional experiences factored into his decision to support his alma mater as an alumnus, Participant J explained that if he had had a negative experience, he would not be likely to support the institution. On the other hand, he added, “Since I’ve had really good experiences
with it, it’s something that I want to make sure that others experience, also, so I’m happy to support it.”

Participant S.

Whereas Participant J had very fond memories of his college years, Participant S described her institutional experience very differently. The daughter of two college graduates, she was raised in a middle class, predominantly white neighborhood. Her mother, a retired teacher, was an educator for many years. Her father held an advanced degree and retired as a school principal. As the child of two educators, her parents stressed that it was important that she receive a college education.

However, when she arrived at the university, she found her new surroundings overwhelming, particularly the size of the campus. As she stated, “It was a little intimidating. It’s very large. When you first get there, the classes are very big. Unless you make the effort, you’re just really not known.” She found that students received little personal attention. More often than not, even when you found someone to help you, it didn’t seem like they could really answer your questions, she added. On the other hand, Participant S liked the fact that the institution offered a wide range of courses and found the classes to be challenging. As well, she found one person that she connected with at the university that helped her navigate the institutional environment. As she stated:
And I think there was one woman that was a counselor for my school and every semester I would find this woman to help me with my classes and choose, kind of, my direction. If it hadn’t have been for this woman, I would have felt a little more disconnected than I was . . . I could never get any of the kind of help that I needed.

Her experience could have been better, she argued, if the orientation process were improved. While she acknowledged that the university had an orientation program, she recalled that “It was just kind of here you are . . . here are the restrooms, here’s where most of your classes will be . . . have a nice life. Good luck. We hope to see you at graduation.” She argued that even as an alumnus, although she believed the university was a great place and a prestigious institution, it was, “still the worst in customer service.” As she explained, “You pay a lot for this education and unless you are really going and making an effort yourself and talking personally and seeking these people out, you can’t ever really get a one-on-one, rich communication with somebody.”

One might wonder why Participant S was a member of the alumni association given the fact that her institutional experience could be described as marginal at best. Indeed, unlike the traditional alumnus that joins the alumni association because she holds fond memories of the institution, Participant S had an altogether different motivation. Three years after graduating from the institution, she returned to the university to use the Career Services Center. In order to use the
center as a graduate, one must be a member of the alumni association. She joined as a result.

Moreover, when asked if the fact that she had a poor institutional experience factored into her decision to support the alumni association, Participant S stated that she did not feel the two were related in her case. Financial giving capacity, or the lack thereof, and fear that her money would not be put to good use, were factors of greater concern, she argued. As well, she felt a stronger connection to the program she was enrolled in as a student rather than the university at large. She would thus be more likely to make a gift in support of the program than the larger institution.

In summary, the participants interviewed for this study held varying background and transitional characteristics that likely influenced their institutional experience. Some graduates were raised in upper middle class or wealthy homes whereas others grew-up in low to moderate-income families. The parents of some alumni were college-educated. It was a foregone conclusion that their children would attend college as a result. At least one alumnus, whose parents had only an elementary education, however, was encouraged to achieve a high school education more so than to earn a college degree. The parents of another interviewee--one that had never been far away from home--always stressed the importance of education when she was growing up. Thus, even though they were reluctant to see her move to another part of the state to attend college, they never told her not to go.
As well, the first-year transitional experiences varied among the interviewees. Some found it difficult to make the move from home to school. As one alumnus reported, he graduated from high school and found himself in a college classroom three days later. Others found the size of the campus and the college environment intimidating, although not all the interviewees reported that the transition from home to school was difficult. One graduate who relocated to the United States from another country to attend the university was pleased with the enormity of the campus and the libraries. Another alumnus, a sophomore transfer student with both hearing and visual impairments, enjoyed interacting with professors as well as all of the social activities offered at the university. He reported, however, that his experience would have been even better if there had been easier access to services for students with disabilities.

Some interviewees were also confronted with academic challenges during their freshman year. Two alumni stated that they had been good students in high school. Yet, they had difficulty during their first semesters largely because of their course loads. Others reported that they had limited contact with faculty; although, two of the interviewees noted that they found that professors were helpful and accessible. Still, almost every participant was struck by the diversity at the institution--specifically, the wide range of courses offered and the number of social organizations available to students. While some graduates noted that they wanted to
make friends with other Latino students, they found that most of their friends were Caucasian because “that’s who was there,” according to one alumnus’ description.

Some graduates found ways of overcoming challenges when they were in college. One participant, for example, initially experienced academic difficulties in the Business School. He later transferred to the Music School where he really began to succeed. A female alumnus similarly reported that she found one woman on campus that gave her direction and helped her feel more connected. Another respondent joined a service fraternity, which helped him integrate into the larger campus community.

More important to the subject at hand, most of the graduates reported that they supported the university as alumni because they had a positive experience while at the university. Some held fond memories, which motivated them to provide support to the institution. Others enjoyed the experience and gave back to the university to make it possible for other students to have a similar experience. At least two alumni, one that majored in Latin American studies and the other in music, reported that they had both positive and negative experiences at the university. Perhaps for this reason, they felt a stronger connection to the program that they studied or the college that they graduated from, rather than to the institution at large. Both thus preferred to make contributions to these smaller entities rather than the university at large. Still, one of these two alumni reported that institutional experience was not the only factor she considered when making
the decision to provide support to her alma mater. Financial giving capacity or the lack thereof, was likely to be a more important factor.

*Role of Institutional Experience in Latino Alumni Giving*

Like the participants interviewed in this study, the majority of survey respondents reported that they had a positive experience while at the university. Only 8.7% did not feel like they were part of the campus community as students compared to almost 89% that disagreed with this statement (see Table 25). Likewise, only 5.8% (See table 20) and 4.4% (see Table 19) of the graduates respectively reported that they felt that the university did not make an adequate effort to make them comfortable as students or that they were not happy while attending the university. Conversely, 81.1 % of the alumni surveyed had a positive general perception of the university’s sensitivity to the needs of Latino students (see Table 26) and 85.5% reported they would recommend the university to other Latino students (see Table 27). As for perceived racial discrimination, a factor that has been shown to impact minority alumni giving in two previous studies (L.T Smith, 1987; L. J. Smith, 1998), only 14.5% of the Latino graduates surveyed stated that they experienced racial harassment or discrimination at the university compared to 85.5% who disagreed altogether (see Table 28). Finally, only 4.4% of the graduates reported that, as Latino alumni, they did not feel responsible for giving to the university compared to 79.7% who disagreed with the statement (see Table 29).
Such findings should not be surprising since this study was confined to Latino graduates that were members of the alumni association. What is perhaps more striking, however, is that 14.5%--ten out of sixty-nine respondents--reported that they experienced racial discrimination at the university (see Table 28), yet they still joined the alumni association. While the number citing they experienced racial discrimination may be few in number, it is important to examine these alumni further. As one study found, while the factors that deter minority alumni giving may be present to some degree, other factors such as a desire to give something back to society and having pride in one’s degree from the university often outweigh the negative factors (Smith, 1998). In exploring the few alumni that reported they experienced racial discrimination at the institution, a better understanding of some of the factors that mitigate a negative experience and lead to alumni support may be obtained.

Participant A, for example, recalled that she experienced racial discrimination while at the institution. To be fair, she argued that other than this lone incident in which one of the faculty members implied that she was cheating during an exam, overall, she did not experience any discrimination at the institution. Still, despite the incident, the participant had very fond memories of the institution. As she recalled:

So I was thinking, ‘no [italics added], it didn’t happen. So it’s something that I just like pushed . . . to the back of my mind because I don’t, I don’t
like to use, you know, my race as a crutch . . . or to say people are
discriminating against me. I like to hold my own and fight my own battles
and everything, so I just said, you know what, I’m just going to forget about
it.

When asked if she let the experience interfere with her alumni contributions, she
replied that she had not “because it’s just one person and, I mean, other than that, I
think it’s what you make of your experience.” Perhaps because she considered the
event an isolated incident and because, as she argued, she did not like to use her
race or ethnicity as a crutch, she did not let it interfere with her alma mater support.

Another alumnus commented in her survey that she had experienced racial
harassment while at the university. Like Participant A, she, continued to support the
institution despite the incident. In her words:

I experienced discrimination from a professor (with tenure) that still makes
me mad to this day. Every time I think about what happened, it makes me
not want to continue giving . . . At the same time, I was able to be
successful in graduating and not have the professor’s racial words/actions
prevent me from finishing--this makes me much more proud to have
graduated . . . scathed, yet successful.

While clearly, the event was something that continued to weigh heavily on her
mind, the alumnus perceived the incident as something perpetrated by one
individual, not members of the institution at large. Equally important, she viewed
her graduation as a source of strength, and thus had great pride in graduating from the institution, a factor that has been identified as often outweighing a negative institutional experience and leading to minority alumni support (L. J. Smith, 1998).

Yet, while some Latino alumni had not let the perception of racial
discrimination inhibit alumni support, not all graduates felt the same. As the following alumnus commented on his survey:

I experienced racism from students while . . . going to parties and playing in intramural sports. The university never did anything negative to me, students did. From what I’ve been told by current students is that there are more programs to assist multicultural interactions. In the early 90s, I recall Mexican nationals had the Union . . . I don’t see much for Chicanos, so I’ll wait on my contributions.

While the alumnus acknowledged that other students and not the university at large perpetrated the discrimination he experienced, he decided to withhold his charitable contributions. He believed that if there had been more “programs to assist multicultural interactions” there might have been fewer student-perpetrated acts of racial discrimination. Moreover, his statements about the lack of programs specifically for Chicano students suggested that he feels the institution continues to lag behind in its commitment to Latino students.
Latino Faculty and Student Representation

If, in the opinion of some graduates, the university fell short in its commitment to Latino students, one reason might have been the lack of Latino representation among faculty and students. Indeed, while the overwhelming majority of alumni respondents reported that they had a positive sense of loyalty as students (see Table 21) and continued to have a positive sense of loyalty to the institution at the time of the study (see Table 22), graduates were not as certain that the levels of Latino representation at the university were satisfactory. That is, 24.7% of alumni reported that Latino representation at all levels of the university was too insignificant, and another 36.2% indicated that they did not know. In comparison, 39.1% of the graduates disagreed with this statement (see Table 30).

Some graduates thus made philanthropic contributions to the institution because such donations often go to scholarship funds or to programs that help students make the transition to collegiate life. In supporting the university, alumni in this study thus felt that they could increase the number of Latino students attending the university. Participant A, for example, recalled her collegiate years quite fondly. One reason that she gave back to the university was because, in her own words, “I think that more Hispanics should be able to go. I guess just anyone who doesn’t have the resources to go, or you know, doesn’t think they can go, I think they should be able to go.”
Another alumnus wrote in his survey that while he wanted to, “try to help those that are working hard to earn a degree,” the institution “is not for the weak or the timid.” On the other hand, he acknowledged the need for increased Latino representation at the university. More relevant to this study, he suggested that Latino alumni contributions could serve as a vehicle through which Latino influence could be exercised at the institutional level. Latino representation might be increased as a result. While he had a great time at the institution, he wrote, “I did/do recognize the need for increased Hispanic representation and participation, if change is needed, it will be accelerated by the amount of donations provided (amount of giving x consistency of giving = influence & power).”

In short, even though the overwhelming majority of alumni reported they had a positive experience while at the institution, less than half of the graduates surveyed felt that Latino representation at the university was adequate. Some alumni, moreover, wanted their donations to be used towards scholarships and programs that might increase the number of Latino students on campus. At least one alumnus, similarly, argued that through regular and sizeable alumni contributions, Latino graduates could wield power at the institutional level that might further Latino representation at all levels.

Factors that Might Mitigate a Negative Institutional Experience

While some graduates had a positive experience at the university and made contributions because they hoped to increase the number of Latinos on campus,
what factors might encourage alumni that had a poor institutional experience to support the university? As one study of minority alumni giving found, graduates were motivated to contribute to their alma mater even when they had a poor institutional experience under certain conditions. If alumni felt that their education helped prepare them for a career after graduation or that they received a quality education at the institution, for example, they were often motivated to provide institutional support even if their collegiate experience was less than ideal. Likewise, another factor often mitigating a negative institutional experience was the alumnus’ pride in his or her degree from the institution (L.J. Smith, 1998). To this end, this study sought to explore these mitigating factors and how they might influence Latino alumni giving.

As the survey found, the Latino graduates were clearly proud of their degrees. As shown in Table 3, 100% of respondents reported that they were proud of their degree from the institution. Indeed, Participant B stated that pride was the number one factor that motivated him to support his alma mater “because not everybody can go out and get a sticker and put it on the back of their car that says” they are an graduate from the university. Moreover, he explained that he was proud of his degree because he felt it would carry a lot more clout than a degree from another institution.

Similarly, some Latino graduates in this study were motivated to support the university as alumni because they felt they received a quality education at the
institution. Indeed, only 1.5% of the respondents reported that the academic program at the university did not meet their needs (see Table 32). Conversely, 98.5% of the respondents reported that they would rate the education they received at the institution positively (see Table 33). As one alumnus commented,

The quality of education I received, I feel, was first rate and, fortunately, did not cost an arm and a leg. Therefore, I give back small donations when I am able to do so, and also, when I am asked to do so.

Moreover, some Latino alumni saw their donations as a means of ensuring that the institution would maintain its reputation, as the following statement by one of the respondents suggests. “University X has opened many doors for me and was very generous to me in many ways while I was there, and therefore, I feel that I should do my part to ensure that the institution maintains its prominence and stature.”

Just as some Latino alumni wanted to give because they received a quality education at the institution, others were motivated to give because their education prepared them for a career after graduation. Of the respondents surveyed in this study, 89.9% agreed or strongly agreed that their education at the university prepared them for a professional career, as shown in Table 34. Indeed, some interviewees described a number of skills that they had acquired during their collegiate years that directly related to their present employment. Participant A, for example, learned how to write and conduct research while honing important analytical skills during her undergraduate years that directly relate to her current
position as a Prospect Researcher in the fund development field. Participant B, similarly, learned about music technology while at the institution, which “really spring-boarded” his career in the field of technology.

If graduates felt that their education at the institution prepared them for a career, some reported that this served as a motivation for alumni giving. As an alumnus originally from El Salvador noted, she had an obligation to give something back to the university because her education prepared her for employment and much more. As she argued:

University X prepared me to face this culture, prepared me to face this society and prepared me to work here--at any business area . . . so . . . there’s a gratitude feeling inside me that says, if this is what they can do for this immigrant, Hispanic woman, yeah, I want to give something back, so they can keep doing this for everybody.

In short, some alumni may be motivated to contribute to their alma mater because they are grateful for a quality education that prepared them for a career. To be sure, some research posits that having pride in one’s degree or feeling like one received a quality education are factors that often outweigh a negative institutional experience and lead to minority alumni support (L.J. Smith, 1998). However, it is difficult to say with any certainty if these were mitigating factors in this study since so few alumni reported that they had a poor experience. On the other hand, the
presence of such factors, particularly when coupled with a positive institutional experience, likely reinforced the graduates’ desire to provide alma mater support.

Moreover, it may be that when it comes to institutional experience, it is rarely an “all or nothing” situation. In other words, alumni may have found some aspects of the institutional experience displeasing, but were pleased with other aspects of the experience. Because they had fond memories overall, they wanted to provide alumni support. Participant A, for one, acknowledged that she gave to help costs stay down so that others would have the chance to attend the university, even if it wasn’t “100% . . . perfect.” Participant J was another example. An individual with hearing and visual impairments, he held fond memories of his undergraduate experience at the institution and thus contributed as an alumnus. A doctoral student at the university at the time of the study, however, he felt that he was more aware that there were some areas that needed improvement. As he explained:

I’m more aware of the lack in reaching out to disability students, and as a consequence, to minorities. I wasn’t as aware as an undergraduate. But I do know there’s a lot of improvement . . . I’m involved in a couple of committees that have to do with accessibility for buildings, so I’m more aware of what’s going on and I know that the university has done a lot of work, but they still have a long way to go. So, I’m happy here, but I’m not completely 100% satisfied.
In short, some alumni may have had a negative institutional experience, but were still pleased for the most part with the experience. Because they held fond memories overall, they were more likely to support the institution as graduates.

*Latino Alumni Giving and the Alumni Association*

While a number of factors may encourage Latino alumni giving, what, if any, strategies can alumni association officers employ to increase Latino alumni charitable activity? Given that the literature suggests that one reason Latinos give less is that they are not asked to give as often as others (Fernandez, 1998), one strategy might simply be to ask Latino alumni for charitable contributions. With this mind, the respondents were asked if they had ever been solicited for a charitable contribution to their alma mater. According to the results, 7.2% of alumni had not been approached for a charitable gift compared to 91.3% that had (see Table 3). Similarly, 74% of respondents reported that the university actively solicited their support while 13% disagreed with the statement and 13% did not know (see Table 36). Such findings suggest that the university was soliciting most, although not all, Latino graduates for charitable contributions.

At the same time, when asked if they had been approached for a gift in a way that did not elicit a favorable response, only 8.7% of the alumni respondents agreed with the statement. The majority of respondents, 79.7%, disagreed, as shown in Table 37. As for the methods of solicitation, respondents indicated that the two most common ways in which they had been approached for an alumni gift,
were by telephone and by letter. A small number of alumni reported that they had been approached for a gift during a fundraising event and two respondents stated they were approached via other methods. The aforementioned alumnus that joined the alumni association in order to use the university’s Career Services Center was one such example. Lastly, only one respondent was solicited through a personal ask—a factor, which may be important given that some researchers argue that Latino giving may be characterized by its emphasis on the personal nature of giving (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999).

Respondents were polled, additionally, to determine their level of participation in the alumni association. As some research suggests, although not specific to minority alumni giving, institutional involvement during college, and later, as an alumnus, is a predictor of alumni support (Taylor & Martin, Jr., 1995). To measure the graduates’ involvement with the alumni association, the survey asked respondents if they knew if there was a regional alumni club in their area and if they had ever attended such an event. Of the sixty-nine alumni, 89.9% indicated that they knew there was an alumni club in their area (see Table 38). In comparison, 60.9% reported that they had attended an alumni event as shown in Table 39.

Such findings suggest that the respondents in this study may be only loosely connected to the alumni association. To be sure, as noted earlier, one of the interview participants joined the alumni association only as a means of accessing
the Career Services Center. Another interviewee, Participant B, reported that although he regularly received invitations to attend the university’s alumni functions, he had not attended any. A third interviewee, Participant A, reported that she donated consistently to the alumni association and was on their email list. Although she regularly received announcements about the alumni association in the city in which she lived, however, she had not attended any of the functions because they were largely “Happy Hours and things like that.” Meaningful participation such as a meeting to devise “some kind of scholarship” or to do something of substance might have spurred her to be more active, she argued.

Participant A added, moreover, that one way to increase Latino gifts might be simply to “keep people informed.” She argued that, she enjoyed receiving regular updates from the alumni association about her fellow alumni and learning about new developments at the university. Other graduates might also be interested in knowing what other alumni have “accomplished so far because they have a degree from University X.” In so doing, alumni would see that “this university’s good. People are achieving their goals. People are going places, doing things.” Indeed, as the survey results found, the majority of respondents, 94.2%, felt that the university had attempted to keep in touch with them (see Table 40). On the other hand, at least one alumnus disagreed. As she wrote:

I do not feel University X has done a good job of keeping the alumni community informed. In this day and age (with the Internet), University X
should attempt to use emails, etc., to keep the alumni community involved.

I think the website is confusing and still haven’t figured out how to look up old classmates.

While regular communication with graduates about alumni accomplishments and university events may be important, it may be even more critical for alumni officers to convey to graduates that the university needs their support. The results of this study, moreover, suggest that the alumni association had fallen short in this area. To be sure, 65.3% of the graduates surveyed reported that the university needs their support (see Table 41). As one alumnus explained, the university needs alumni financial support and, on a yearly basis, to “keep good professors, offer good salaries” and to “attract good students.” Another graduate noted that private funding was needed to help the institution remain competitive. Still, almost 33% of the graduates in the study were not as certain that the university needed their support—18.8% disagreed with the statement altogether and 15.9% reported that they did not know (see Table 41).

Perhaps, some graduates felt that the institution was so large and had so many supporters that they did not need the help of alumni, in particular, those unable to make a substantial contribution. Participant B was one such example. During the interview, when asked if he thought the university needed his money, he laughed and replied, “No, I certainly do not.” He cited a recent gift to the
university, which he argued was the largest financial gift any university had ever received. As he stated,

It was like a $150 million and that’s unheard of, so I don’t really think that University X needs my money because if their investors, invest that money right, with the interest, they can make so much more money off of that.

Participant B added, furthermore, that he did not feel motivated to support the university as an alumnus because he had already provided enough support to the institution as a student, in the form of tuition. Another graduate, similarly, agreed that she did not feel an obligation to contribute to the university as an alumnus, “and the main reason why is because you pay thousands of dollars in tuition. And . . . you gain your knowledge and you move on.” To be fair, however, Participant B and other graduates that did not believe the institution needed their alumni contributions were in the minority. As shown in Table 4, 78.2% of the alumni respondents did not agree that they were unable to make a large gift and the university would not appreciate a small gift.

If some alumni did not feel that the institution needed their support, others were unsure that their contributions would be used properly. As Participant J stated when asked if the university needed his support, “Yes, I don’t know whether they use it wisely, but I think that the way that things are, I think they do need financial support from their alumni.” In short, alumni association officers must take care to convey to graduates that their support is needed and appreciated. Equally
important, fundraisers must be good stewards of alumni donations and provide
evidence to alumni that their contributions are used wisely.

Moreover, the survey results suggest that the Latino alumni were unsure if
they could restrict the manner in which their contributions were to be used. While
43.5% of the respondents agreed that graduates could specify how their
contributions were to be used by the institution, 39.1% reported that they did not
know, and 17.4% disagreed altogether (see Table 43). Yet, as the survey found, the
Latino alumni clearly had strong giving preferences. When asked which of the
programs at the university was most deserving of alumni support, graduates ranked
academic programs first, followed by financial aid and then, multicultural
programs. Student-centered programs garnered support from alumni, as well. As
Participant A stated, she wanted her contribution to be used, “for the students,
either for outreach or for developing programs there, or for . . . giving financial
assistance to students.” Other areas such as the library, faculty support, university
ministry and athletics were named, although less frequently, as areas deserving of
alumni assistance. Participant J, likewise, stated that he preferred “To help students
out that are more financially strapped rather than for general purposes like fixing up
the buildings” Although he added that, “but, that’s also a part of it,” which suggests
that, like other students, he favored students-centered programs, but recognized that
capital support for buildings and equipment was necessary, too. As Participant M
pointed out, using funds to support the “beautiful campus” and the library work hand in hand to “attract good students” to the institution.

Some alumni, on the other hand, preferred that their gift be used to support a particular college or department. Perhaps as noted earlier, while such alumni may feel loosely connected to the larger institution, they feel a stronger connection to the specific college or department they were a part of as students. Participant S, is one example. As she noted, she would rather support the program she was part of while at the institution rather than the university at large. As she argued:

I feel like that there’s some wonderful opportunities for students there and if the program had more money and people could . . . just learn more and maybe be able to travel or do some kind of studying abroad or something like that.

Participant B, a graduate of the College of Music, similarly, favored giving back to the Music School, and specifically, the Percussion Department to purchase badly needed equipment or to help other students.

If alumni in this study clearly had giving preferences, they likewise had strong opinions about the programs they felt were less deserving of support.

Support for athletics and research, for example, garnered the most vocal opposition from alumni in this study. As one survey respondent, a professional fundraiser who described herself as, “very picky” about where she makes her charitable gifts commented, she already purchased tickets to football games and has paid off a
lifetime membership to the alumni association. That is, “sufficient support” the
alumnus suggested, because the prospective donor base “is so large and the giving
emphasis is so athletics-centered that I think the university is doing fine without my
dollars.” Other graduates echoed her sentiments. As one alumnus stated, “I want to
give to areas of the university that I feel are worthwhile causes that I support and
believe need my support. For example, I would contribute least to the athletic
programs as they are already largely supported.”

Similarly, alumni did not favor making contributions in support of research.
As one alumnus wrote, “I believe that universities already receive large donations
from companies to initiate research. It is unclear if I give money, that the money
will be used to help students and their activities rather than to finance research.” To
be fair, however, the alumnus noted “this misuse of money” occurs “at many large
universities.” Another graduate feared his donations might be misspent because of
the institution’s research interests. Still, he argued that:

I was able to produce many independent theatrical productions because of
the university’s abundant facilities and resources. If I could be sure my
donations were used to support such student projects, than I would be
couraged to contribute to the university.

Such statements suggest that the alumnus would be more apt to support his alma
mater if he could be certain that his gifts would be used in the manner that he
desired. In his giving preferences, he was thus not unlike other Latino alumni in
this study. That is, he preferred to support projects that were student-centered within the area of the university with which he felt the strongest connection.

Some graduates likewise wanted their contributions to benefit students—and, specifically, Latino students. In the study, 53.6% of the respondents stated that they preferred that their donations be used for scholarships or to benefit other Latino students (see Table 44). As one alumnus argued.

In fact, I was going to switch my annual fund giving to the scholarships that they’ve set up. Because . . . I guess since I’m Hispanic, I just want more Hispanics to go there. So, you know, I identify more with Hispanics and everything because I am one, so . . . I want to benefit them more. You take care of your own, I think.

Another alumnus echoed these sentiments. When asked if it was important that his contributions be used to benefit other Latino students, Participant J agreed because, “There’s not enough of them here.” To be sure, however, a large number of the graduates did not agree. One-third, or 33.3% of the alumni reported that they did not know if they wanted their donations to be used for scholarships or to benefit other Latino students, and 11.6% of the respondents disagreed altogether (see Table 44).

If some Latino graduates give because they want to help Latino students, they may, similarly, prefer that other Latino alumni ask them for their charitable
gifts. As Participant M argued, having Latino alumni solicit other Latino graduates for contributions would likely produce favorable results. As she noted,

But you [Latina] will come up with something that can really appeal to my emotions . . . and I’ll say, yah, makes sense. So, I feel much more in my own world with you and connected, so I would say, yah, makes sense . . . I should contribute. . . . I definitely would use somebody that has the same cultural background.

Participant J likewise agreed, however, he noted that this strategy was not something he regularly witnessed. As he stated,

I don’t know why the reason is, but I don’t think there is enough outreach by other Latino alumni to Latino alumni to get them to contribute. I think that would be more of a factor since you’re more familiar with them.

Indeed, some colleges and university development officers have created minority alumni associations in an attempt to increase contributions from minority graduates. Yet, some administrators have been reluctant to establish such alumni associations out of concern that segmentation between minority and non-minority students may result (Nicklin, 1994). Interview participants in the study did not seem to agree. As one alumnus stated, alumni associations geared toward Latinos might simply be more efficient because the goals of the organization would be “more focused.” Participant J, similarly, argued that there is pride in having a separate association. Finally, Participant B noted that a Latino alumni association,
particularly one with prominent Hispanic graduates, would be an effective fundraising device or at least, “It would bring in more money than not having it.” In his opinion, the mere presence of other successful Latinos would likely encourage Latino alumni to give. “It would put that idea in their [Latino alumni] head without actually someone asking them for money. It would put the idea in their head to where the people in the organization would give without being asked.”

Summary

In short, this study began with a survey that was mailed to all 121 Latino graduates at University X. Sixty-nine alumni returned their completed surveys. Thereafter, five alumni participated in a more in depth interview to obtain additional information that might be useful in understanding their alumni support. The data were then coded, analyzed and summarized.

The survey findings revealed a demographic profile of the Latino alumni that might provide insight into their philanthropic participation. As well, the findings suggest that the Latino graduates in this study were philanthropic and supported an array of charitable institutions. More specific to alumni giving, the results of the study revealed that a number of factors may influence such giving including financial capacity, giving preferences and institutional experience. The alumni association office, likewise, plays a key role in encouraging Latino alumni philanthropic participation. Specifically, the results of the research suggested a
number of practical applications that development officers and alumni association
officers might employ to encourage Latino alumni philanthropic participation.

The findings of this study must be examined in a larger context, however. To that end, the following chapter provides a summary of the results of the study, placed within the framework of the existing research about Latino giving and Latino alumni giving. Likewise, the next section of this paper includes suggestions that practitioners might employ to increase Latino alumni participation. Areas for further research and a review of the limitations of the study are similarly identified. The chapter then concludes with my final comments.
Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The research study at hand sought to identify the factors that influence Latino alumni giving. Specifically, the question addressed was as follows: What are the self-reported factors that promote or deter Latino alumni giving of the 1995 graduates at a Research I Level University in the southwest? To this end, I obtained the names and addresses of 121 Latino students that graduated from the university in 1995. While I had hoped to survey all of the 1995 Latino graduates, unfortunately, only contact information for those graduates that were members of the alumni association could be obtained. Individuals that graduated in 1995 but did not elect to join the alumni association were thus not included in the study, a factor, which has been identified as a limitation of this research. In any event, 69 of the 121 alumni completed and returned the surveys. Five graduates were then selected to participate in a follow-up interview to uncover more in depth information about Latino alumni giving. After analyzing the data, the research results were summarized and interpreted.

The chapter presented herewith summarizes the findings of the study. The first section of the chapter begins with a review of the results placed within the context of the larger body of research about Latino giving and Latino alumni giving. Implications for university policy and suggestions for practical applications
based on the findings of the study then follow. Still, although this is a final report, it should be noted as suggested earlier, that this final report should be considered a “living interpretive document” (Manning, 1997, p. 110). Additional research in the area is needed to uncover a more complete view of Latino alumni giving. To that end, recommendations for future areas of study are included in this chapter. Finally, the chapter concludes with my closing comments about Latino alumni giving.

Summary of the Findings about the Philanthropic Involvement of the Alumni

After analyzing the data, a demographic profile of the alumni in this study emerged that may be useful in explaining their philanthropic involvement or the lack thereof. That is, the majority of the respondents, over 50%, had income levels in excess of $75,000. About half were single and half were married, although few had children. While each alumnus held at least a bachelor’s degree, some earned graduate and professional degrees as well. As for ethnic identity, the majority identified themselves as Hispanic or Mexican-American; a smaller number considered themselves Cuban-American or Puerto Rican. Only one respondent self-identified as Latino and another as Chicano. As for religious background, the majority of the respondents were of the Catholic faith. These results are important because as, the literature suggests, household income is a key factor in philanthropic involvement (Independent Sector, n.d.). As well, specific to Latino philanthropy, some research suggests that Latinos have a strong ethnic identity
(Rivas-Vasquez, 1999) and strong religious convictions (Wagner & Rodriguez, 1997) that may have a bearing on charitable activity.

Moreover, as the study found, the factors that promote or deter Latino alumni giving among the 1995 Latino graduates of a major southwestern the university, like those that influence Latino giving at large, are complex. Before one can even begin to discuss the giving patterns of Latino alumni, a more basic question must be addressed. That is, were the Latino alumni in this study philanthropic? As anecdotal evidence suggests, development professionals are finding that it is more difficult to raise funds from Latino and other minority alumni, than from their mainstream counterparts (Gaiter, 1991). One reason for the dismal levels of support may be, as some fundraisers argue, “Latinos don’t give.” Indeed, the findings of some national philanthropic studies support this notion, which may be prevalent within the nonprofit community is supported by the findings of some national philanthropic studies (Cortes, 1995). Others suggest that the lack of alumni support among Latino graduates is rooted in a Latino culture of giving, which does not include giving to higher education (Nicklin, 1994).

Contrary to what some in the nonprofit community argue, however, the findings of this study suggest that philanthropy is clearly an important aspect in the personal lives of Latino graduates and their families. The Latino alumni in this study supported a wide range of charitable institutions including political actions groups, other educational institutions and their alma maters. Likewise, they made
charitable contributions to help those less fortunate and to give back to society, among other reasons. At the same time, the study found that alumni wanted to identify with the agencies they supported philanthropically, although it was not as important to some that such agencies have Latino representation.

Yet, while these alumni recognized the importance of charitable giving in their lives and that of their families, they did not necessarily view the larger Latino community as philanthropic. While over half of the graduates surveyed reported that philanthropy was an important aspect of the Latino culture, others were unsure or disagreed altogether. Perhaps the uncertainty among alumni about the role of philanthropy in the Latino culture is a reflection of a more widespread misunderstanding about Latino charitable behavior. That is, until recently, research has traditionally focused on elite philanthropy. The giving practices of large groups of people—including Latinos—have thus been excluded from philanthropic studies (Smith, Shue, & Villarreal, 1992; Smith, Shue, Vest et al., 1999). As a result, the notion that “Latinos don’t give” prevails within the philanthropic community. Indeed, some evidence suggests that even Latinos often view of themselves as the beneficiaries of charitable contributions rather than as benefactors (Estrada as cited in Ramos & Kasper, 2000). At the same time, until recently, few Latinos had the means to make substantial gifts. Latino giving has thus been largely overlooked as a field of inquiry (Ramos, 1999). Moreover, what little research has been conducted
in the area, as stated earlier, suggests that Latinos are relatively uncharitable (Cortes, 1995).

At the same time, the uncertainty among Latino alumni about the importance of giving within the Latino culture may be a reflection of what some scholars refer to as the philanthropic continuum. In other words, initially, as members of Latino and other minority communities strive to overcome poverty and cultural isolation amid the larger population, they rely closely on one another for mutual assistance. Giving and sharing thus occurs on a highly informal, communal and familial level. As the group becomes more established, giving patterns move toward a more formal type of organized philanthropy that is increasingly removed from the immediate community (Berry & Chao, 2001). Indeed, as some evidence suggests, although much of Latino philanthropy may be characterized by a preference for giving to family and extended family, “Latino giving now reflects an increasingly wider spectrum of vehicles and practices and includes the full range of conventional social investment options in the United States,” (Ramos, 1999, p. 158).

Placing the findings of this study within the context of the philanthropic continuum, when Latino alumni reported that they were charitable, yet did not recognize the larger community as philanthropic, perhaps what they really meant to suggest was that they may be further along the philanthropic continuum than other members of the Latino population. Such an argument is not without merit, given
that these respondents were college graduates. As some experts argue, educated
Latinos tend to earn more and have more disposable income; consequently, they are
more capable of participating in organized philanthropic activity than those without
a college education (Wagner & Rodriguez, 1997). To be sure, as the results of this
study revealed, the graduates supported a wide range of formal, charitable
institutions.

Yet, while the majority of the alumni in this research participated in
traditional philanthropy, a large number continued to recognize informal giving to
immediate and extended family as another form of philanthropy. Unlike those in
the nonprofit community that suggest that Latinos are “relatively uncharitable”,
moreover, some alumni in this study argued that Latinos are often quite generous
within their immediate circles or in times of crisis. At least one alumnus recalled
family members helping one another during times of illness or financial need when
he was a child. Another witnessed Latino generosity during the floods in Houston.
A third graduate, however, made a distinction between giving, which he defined as
support for immediate family, and philanthropy, which he considered to be support
for those outside one’s familial circle. Finally, some graduates did not equate
financial assistance to immediate or extended family as philanthropy.

On the other hand, some alumni argued that while philanthropy is an
important part of Latino culture, socioeconomic factors often limit financial giving
capacity. Latinos therefore often give of their time rather than their money.
Nevertheless at least one participant argued that financial capacity alone can not explain Latino philanthropic participation, or the lack thereof. That is, the influence of religion within the community is often so great, that when it comes to giving to the church, even the poorest Latinos find some way, however small, to help.

Finally, two alumni, including one who was employed in the development field and may thus have had a better understanding of traditional giving practices, suggested that the low levels of Latino participation in institutional philanthropy may be the result of a lack of trust and familiarity with organized giving.

In short, the Latino alumni in this study were philanthropic. The graduates made contributions to a wide range of formal charitable institutions, including their alma maters. On the other hand, the alumni were not as certain that the larger Latino community was philanthropic, although some argued that, when it comes to assisting family and friends, or the church, Latinos are often quite generous. Such findings are not unlike those in the literature, which suggest that while Latinos are increasingly participating in organized philanthropy, much giving within the Latino community still occurs informally in the form of gifts to family and friends (Ramos, 1999).

Summary of the Findings about Latino Alumni Giving

If the findings suggest that the Latino graduates were philanthropic, the research, likewise, found that over 75% of the alumni in this study had made a charitable contribution to the university (see Table 18). While such findings may be
inconsistent with anecdotal evidence, which suggests that fundraising professionals find it more difficult to raise funds from Latino and other minority alumni than mainstream graduates (Gaiter, 1991), one must keep in mind that the sample in this study was drawn from graduates that were members of the alumni association. By implication, these individuals are more likely to be supporters of the university than graduates that do not join the alumni association. On the other hand, almost 25% of the graduates surveyed in the study reported that they had not made a contribution to the university (see Table 16). Perhaps, when alumni report that they have not made a charitable gift to the university, what they intend to say is that they have financial obligations, which prohibit them from providing ongoing support or gifts of a more significant size to their alma mater at the current time. Indeed, some evidence suggests that Latino alumni often have financial obligations to family and friends, or as a result of student loans, that limit giving capacity (Nicklin, 1994). The findings of this study lend some credibility to this argument although, to be fair, the majority of alumni did not have such financial obligations. Some alumni, however, reported that while they had financial limitations at the time of the study, as they became more financially secure in the future, they intended to provide more regular support to the university.

Financial capacity aside, institutional experience may, likewise, influence Latino alumni giving. While research in the area is sparse and even almost non-existent for Latino alumni philanthropy, preliminary evidence suggests that
minority graduates are less apt to support their alma mater if they had a poor experience while enrolled at the institution (L. T. Smith, 1987; L. J. Smith, 1998). In this study, however, the overwhelming majority of respondents reported they had a positive experience at the institution as students and continued to feel loyal to the university as alumni. While perhaps inconsistent with research, which suggests that Latino students often have a negative collegiate experience (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991), all of the respondents in this study were members of the alumni association. It should not, therefore, be surprising that the majority reported they had a positive experience.

Interviews with a few selected Latino graduates, likewise, produced similar findings. Participants, for the most part, reported that they had a positive experience as students. Some enjoyed the diversity at the institution, in particular, the wide range of courses offered at the university. Others commented on the enormity and beauty of the campus. Some alumni reported that they had a positive interaction with both faculty and fellow students. The wide range of student social and service organizations available for membership was cited as another factor, which contributed to a positive institutional experience. More important to the subject at hand, because the participants had a positive experience while at the institution, they wanted to support their alma mater.

On the other hand, not all respondents were pleased with every aspect of the institutional experience. First year experiences, particularly in the academic arena,
were challenging for some. One participant found the size of the campus intimidating. Relationships with some professors proved difficult for at least one interviewee. The lack of outreach to students with disabilities was an area of concern for yet another alumnus. Moreover, it seems clear that some graduates, even those that reported they had a positive experience to the university, felt that Latino representation at all levels of the institution was inadequate.

Most of the interviewees, however, found ways of coping with negative institutional experiences as students. Some relied on their own personal determination to overcome academic challenges. Others were resourceful and looked to individuals on campus to help them navigate the collegiate experience. Membership in social and service organizations during their undergraduate years, likewise, helped at least two interviewees to connect on some level with the institution. Some participants found that while their connection to the institution was tenuous, they made a stronger connection to the college or department from which they earned their degree.

What role, if any, did these factors play in the alumnus’ decision to support the university? As the findings of this study suggest, when it comes to institutional experience and Latino alumni giving, perhaps, it may be rarely and all or nothing situation. While not all alumni were pleased with every aspect of their collegiate experience, most found ways of coping with some of the negative aspects. Because alumni were pleased for the most part with the experience and, overall, they held
fond memories, they wanted others to experience the same. They felt motivated to support the university as alumni, as a result. As for those Latino students that felt more connected to a college or department rather than the institution at large, they may be less inclined to support the university and more apt to make a gift to the individual college or department. Indeed, two participants in this study reported that they would prefer to support smaller programs on campus, rather than the larger university because they had stronger ties to these entities.

Yet, while most graduates reported that they had a positive experience at the university, fewer were satisfied that Latino representation at all levels of the university was adequate. Some alumni thus made alumni contributions because they viewed their support as a means of increasing Latino student representation at the university. To be sure, over half of the graduates in this study preferred that their gifts be used for scholarships or to benefit other Latino students. As at least one alumnus in this study noted, she would like to see her alumni gifts benefit other Latino students because, “you take care of your own.” Another graduate, furthermore, argued that the size and consistency of alumni gifts is clearly a source of influence that alumni can exercise to increase Latino participation at all levels of the university. Such findings are not inconsistent with the philanthropic literature, which suggests that Latino donors often prefer to make gifts that both benefit the Latino community and build institutional capacity within the community (Ramos, 1999).
While some graduates felt that Latino representation at the institution was inadequate, another factor—the perception of racial harassment or discrimination—may be more detrimental to alumni support. Indeed, one alumnus experienced racism while at the institution and argued that he still does not see much commitment to Latino students on campus today. He has decided to withhold his alumni contributions, as a result. Yet, even among alumni that experienced discrimination while at the university, there were those that continued to make philanthropic contributions to the institution. Some viewed the event as an isolated incident or something that was perpetrated by a single individual, which should not thus interfere with their alma mater support. Another alumnus, however, questioned her support, each time she recalled that she experienced discrimination at the university. On the other hand, she viewed her graduation, particularly in the face of the discrimination she experienced, as a source of pride. She thus continued to support the university as an alumnus.

Perhaps this alumnus is not unlike the graduates of color in L. J. Smith’s study (1998). As she found, minority alumni were often likely to make contributions to their alma mater even when they had a negative experience, if they were proud of their degree from the institution or if they felt they received a quality education that helped prepare them for a career. As the results of this study found, 100% of all alumni surveyed were proud of their degree from the university (see Table 31). Some graduates, moreover, provided support to their alma mater as a
means of ensuring that the institution will retain its reputation in the academic community. Others felt that they received a quality education at the institution, which helped prepare them for a career after graduation. These alumni therefore made contributions as a means of expressing their gratitude to their alma mater. On the other hand, it is difficult to say with any certainty if these factors mitigate a negative institutional experience as L. J. Smith (1998) suggests, since so few alumni in this study report that they had a negative experience while at the university.

Institutional experience notwithstanding, the findings of this study clearly suggest that alumni association officers play a key role in ensuring Latino alumni charitable participation. As some research in the larger non-profit arena suggests, one reason that Latinos don’t give as much as others donors is simply that they are not asked to give as often as other donors (Fernandez, 1998). It seems clear that this was not the case at the university. As this study found, institutional fundraisers were actively soliciting Latino alumni for donations. The telephone call and the fundraising letter were, additionally, the most common methods of gift solicitation, although at least one graduate joined the alumni association because she was required to do so in order to use the Career Services Center. Only one respondent, moreover, received a personal request for an alumni contribution. Yet, some philanthropic research suggests that the most important characteristic of Latino giving is its emphasis on personal relationships (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999).
Alumni association officers may thus be failing to capitalize on what could be the single most effective means of approaching Latino graduates, the personal ask.

In the same way, development officers may be falling short in convincing Latino graduates that the university needs their support. As the results of this study suggest, some alumni felt that the university had such a large pool of donors that their charitable support was not necessary. Others read or heard about sizeable gifts made to the institution. Some Latino graduates were thus not convinced that the institution needed their assistance. In particular, Latino alumni with limited giving capacity were less apt to feel that their small contribution could make a difference. Others, similarly, reported that they paid a great deal in tuition to the university as students. They have therefore already fulfilled their obligation to the institution and did not need to provide support as alumni. Finally, some graduates were uncertain if their donations would be used wisely.

Likewise, some alumni were unsure if they could restrict the manner in which their contribution should be used. As the results of this study suggest, a number of Latino graduates preferred to provide financial support for academic programs or for student scholarships. Because some alumni felt the fundraising emphasis was too research or athletics-oriented, and they did not know if they could restrict their contributions for a specific purpose, they were not motivated to provide support. Such findings are consistent with the research in Latino giving, which suggests that Latino donors often prefer to provide support on a more direct,
personal level (Berry & Chao, 2001) and are less inclined to fund equipment or research (Ramos, 1999).

As the findings of the study suggest, moreover, communication is a key function of the alumni office. Graduates want to receive regular updates from the alumni association about fellow alumni and new developments at their alma mater. Although to be sure, most alumni in this study felt that the university had done a good job of keeping in contact with them. Still, my sense is that the Latino graduates in this study were only loosely connected with the alumni association. Almost 40% of the respondents had never attended an alumni association event (see Table 3). Perhaps, as one alumnus suggested, alumni association-sponsored social events such as “Happy Hours” may hold little appeal for Latino graduates. Indeed, according to the literature, homecomings, reunions and other traditional alumni activities may not be enough to bring Latino and other nontraditional graduates into the philanthropic fold (Osborn, 1990). Meaningful activities, such as a campaign to create scholarships for other students may be more likely to encourage Latino alumni participation.

Finally, there is the question of the Latino alumni association. As some anecdotal evidence suggests, Latino graduates may be more likely to make a charitable gift if they are approached by another Latino graduate of the institution. With this in mind, some university administrators have created alumni associations solely for Latinos and other minority graduates. Some have been reluctant to do so,
however, because they fear such organizations will further segment students (Nicklin, 1994). As this study found, some alumni may be more likely to give if the individual soliciting the contribution is another Latino graduate. Still, the university chosen for the site of this study did not have a Latino alumni association. It is thus difficult to determine what, if any, impact on Latino alumni giving a Latino-specific alumni association might have.

In short, the findings of this study suggest that the factors that influence Latino alumni giving may be complex. While the literature suggests that Latino alumni often have financial obligations, which prevent more widespread alumni support, only a few in this study reported that they had such obligations. Others argued that even though they had financial limitations at the time of the study, they intended to support the university in the future, when they were more financially secure. Such findings suggest that these alumni have the motivation to provide philanthropic support to their alma mater, although they do not necessarily have the financial capacity to do so.

Institutional experience, as well, likely plays a key role. Most graduates in this study had a positive experience at the university and continued to feel loyal to their alma mater. They gave because they wanted others to have the same experience. On the other hand, at least one graduate, experienced discrimination and had thus chosen not to support the institution. As this research suggests, it is rarely an all or nothing situation, however. Most graduates recognized that they had
both positive and negative institutional experiences, but the positive experiences outweighed the negative. They gave because even though it wasn’t “100% perfect,” as one alumnus argued, they wanted others to have the same overall positive experiences. Moreover, even though alumni reported that they had a positive experience while at the university, most agreed that Latino representation at all levels of the university was inadequate. Some graduates thus viewed their alumni support as a means of increasing Latino representation at the institution. Finally, some alumni gave even in the face of a negative institutional experience because they had pride in their degree from the university or because they felt that they received a quality education that prepared them for a career.

On the other hand, not all Latino graduates were convinced that the university needs their support. Some, in particular, those with limited giving capacity, felt that the university had such a large group of benefactors that their support was not needed. In the same way, some alumni were unsure if they could restrict the manner in which they would like their contribution to be used. The alumni association office thus plays a key role in securing Latino alumni gifts. Alumni association officers must convey to Latino alumni that their support is important and vital to the university. Meaningful participation in the alumni association, such as raising funds in keeping with alumni giving preferences--support for academic programs or scholarships for other students, for example--may help bring more Latino alumni into the philanthropic fold. It may be
beneficial, likewise, to have Latino graduates approach other Latino alumni for charitable contributions.

**Implications for University Policy**

The results of this study suggest that there may be some strategies that alumni officers and other practitioners can employ that will likely increase Latino alumni philanthropy. First and foremost, administrators and development officers alike must work to ensure that Latinos students have a positive institutional experience. While some students draw on their own personal strengths or find someone to assist them to navigate the institutional experience, university administrators should not assume that all students are so resourceful. Latino students are often first-generation college students. Many have first and second year transitional experiences that do little to encourage their academic and social adjustment (Hurtado et al., 1996). Helping Latino students to feel connected to the larger institution may require ongoing support throughout the collegiate experience.

One means of helping students to feel connected might be to initiate a comprehensive student advancement model that begins during the student’s freshman year and extends through graduation. As one alumnus in the study suggested, the university’s current orientation program only initially introduces students to the campus facilities. A “second orientation” or ongoing gatherings to continue to reach out to students might help Latino students to make a stronger institutional connection. Indeed, as Baker (1996) argues, the practice of introducing
minority students to the alumni association office after graduation may not be enough to encourage alumni participation. In addition to introducing Latino alumni to the alumni relations office as early as possible, perhaps during the freshman orientation, alumni officers should implement ongoing, strategically planned programs with the support of the student affairs and academic affairs divisions of the institution.

As well, as this study found, social and service organizations can help some Latino students feel connected to the institution. While some students hold a tenuous commitment to the larger university, they often feel a stronger connection to one of the smaller organizations on campus. Moreover, as Attanisi suggests, students of color often rely on ethnic enclaves to scale down the larger college campus and socially integrate into the institutional community (as cited in Murguia et al., 1991). To the extent that Latino students use ethnic enclaves to create their niche on campus, representatives from Latino-specific student organizations should continue to reach out to Latino students. While not one of the participants interviewed for this study reported that they were members of any Latino student organizations, at least one interviewee lamented that he had not been more involved with other Latino students during his undergraduate years. Another reported that she had few Latino friends, although she wished she had because she “wanted to speak Spanish.” Students should thus be presented with multiple opportunities
during their collegiate years to learn about various organizations, Latino and non-Latino specific alike.

As well, the research suggests that alumni association and development officers can employ fundraising strategies that may bring Latino alumni into the philanthropic fold. For one, fundraisers should continue to solicit Latino graduates for alumni gifts. As research suggests, one reason that Latinos may give less than their mainstream counterparts is that such prospective donors often receive fewer requests to make charitable gifts (Fernandez, 1998). If fundraisers want to ensure Latino alumni philanthropic participation, they must continue to approach these graduates for contributions. Development officers should not assume that Latino graduates, even those that had a poor institutional experience, are not potential donors as some research in minority alumni giving suggests (L. J. Smith, 1998).

At the same time, alumni officers should recognize that some Latino alumni may have limited giving capacity. While the majority of respondents in this study did not have financial obligations that limited their ability to make alumni gifts, some graduates continued to have such obligations. As well, the participants in this study were confined to members of the alumni association. It may be that Latino graduates with the means to make financial gifts are more likely to join the alumni association than those with limited giving capacity. Institutional development officers should thus encourage alumni to make their annual gifts in the form of a pledge, so that they can break the gift down into smaller, more manageable perhaps
monthly payments. Some alumni, likewise, reported that they hoped to make larger and more regular gifts in the future as their financial situation improved. Alumni officers must, therefore, not assume that a Latino alumnus that does not make a gift now will never be a donor. In the meantime, fundraisers should be patient and continue to express to alumni that their gift, regardless of size, is important to the university.

Institutional fundraisers should, additionally, consider using other methods of gift solicitation. As the study found, the most common forms of donor solicitation was the fundraising letter or telephone call. Some graduates suggested, however, that fundraisers should utilize email in lieu of direct mail or telephone calls to solicit donations. Telephone calls, in particular, are often ill-timed whereas the alumnus can read an email donation request at his or her convenience, when the timing is best. On the other hand, at least a telephone call to an alumnus offers more of a personal touch. As Latino giving research suggests, an emphasis on personal relationships may well be the most important characteristic of Latino philanthropy (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). Yet, only a handful of the alumni in this study were personally asked to make a contribution to the university or were approached for a donation during a fundraising event.

As one interviewee shared, however, annually, one of the partners at the accounting firm where she was employed, asked her to make a gift to the institution. This may be a highly effective donor solicitation method because the
partner was also a graduate of the institution, so that, in effect, one alumnus personally asked a fellow alumnus to make a gift in support of their shared alma mater. It may be even more beneficial, however, if the individual personally soliciting the gift is another Latino graduate. As some interview participants in this study suggested, Latino alumni may feel a stronger connection and a familiarity with other Latino graduates that may facilitate giving. Alumni association officers should thus consider having Latino faculty and alumni solicit alumni for contributions.

Equally important, alumni association officers should continue to use non-traditional methods of bringing Latino graduates into the alumni association. As one interview participant explained, she joined the alumni association in order to utilize the Career Services Center after graduation. Development officers should continue to use this and other means to increase Latino representation in the alumni association. On the other hand, alumni officers should make clear to such alumni that their membership in the association represents much more than just a means of accessing the Career Services Center. If alumni relations officers fail to do so, Latino graduates that join through this non-traditional means may not continue to support the association once they no longer need the services of the center.

Alumni relations officers must, likewise, be aware that it is not uncommon for Latino students to have a negative, or at the very least, a less than positive experience at the institution. While there may be little that one can do to offset a
negative institutional experience after graduation, the savvy alumni officer may find it useful to keep this in mind when soliciting Latino graduates for contributions. Using fundraising strategies that evoke positive institutional memories as the sole means of “making the ask,” for example, may not be enough to yield Latino alumni gifts. As this study found, Latino graduates take pride in their degree from the university; many are grateful to the institution for preparing them for a career field. Fundraising letters, phone calls or personal solicitations that emphasize pride in one’s degree or publicize the educational accomplishments or employment promotions of other alumni, may be more beneficial in encouraging Latino alumni giving.

As some Latino graduates reported, they want fundraising officers to keep the alumni community informed. The university website is one avenue; however, it must be user friendly and updated regularly. Additionally, communication should include timely information about alumni and university events, as well as news about faculty. At the same time, it may not be enough to merely publicize upcoming alumni events on the website or in a newsletter to encourage Latino alumni participation. While 60% of alumni surveyed had attended an alumni event, almost 40% had not (see Table 38). Alumni association officers should thus consider activities outside the traditional alumni social event or “Happy Hour” to increase Latino alumni participation. A gathering to discuss scholarships for future students, for example, might encourage Latino alumni participation.
Equally important, institutional fundraisers must convey to Latino alumni that their support is needed. Some alumni, in particular, those with limited giving capacity often hear about sizeable gifts made to the institution. They may be less apt to feel that their small gift will make a difference because the university has such a large pool of wealthy benefactors. Alumni association officers must continually reinforce the message in every communication with their Latino alumni that the support of all graduates is important to the university. Similarly, alumni officers must provide evidence to Latino graduates that their donations are being used wisely. If graduates can, likewise, restrict their contributions for a specific purpose, fundraisers should make this clear to alumni, as well.

At the same time, the literature suggests that some institutional administrators have resisted creating minority alumni associations out of fear that further segmentation between minority and non-minority students may result (Nicklin, 1994). Administrators should weigh the benefits of a Latino alumni association before ruling out such an organization. Indeed, the research herein suggests that Latino students may be more likely to give when approached by another Latino graduate. Moreover, if some Latino students utilize ethnic enclaves to find their niche on campus and help them connect to the larger institution (Murguia et al., 1991), it stands to reason that Latino alumni may feel more connected to an alumni association if it is, likewise, Latino-specific. Still, the university chosen for the site of this study did not have a Latino alumni association.
It is thus difficult to determine what, if any, impact on Latino alumni giving a Latino-specific alumni association might have.

Perhaps the situation is not unlike that of foundations in the larger philanthropic community. As some observers argue although, well intentioned, it may not be enough for foundations to invite diverse individuals to sit on their boards and advisory committees. If such foundations want to demonstrate their commitment to persons of color, they may have to increase their funding to minority communities (Berry & Chao, 2001). Similarly, for those university development officers interested in bringing Latino graduates into the philanthropic fold, it may not be enough to create an alumni association geared toward Latinos. Rather, alumni associations, Latino or non-Latino alike, may be more successful in stimulating Latino charitable involvement if they demonstrate their true commitment to Latino students. As the findings of this study suggest, for example, even though the majority of Latino graduates reported that they had a positive experience at the institution, a large number continued to feel that Latinos were underrepresented at the university. Alumni association programs aimed at raising funds for scholarships that might increase the numbers of Latino students at the university may thus do more to stimulate Latino alumni philanthropic involvement than the creation of a group-specific alumni association, in and of itself.

While programs geared at increasing Latino alumni philanthropic involvement such as Latino specific-alumni associations sound good in theory, they
may be costly to implement. Given that some institutional fundraisers argue that Latino alumni are less likely to provide charitable support than their mainstream counterparts, it may be that some development officers feel the cost of such methods outweigh the potential benefits. Still, one might keep Baker’s (1996) advice in mind when comparing benefits with the costs. As she argues, investing in the welfare of Latino or other nontraditional students while they are on campus is easier than trying to locate them, by mail, as alumni.

In summary, the results of this study suggest a number of implications for university policy. For one, it seems clear that administrators and development officers alike must strive to ensure that Latino students have a positive institutional experience. A comprehensive student advancement model that continues throughout the educational experience and includes strategically planned programs may help students make a strong institutional connection. As well, students should be exposed to campus organizations; Latino and non-Latino alike, to help them scale down the larger campus and socially integrate into the institution.

Similarly, alumni association officers can utilize fundraising strategies that may encourage Latino alumni philanthropy. Simply asking Latino alumni to make gifts on a regular basis is one suggestion. Alumni officers should, likewise, encourage Latino graduates who may have financial obligations that limit giving capacity, to pledge their annual gift in smaller, perhaps, monthly payments. As well, fundraisers should utilize direct mail or telephone calls to solicit gifts from
Latino graduates, although a personal ask may be the most effective means of generating Latino alumni support. At the same time, development officers should continue to use nontraditional means to increase Latino representation in the alumni association. The aforementioned requirement that graduates join the alumni association in order to use the Career Services Center is one such example.

Communication is yet another function of the alumni association. Alumni officers must convey to Latino graduates that their support is vital to the university. Regular updates from the alumni office, in particular, those that contain information about alumni educational and employment accomplishments may also encourage Latino alma mater support. Meaningful participation in the alumni association is likewise key. Latino alumni may be more likely to participate in the alumni association if asked to help raise funds for scholarships than to participate in social events, for example.

Equally important, alumni officers should recognize that all Latino alumni have the potential to be donors. Some Latino graduates may have other giving preferences, to be sure. This does not rule out support for their alma mater, however. Even when Latino alumni have a negative institutional experience, other positive experiences may outweigh the negative. Institutional fundraisers and alumni association officers should likewise be patient. As some research suggests, it takes a greater investment in time to bring Latinos into the philanthropic fold. Fundraisers must, therefore, be more patient as they establish personal relationships
with Latino donors (Rivas-Vasquez, 1999). If there is one thing that was clear in this study, it is that some alumni hope to make a significant contribution at a point later in life when finances permit. In the meantime, alumni association officers need to keep the lines of communication open and continually convey to Latino alumni donors that their support is vital to the university.

Limitations of the Study

While a first step in exploring the subject at hand, the results of this study, which explores the giving patterns of Latino alumni, an area of inquiry that has heretofore been largely unexplored, can be described as preliminary at best. Indeed, the research is not without limitations. For one, the study employed a qualitative research design and was conducted from within an interpretivist paradigm. By definition, the goals of such an inquiry are trustworthiness and authenticity, not generalizability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The results of this study are thus meaningful only within a narrow context, specifically, 1995 Latino graduates from a major southwestern university. Additional research, which targets Latino graduates, across other institutions and even other states, will uncover a more complete picture of the topic at hand.

The sample utilized in the study, which was not generated randomly, but rather drawn from a roster of graduates provided by the alumni association office is another limitation of the research. A more important limitation stems from the sample, however. That is, while some 1200 Latino students graduated from the
university in 1995, my sample was confined to only those 121 Latino graduates of 1995 that joined the alumni association--about 10% of the larger population. In omitting individuals from the sample that were not members of the alumni association, and hence, not likely to support the institution philanthropically, the factors that discourage Latino alumni giving remained largely unexplored in this study.

Additionally, only three of the respondents in the study were 40 years of age and older. As suggested in the literature, however, older alumni are those that may have the greatest giving capacity and, at the same time, often harbor the greatest reluctance toward giving (Nicklin, 1994). This research, which included only a handful of older graduates, thus provided little insight into the giving patterns of a segment of Latino alumni that development officers may be most interested in targeting for contributions, yet may yield the poorest results.

Recommendations for Future Study

Based on the findings of this research, there are a number of possible areas for future inquiry. To begin with, this study examined the giving patterns of a small number of Latino graduates at a single institution. The findings are thus preliminary at best. Additional research is needed at other institutions to explore the factors that impact giving for comparison. A comprehensive study that looks at the giving factors across several institutions would likewise shed additional light on Latino alumni philanthropy.
Similarly, the study at hand explored Latino alumni giving at a Research I
level institution. Future studies should thus be conducted at other types of
institutions to see if the results differ or are similar. As an example, some research
of alumni giving has explored the differences between giving at public versus
private institutions. Future research might, similarly, explore Latino alumni giving
at both public and private institutions. As well, the university that served as the site
of this study is not a Hispanic-serving institution. Researchers seeking to uncover
the factors that influence Latino alumni giving should consider conducting studies
at Hispanic-serving institutions.

As well, some evidence suggests that older alumni may be less inclined to
give than younger alumni of color. This study, however, included only a very small
number of alumni over forty years of age. Future research should thus target older
alumni. More importantly, a significant limitation of this study was that the sample
was drawn only from Latino graduates that were members of the alumni
association. Additional research aimed at graduates that choose not to join the
alumni association is clearly needed if we are to better understand the factors that
discourage Latino alumni giving.

Finally, some anecdotal evidence suggests that Latino graduates may be
more likely to make an alumni gift if the request is made by another Latino
alumnus. Some universities are thus developing alumni associations specifically for
Latino alumni, although some practitioners argue that such associations may be
divisive. Moreover, it is unclear if such associations are truly bringing more Latino graduates into the philanthropic fold. According to some graduates in this study, the presence of a Latino alumni association would likely encourage Latino giving. Additional research should thus be undertaken to determine if giving differs at institutions with Latino alumni association when compared to institutions with traditional alumni associations.

**Final Comments**

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest a number of factors that influence Latino giving. For one, it seems clear that the Latino alumni were philanthropic. The graduates supported a wide range of institutions and cited an array of reasons that they make charitable gifts. Few, moreover, had financial obligations that prevented them from providing charitable support for their alma maters. Such findings are significant because they suggest that Latino alumni in this study have both the financial capacity and the charitable propensity needed to philanthropically support the university. Although, to be fair, the findings suggest that graduates may have other areas of charitable interest that compete for their philanthropic dollars. At the same time, some alumni have financial limitations that prevent their alumni support, at least, shortly after graduation. Alumni and development officers should not rule out these graduates as future donors, however.

A more critical factor that likely influences alumni giving may be institutional experience; however, it may not be a matter of all or nothing. While
Latino graduates may have had some poor institutional experiences, they may have had other positive experiences that outweigh the negative. Even when some alumni in this study experienced discrimination at the university, they continued to give because they had pride in their degree from the university or because they were grateful that they received a quality education that prepared them for a career field. Some graduates, likewise, see their contributions as a means of increasing Latino representation at the university.

Not all Latino graduates were convinced that the university needed their support, however. The alumni association office thus plays a key role in Latino alumni giving. Development officers must communicate to Latino alumni that their support is important and needed. Meaningful participation, such as raising funds for academic programs or scholarships for other students, may help increase Latino alumni philanthropic participation. It may be beneficial; moreover, to have Latino graduates approach other Latino alumni for charitable contributions.

Although the findings of this study are not intended to be generalizable, they are important in that they add to the scant body of research about Latino alumni giving and Latino philanthropy. As noted earlier, due in part to the limited research in the area, Latinos are often misunderstood within the non-profit community in terms of giving potential. Non-profit leaders thus often fail to develop effective strategies that might engage Latinos as donors (Campoamor & Diaz, 1999). The research should thus be of value to researchers interested in
promoting a more inclusive view of philanthropy. As for alumni giving, clearly there is an interest in bringing Latino alumni into the philanthropic fold (Gaiter, 1991; Nicklin, 1994). Development officers seeking to understand Latino alumni giving should thus find the results of this study, in particular, the recommendations for practical applications, beneficial.

While understanding the factors that promote or inhibit Latino alumni giving is important as we seek to bring more Latino graduates into the philanthropic fold, an equally important finding may be uncovered when we study such giving. That is, administrators may find it useful to utilize alumni giving as a gauge for measuring Latino student satisfaction with the collegiate experience. To be sure, some administrators may be reluctant to hear from graduates that had a negative institutional experience. Administrators interested in retaining Latino college students, however, should view the findings as an opportunity to learn more about the ways in which institutional satisfaction might be increased.

The findings of this study should be important to Latino students, as well. As the philanthropic literature suggests, increasing Latino membership in nonprofit organizations has the capacity to increase Latino involvement in other aspects of mainstream civic life, including political participation (Diaz, 1996). Latino participation in traditional organized philanthropy, meanwhile, is an important, yet largely untapped means by which Latinos can help shrink the gap between the poor and the wealthy (Ramos & Kasper, 2000). Latino alumni should thus understand
that they, too, benefit from their increased philanthropic participation. Indeed, as at least one alumnus in this study recognized, Latino graduates can exercise influence at the institutional level through regular and significant gifts to the institution.

At the same time, some research suggests that Latinos often refrain from giving to organized charitable institutions because of a lack of financial giving capacity and familiarity with traditional philanthropy. Moreover, as noted in the literature, Latinos are generally perceived as the beneficiaries of charitable dollars and rarely as benefactors; even Latinos often view of themselves as takers, rather than givers (Estrada as cited in Ramos & Kasper, 2000). As this study similarly found, it appears that there is some uncertainty among the alumni surveyed about the importance of philanthropy within the Latino community, although most of the graduates perceived of themselves as philanthropic. To the extent that alumni giving provides Latino graduates with a comfortable and affordable venue for participating in organized philanthropy, it therefore provides a perhaps small, but no less significant means for changing the public’s perception about Latino generosity. Similarly, it affords a segment of the Latino community, specifically Latino college graduates, the opportunity to recognize that they are indeed benefactors—a factor which may lead to expanded involvement in other areas of philanthropy.

At the same time, administrators and university fundraisers alike should be aware that the larger body of research in Latino giving suggests that the
underrepresentation of Latinos in the nonprofit sector diminishes more widespread Latino institutional giving. As Ramos (1999) argues, the dearth of Latinos in leadership roles in organized philanthropy limits Latino exposure to and comfort levels with the vocabulary and standard practices of traditional philanthropy—a situation which thereby limits widespread Latino institutional giving. Likewise, Cortes (1999b) suggests that so long as Latinos remain underrepresented in organized philanthropy, Latinos are not likely to view the conventional nonprofit sector as a means of addressing the needs of the community. Placing Latino alumni giving within the context of this argument, fundraisers should understand that Latino alumni support may not appreciably increase as long as Latinos continue to be underrepresented at all levels within the university.

Finally, the tendency for some administrators and development officers to avoid alumni research out of fear of alienating potential donors is a real concern. Conducting research aimed at understanding the factors that promote or limit Latino alumni giving is thus not without risk. Competition for funding in higher education is fierce, however. Over the long term, it would behoove university and alumni officials to gain insight into the factors that might bring Latino alumni into the philanthropic fold. If surveys were conducted in a manner that conveyed genuine interest in the values and opinions of this emerging donor group, the alumni association might in fact gain Latino support.
In summary, it appears that the factors that predispose or encourage Latino alumni giving are complex. Some research suggests that cultural traditions inhibit Latino alumni giving. Economic factors, in other words financial capacity, likely play a role as well. Institutional experience may be central to alumni giving or the lack thereof, as well. Finally, alumni association officers play a key role in encouraging Latino graduates to support their alma mater philanthropically.
Table 1

*Ages of Alumni*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 or younger</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>68.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 to 40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 to 45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 to 50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 or older</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

*Gender of Alumni*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3

*Household Incomes of Alumni*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Range</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 or less</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,001 to $35,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,001 to $50,000</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001 to $75,000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,001 to $100,000</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,001 to $150,000</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$150,001 to $200,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200,001 or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

*Degrees Earned by Alumni*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Number Graduated from the University in 1995</th>
<th>Number Graduated from Another Institution(^a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Alumni were asked to list all of the degrees they had earned at the university and other institutions.

\(^a\)Graduation dates at other institutions vary.
Table 5

*Marital Status of Alumni*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single (never married)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated or divorced</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

*Number of Children of those Alumni with Children*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>79.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five or more</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7

*Family Structure of Alumni with Children*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single parent families</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual parent families</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8

*Ethnic Self-Identity of Alumni*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino/Latina</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicano/Chicana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican-American</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuban-American</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>10*</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aOther categories of ethnic self-identity included the following: Spanish American (1), Asian Hispanic (1), American (1), half-Anglo (white)/half-Hispanic (2), half-Hispanic/half-white (1), Latino/Mexican-American (1), Hispanic/Mexican-American (2), and Hispanic/Chicano/Mexican-American (1).*

*bOne respondent indicated that she identified herself as a Latina/Mexican-American although she added that identity is now a family matter as her husband is half black. Thus, as a family they sometimes give to organizations that help the black community.*
Table 9

*Religious Affiliation of Alumni*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Other categories of religious affiliation included all of the following: Presbyterian (1), Jewish (1), Christian (1), Non-denominational (21), None (2) and did not report (1).
Table 10

*Importance to Alumni that They and Their Families Made Charitable Contributions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11

*Reasons that Alumni Made Charitable Contributions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help less fortunate</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give back to society</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give back to the Latino community</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of obligation</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have the financial capacity to give</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer pressure</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Othera</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Alumni were asked to list all of the reasons that they make charitable contributions.

*Other reasons for giving included the following: sense of pride, Christian beliefs would have me do so, because it makes me feel good, tithing and Christian beliefs, tax benefits, because God takes care of me, to give back to University’s student programs, church tithe--support church community, give something back to my alma mater, help fund medical research/studies to find cures for diseases, belief in organization’s work, and to give back to the Latino/Hispanic and Black communities.*
Table 12

*Importance to Alumni that They Identified with the Organizations They Supported*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 13

*Importance to Alumni that the Organizations They Support Have Latino Representation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not respond</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14

*Alumni Perceptions that Philanthropy is an Important Part of the Latino Culture*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not respond</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15

*Alumni Perceptions that Financial Assistance to Family is a Form of Philanthropy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16

*Alumni that Have Made a Charitable Contribution to the University*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17

*Alumni that had Familial Obligations that Interfered with Giving to the University*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 18

*Alumni That Had Student loans that Interfered with Giving to the University*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 19

*Alumni that were not Happy While Attending the University*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20

*Alumni that Felt the University Did Not Make an Adequate Effort to Make Them Feel Comfortable About Being There*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 21

*Alumni Whose Sense of Loyalty to the University as Students was Positive*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 22

*Alumni Whose Sense of Loyalty to the University was Positive at the Time of the Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 23

*Alumni Whose General Attitude Toward the University was Positive*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 24

*Alumni Who Would Choose the University if They Had to Do It Again*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 25

*Alumni Who Felt Like They Were Part of the Campus Community as Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 26

*Alumni Whose General Perception of the University’s Sensitivity to the Needs of Latino Students When They Attended was Positive*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 27

*Alumni Who Would Recommend the University to Other Latino Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 28

*Alumni who Felt Like they Experienced Racial Harassment or Discrimination at the University*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>3&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>4.3.%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>One alumnus reported that the discrimination or harassment he or she experienced had been perpetrated by students and not the institution.
Table 29

*Alumni Who do not Feel Responsible for Giving to the University as Latino Graduates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 30

*Alumni who Felt that Latino Representation at All Levels of the University was Too Insignificant*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 31

*Alumni who were Proud of Their Degree from the University*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 32

*Alumni who Felt Like the Academic Program at the University did not Meet Their Needs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>58.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 33

*Alumni who Rated the Education they Received at the University Positively*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 34

*Alumni who Felt that the Education They Received at the University Prepared Them for a Professional Career*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 35

*Alumni who Had Not Been Approached for a Donation by the University*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 36

*Alumni who Reported that the University Actively Solicited Their Support*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 37

Alumni who were Approached for a Donation in a Way that Did Not Lead to a Favorable Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 38

*Alumni who Knew that there was a Regional University Alumni Club in their Area*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>89.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 39

Alumni who Had Previously Attended an Alumni Event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 40

*Alumni who Felt Like the University had Attempted to *Keep in Touch with Them*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 41

*Alumni who Did Not Feel the University Needed Their Help*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 42

*Alumni who were Unable to Make a Large Gift and Felt the University Would Not Appreciate a Small Gift*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 43

**Alumni Who Felt they Could Restrict How Their Contributions Should be Used by the University**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 44

*Alumni who Preferred that their Donations be used for Scholarships or to Benefit Other Latino Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

Giving Survey

Part One: Demographic Information. (Please check the most appropriate box).

1. Age: □ 30 or younger □ 31 to 35 □ 36 to 40 □ 41 to 45 □ 46 to 50 □ 50 or older

2. Gender: □ Male □ Female

3. How do you identify yourself?
   □ Latino/a □ Hispanic □ Chicano/a □ Mexican-American
   □ Puerto Rican □ Cuban-American □ Other __________________________

4. Religious Affiliation: □ Catholic □ Methodist □ Baptist □ Protestant □ Other_______

5. Marital Status: □ Single (never married) □ Separated or divorced □ Married □ Widowed

6. Number of Children: □ None □ One □ Two □ Three □ Four □ Five or more

7. Family Structure at present (if you have children):
   □ Single parent family (male/female head of household) □ Dual parent family □ Other ____

8. Please indicate the name of the institution in which you completed the following:
   Bachelor’s Degree __________________________ Year ________________
   Master’s Degree ________________________________ Year ________________
   Other (Please specify) ___________________________ Year ________________

9. Household Income (please check the box that best describes your current annual family income)
   □ $25,000 or less □ $25,001 to $35,000 □ $35,001 to $50,000 □ $50,001 to $75,000
   □ $75,001 to $100,000 □ $100,001 to $150,000 □ $150,001 to $200,000
   □ $200,001 and above

Part Two: General Philanthropic Involvement. (Please check the appropriate box).

NOTE: In Parts Two and Three of this survey, philanthropy or philanthropic involvement is defined as charitable contributions in the form of monetary support, not volunteer time.

1. It is important to me and my family to make charitable contributions.
   □ Strongly Agree □ Agree □ Don’t know □ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree

2. It is important for me to personally identify with the organizations to which I contribute.
   □ Strongly Agree □ Agree □ Don’t know □ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree

3. It is important to me that the organizations to which I contribute have Latino/Hispanic representation.
   □ Strongly Agree □ Agree □ Don’t know □ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree
4. I consider financial assistance to immediate and extended family members to be a form of philanthropy.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree  [ ] Agree  [ ] Don’t know  [ ] Disagree  [ ] Strongly Disagree

5. Philanthropy is an important part of my culture.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree  [ ] Agree  [ ] Don’t know  [ ] Disagree  [ ] Strongly Disagree

6. I make charitable contributions because I want to give something back.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree  [ ] Agree  [ ] Don’t know  [ ] Disagree  [ ] Strongly Disagree

7. I want to set an example for others to follow.
   - [ ] Strongly Agree  [ ] Agree  [ ] Don’t know  [ ] Disagree  [ ] Strongly Disagree

8. To what organizations do you provide charitable contributions? (Please check all that apply).
   - [ ] Undergraduate Alma mater  [ ] Political action groups  [ ] Church
   - [ ] Other Educational institutions  [ ] Graduate Alma Mater United Way
   - [ ] Other: (Please specify) ____________________

9. Why do you make charitable contributions? (Please check all that apply).
   - [ ] To help those less fortunate  [ ] To give something back to society
   - [ ] Because I have the financial capacity to give  [ ] To give something back to the
       Latino/Hispanic community
   - [ ] Because I feel a sense of obligation  [ ] Out of a sense of peer pressure
   - [ ] Other: (Please specify) ____________________

Part Three: Philanthropic Involvement at the University X (Please check the appropriate box).
1. Have you ever made a charitable contribution to the University X?
   - [ ] Yes  [ ] No

2. Have you ever been asked to make a charitable contribution to the University X?
   - [ ] Yes  [ ] No

3. If you answered yes to question #2, please check the box(es) that describe how you were solicited for a donation?
   - [ ] Telephone call  [ ] Letter  [ ] Personal ask  [ ] Fundraising event
   - [ ] Other: (Please specify) ______________

4. Have you ever attended a University X alumni event?
   - [ ] Yes  [ ] No

5. Do you know if there is a regional University X Alumni Club in your area?
   - [ ] Yes  [ ] No

6. Do you feel that the University X has attempted to keep in touch with you?
   - [ ] Yes  [ ] No

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7. Which of the following programs at the University X do you feel are most deserving of your financial support? (Please number in the order of your priority).

_____ Academic Programs _____ Athletics _____ Faculty Support _____ Financial Aid 
_____ Library _____ Multicultural Center _____ University Ministry _____ Other : ________

Part Four: Factors that Influence Giving. (Please rate the following statements).

1. My general attitude toward the University X today is positive.
   ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Don’t know ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

2. I would rate the education I received at the University X positively.
   ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Don’t know ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

3. My general perception of the University’s sensitivity to the needs of the Hispanic students when I attended was positive.
   ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Don’t know ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

4. My sense of loyalty to the University X as a student was positive.
   ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Don’t know ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

5. My sense of loyalty to the University X today is positive.
   ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Don’t know ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

6. If I had to do it again, I would choose to attend the University X.
   ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Don’t know ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

7. I still consider myself a part of the University X community.
   ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Don’t know ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

8. I would recommend the University X to other Latino/Hispanic students.
   ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Don’t know ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

9. I keep in touch with other graduates of the University X.
   ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Don’t know ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

10. My education at the University X prepared me for my professional career.
    ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Don’t know ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

11. I am proud of my degree from the University X.
    ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Don’t know ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

12. I continue to have contact with the University X.
    ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Don’t know ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

13. The University X actively solicits my support.
    ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Don’t know ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
14. I can designate how and where my contributions are to be used by the University X.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

15. I prefer that my donations to the University be used for Latino scholarships or to benefit other Latino/Hispanic students.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

16. I did not feel like I was a part of the University X campus community.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

17. I do not feel like the University made an adequate effort to make me feel comfortable about being there.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

18. I felt like I experienced racial harassment or discrimination at the University X.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

19. The academic program available at the University X did not meet my needs.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

20. I was not happy while attending the University X.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

21. I do not feel that the University X needs my help.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

22. I have not been approached for a donation by the University X.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

23. The University X approached me for a donation, but in a way that did not elicit a favorable response.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

24. As a Hispanic or Latino/a graduate, I do not feel responsible for giving to the University X.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

25. I am unable to make a large gift and I feel that the University X would not appreciate a smaller gift.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

26. I feel that Latino/Hispanic representation at all levels of the University X is too insignificant.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

27. I have financial obligations to family that keep me from giving to University X.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

28. I have financial obligations because of my education (student loans) that keep me from giving to University X.
   □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Don’t know  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree
29. Are there additional aspects of your University X experience as a student or an alumnus that influence your decision to support the institution? □ Yes □ No
If you answered yes, please comment:
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

SECOND PHASE OF STUDY: INTERVIEWS BY TELEPHONE OR IN PERSON
If you are willing to further assist me by participating in an interview, please complete the following:

Name: _______________ Address: _______________ City, State, Zip _______________
Daytime Ph #: ___________ Evening Ph #: ___________ E-mail address: _______________
Best Time to Contact by Telephone: ________________________________

Please return this survey no later than September 4th, 2001 or sooner if possible.
A stamped, self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.
Thank you again for your assistance.
Appendix B

*Initial Survey Cover Letter*

Sandra A. Gonzalez

Dear University X Alumnus:

As a Latina/Hispanic and a student at the University of Texas at Austin and a doctoral candidate in the Educational Administration Program, I am seeking your help for a research project being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for my dissertation.

The title of my study is *Latino Alumni Giving at a Major Southwestern University*. I am asking for your help in this study because you are a Latino/Hispanic graduate of University X and I feel that your input will be vital to this study. Although completion of the enclosed survey is voluntary, I hope that you will take a few minutes of your time to answer the questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope no later than September 4, 2001.

You may notice that your survey has been numbered. Please let me assure you that this is solely for the purpose of documenting which of the surveys have been returned to me. Your anonymity will be maintained in any and all reports that are generated from my research and your responses will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. A copy of the final written report will be available for your review at your request.

In the second phase of my study I will conduct in-depth, audio taped interviews with at least five of the survey respondents. If you are interested in participating in this phase of the research, simply complete the final portion of the attached questionnaire located on the last page of the survey.

*Please help me by completing and returning this survey as soon as possible.* I can be reached at (210) 734-0374 or 292-3571 or you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Jim Scheurich, at (512) 475-8583 if you have any questions. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Sandra A. (Sandie) Gonzalez  
Doctoral Candidate, the University of Texas at Austin

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Appendix C

Cover Letter for Second Mailing of Survey

Date

Dear University X Alumnus:

As a Latina/Hispanic and a student at the University of Texas at Austin, and a doctoral candidate in the Educational Administration Program, I am writing once again to seek your help for a research project being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of my dissertation.

A few weeks ago, I mailed a survey to you. If you have already completed and returned the survey in the envelope provided, disregard this message and thank you for your help. If you have not returned the survey, I am sending you another copy. Simply complete the enclosed survey and return to me in the stamped, self-addressed envelope as soon as possible.

Approximately 25% of the surveys I sent out initially have been completed and returned. I am seeking a 60% response rate, however. Your assistance is thus vital to this study.

If you do not wish to participate in this study, please check the box below and return to me.

Thank you again for your assistance in this research project.

Sincerely,

Sandra A. (Sandie) Gonzalez
Doctoral Candidate, the University of Texas at Austin

☐ I do not wish to participate in this research study.
Appendix D

Interview Guideline

Part 1. Preliminary Information

1. Explain the reason for the research
2. Obtain approval to tape record the interview and consent form, if necessary
3. Ensure participant confidentiality
4. Answer questions/address concerns

Part 2. Questions about the role of family and culture

1. Please tell me about your childhood family.
2. What is your parents’ educational and occupational background?
3. Can you describe the neighborhood in which you were raised?
4. How important was it that you have a college education to your parents?
5. What types of activities do you and your family do together?
6. In your opinion, what issues are important to males or females of the Latino culture?

Part 3. Questions about current personal information

1. Tell me about your current profession.
2. Are you married?
3. If married, what is the educational and occupational background of your spouse?
4. Do you have children? How many? How old are they?
5. Can you describe the education of your children?
6. Is their education different or similar to the one you experienced as a child?
7. Describe your involvement in community activities.
8. Describe your involvement in church or other religious activities.

Part 4. Questions about philanthropic activity

1. Define philanthropy.
2. In your opinion, does financial assistance to immediate and extended family members fall under the definition of philanthropy?
3. Is philanthropy an important aspect of your life? Why? Why not?
4. Could you describe the philanthropic behavior that is typical of members of the Latino culture?
5. Do you think that Latino giving behavior is more likely to be influenced by culture or by socioeconomic conditions? Please explain.
6. Describe the role of philanthropy in your childhood family? Do you have any lasting memories about your family’s charitable activities?
7. Does religion impact your philanthropic behavior? If so, how?
8. Would you be more likely to make a charitable contribution to your church or alma mater?
9. Is it important to you to philanthropically support institutions that benefit the Latino community?
10. How important is it for you to see Latinos represented in the organizations you support philanthropically?

Part 5. Questions related to experience at the University X

1. What factors did you consider when deciding to attend the University X?
2. Describe your first impression of the University X.
3. Describe your first year at the University.
4. What things did you like about the University?
5. What things didn’t you like about the University?
6. Were you comfortable attending classes at the University?
7. Were you comfortable interacting with professors and peers?
8. Did you make friends with non-Latinos?
9. Were you more likely to make friends with Latinos while on campus?
10. Did you belong to any Latino organizations while on campus?
11. Describe your social life at the University.
12. How did you feel about the University at the time of your graduation/stopping out?
13. How do you feel about the University now that you have been away for a few years?
14. Describe what, if anything, could have made your experience at the University better?
15. What role does your perception of satisfaction with your experience while at the University play in your decision to support the institution as an alumnus?

Part 6. Questions related to factors that generally inhibit alma mater support.

1. Do you feel that the University needs your financial support?
2. Has the University approached you for financial support? How do you feel about the manner in which you were approached?
3. Do you feel you experienced racial harassment/discrimination at the University? If so, can you give an example(s).
4. If yes to #4, how does this impact your decision to provide alumni support?
5. Do you feel a stronger tie to your undergraduate institution than the University? How does this impact your decision to support the University?
6. Does the Hopwood decision influence your decision to provide philanthropic support to the University? Please explain.
7. What role, if any, do student loans play in your decision to support the University?

Part 7. Questions related to factors, which generally predispose alumni support

1. Do you feel that you have an obligation to give something back to society (philanthropically)? Please explain.
2. Do you feel that you have an obligation to give something back to the University?
3. How would you like the University to use your donations?
4. Is it important to you that other Latinos/Latinas benefit from your financial contributions to the University? Why or why not?
5. Are you proud of your degree from the University?
6. What part of your education at the University do you feel best prepared you for your career?
7. What suggestions would you make to the University to encourage more Latinos/as alumni to make charitable contributions?
8. Have you attended any of the University’s alumni functions? If so, please describe.
9. Ask if there is anything else they would like to add about alumni giving.

Part 8. Conclusion

1. Make closing comments
2. Address any final concerns of the respondent
3. Request permission to contact participant after interview for clarification, if needed.
4. Explain intent to provide a written summary of interview to participant for corroboration.
5. Thank respondent for participation

[Adapted from Smith (1987) and Smith (1998)]
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VITA

Sandra Aida Gonzalez was born in Evanston, Illinois on November 22, 1957, the daughter of Elida Palomo and Alejandro Palomo. After completing her work at Thomas Jefferson High School, San Antonio, Texas, in 1975, she entered San Antonio College in San Antonio, Texas. Later, in September 1984, she transferred to the University of Texas at San Antonio in San Antonio, Texas. She received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the University of Texas at San Antonio in May 1987. In September 1990, she entered the graduate school at the University of Texas at San Antonio. She received a Master of Arts from the University of Texas at San Antonio in May 1994. After working in the non-profit sector for a few years, she entered the graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin in September 1995.

Permanent Address: 109 Berwick, San Antonio, Texas 78201

This dissertation was typed by the author.