



## Ensuring the Success of Latino Males in Higher Education: A National Imperative

Saenz, Victor B.; Ponjuan, Luis; and Figueroa, Julia, eds.  
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### Book Review

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**Reviewed by:** Tim Baldwin, *Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*

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Why do so few Hispanic males enroll in and graduate from institutions of higher learning? Why are Latinas, by contrast, enjoying so much more success than Latinos? Moreover, why is there a dearth of research addressing these questions? This book, which includes twelve chapters written by leading Latin@ scholars, addresses these questions with the goal of broadening readers' contextual understanding, deepening their comprehension of the specific challenges faced by Hispanic males in higher education, and securing their commitment to Latino success.

The book's contributors adroitly explore the complex challenges that Latino males face in the context of American society and higher education. The book's first two chapters discuss many of the socio-economic factors contributing to the current Latino "crisis" in higher education. They carefully examine the Hispanic gender gap and the ways in which it is manifested along the educational pipeline, alternate life pathways for Latino males (such as military, low-paying labor, prison), and factors that frequently hinder Latinos from enrolling in college (such as lack of financial aid literacy and inadequate academic preparation).

Multiple chapters investigate key cultural factors that significantly impact Latino experiences in higher education. Chapters Four, Five, and Eleven, for example, focus on Latino identity and intersectionality, probing complicated issues (for example, relationships between *caballerismo*, Latino persistence, and high attrition rates) and introducing humanizing nuances (such as the Latino male privilege paradox). Chapters Two, Seven, Eight, and Nine pose critical questions about the role that *familismo* plays in hindering and promoting Latino academic success. Those chapters also address other relevant topics such as the unique features of Mexican sub-culture and various forms of Latin@ cultural wealth.

The final section of the book calls on academics to more thoroughly research the crisis pertaining to Latinos in higher education. Chapter Ten describes research on college administrators' levels of awareness about the challenges faced by Latinos in academia. Their findings, namely that administrators' awareness not only varied widely, but also that some administrators resisted acknowledging problem areas altogether, underscore the urgent need for more research. Chapter Eleven suggests that studies which compare and contrast the experiences of Latinos and Latinas might yield much fruit, while the authors of Chapter Twelve advocate for a strengths-based, data rich, interdisciplinary approach to research on Latinos, an approach which is successfully modelled throughout the book.

In conclusion, educational leaders and researchers are sure to find this book – and especially the new research that it presents – a valuable and generative resource. The book's contributors helpfully shift the research focus from Latino students' resiliency and deficits to exploration of the social and cultural factors that shape their educational experiences. While the authors do not offer many substantive recommendations for educational programming and practice or directly address issues pertaining to Latinos in graduate education, they do make a strong case for "ensuring that the success of Latino males in higher education" becomes a national imperative. After reading the book, one also hopes that educators will wholeheartedly embrace Latino success as a moral imperative.

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