



Illinois Latino College Access and Completion: Voices From the Field

SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

The Latino College Landscape Study

An Overview of the Landscape Study Findings

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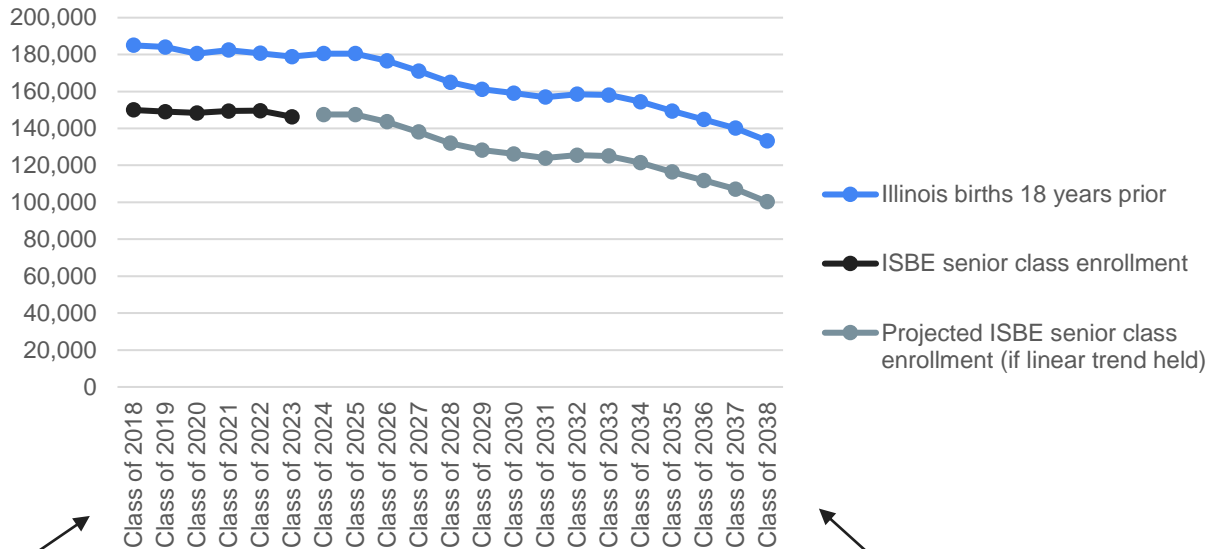
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To begin, it is critical to understand how the school-age population is shifting in Illinois. Birth and enrollment declines predict much smaller high school classes in the future than today.

Births & High School Classes in Illinois

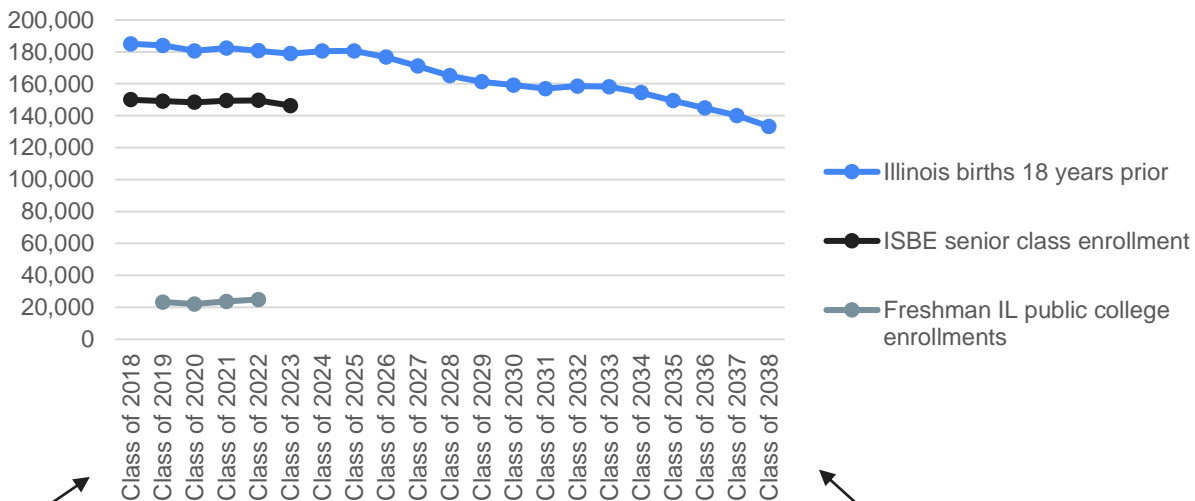


Born in 2000

Born in 2020

These demographic trends should lead to changes in college enrollments as well. The result will likely be massive structural changes to our educational institutions in Illinois.

Births, High School Classes, and College Enrollments in Illinois

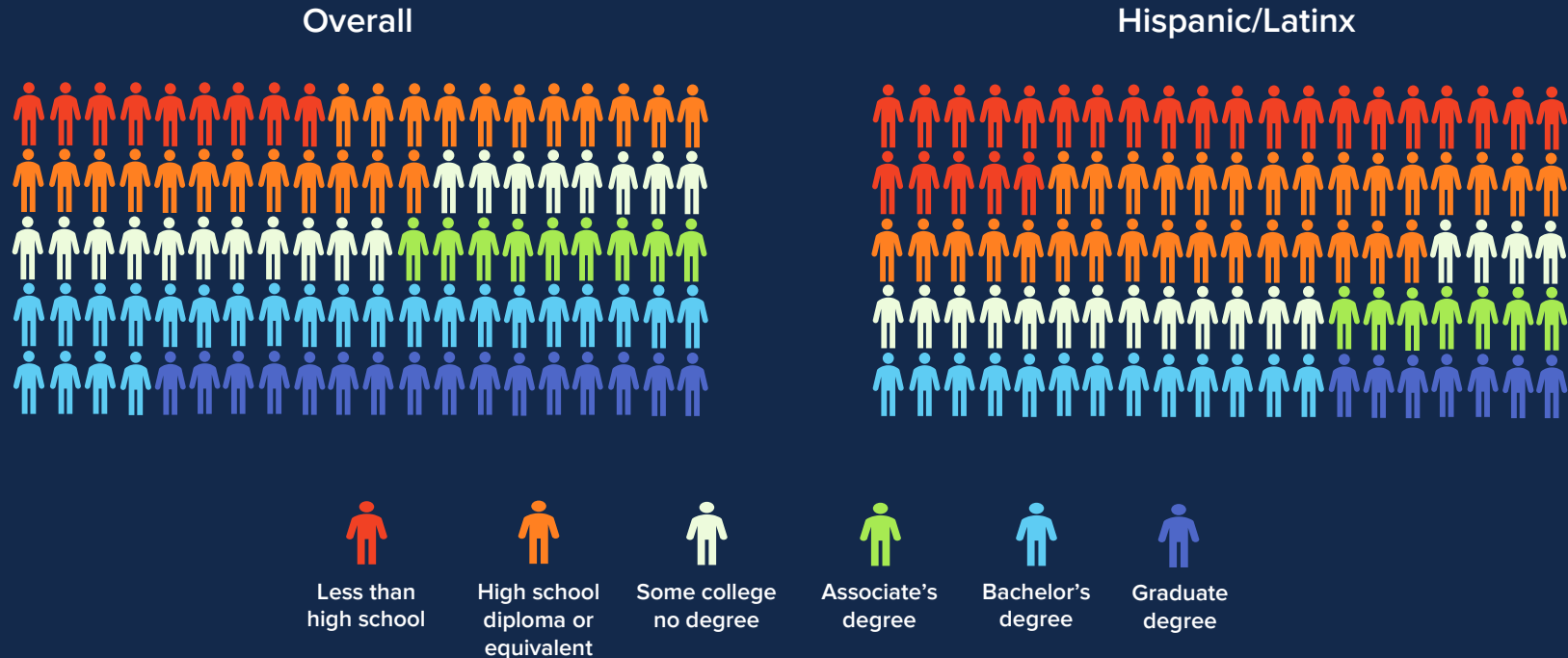


Born in 2000

Born in 2020

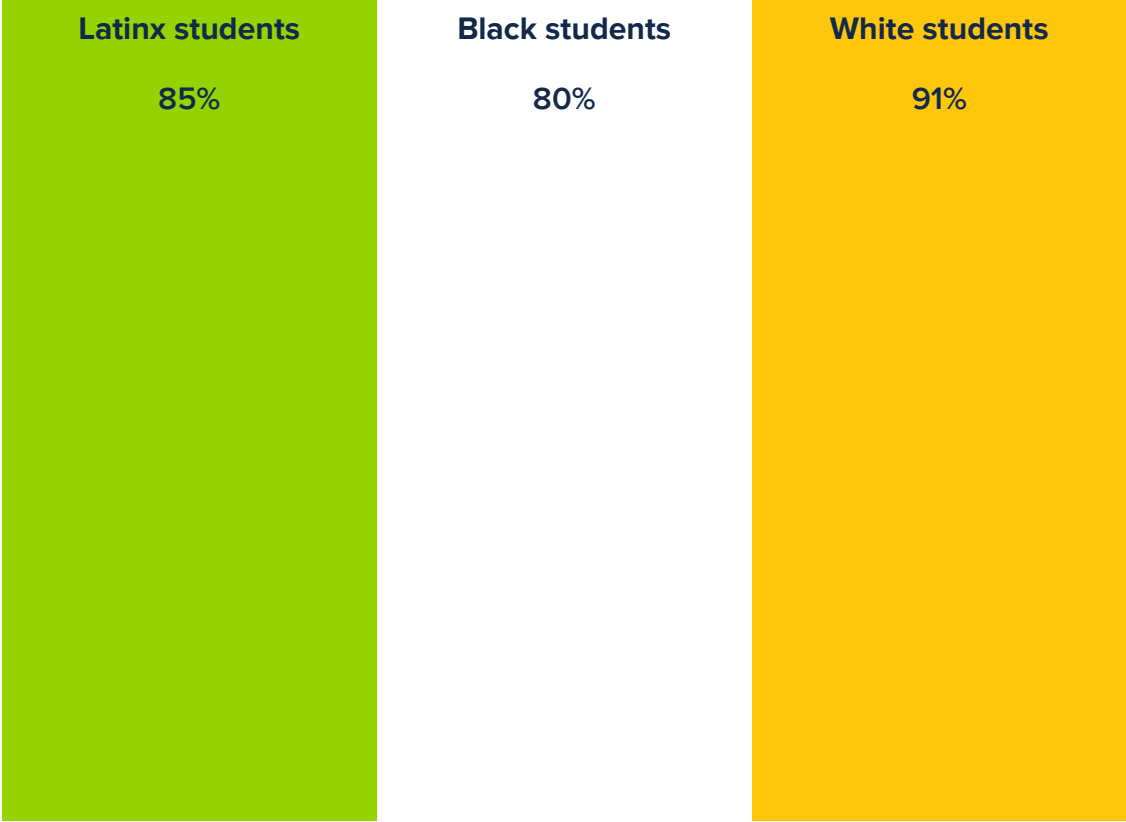
This is an opportunity to think boldly about how we serve our students now and in the future.

In Illinois, as nationwide, Latinx education attainment levels do not match those of the overall population.



These attainment gaps are no accident; they are the result of disparities along the pathway to and through college at every step.

HS graduation rate (4-year)



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	Latinx students	Black students	White students
HS graduation rate (4-year)	85%	80%	91%
College enrollment rate	50%	45%	66%
2-year rate	23%	12%	23%
4-year rate	26%	33%	43%

Sources: Illinois Report Card (SY22), IBHE Data Points (2023) for SY21 HS grads

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Note that Latinx students enroll in 2-year colleges at the same rate as White students...but enroll in college overall much less.

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Developmental education placement (IL public colleges)	12%	15%	5%
First-year retention rate (IL public colleges)	75%	62%	82%

Sources: Illinois Report Card (SY22), IBHE Data Points (2023) for SY21 HS grads, IBHE (2020) Assessing Equity in IL Higher Education

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Community college graduation rate	25%	14%	38%
Public university graduation rate	51%	33%	68%
Private non-profit graduation rate	59%	38%	70%
For-profit college graduation rate	32%	19%	30%

Sources: Illinois Report Card (SY22), IBHE Data Points (2023) for SY21 HS grads, IBHE (2020) Assessing Equity in IL Higher Education

There is nothing inherently better about any education level, and individual choices should always be respected and supported.

However:

Different education levels convey different economic and social benefits.

Vast differences in attainment suggest that there are systemic and structural disparities that should be addressed.

Our goal is to build a system in which all students have the same opportunity to make their individual choice.

**Key Issue #1:
Academic Preparation for
College**

Once I enrolled in college, I realized that I was ill equipped to tackle college level courses.

It felt like I was always playing catch-up.

-Latino college graduate



In **Illinois**, there were gaps in rigorous course-taking for Hispanic students in SY2018. ISBE data show that Hispanic student participation in AP courses has risen dramatically from SY16 to SY21, with Hispanic students going from 20% to 26% of AP course-takers and from 16% to 22% of dual credit course-takers.

Racial/ethnic Group	% School Population	% AP course-takers	% DC course-takers
Hispanic	25.3%	23.5%	19.1%
Am Indian	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Asian	5.0%	10.6%	5.0%
Black	16.3%	9.7%	10.5%
Multiracial	3.0%	3.3%	2.8%
Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
White	50.0%	52.5%	62.4%

Sources: Community College Research Center, 2021, <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/easyblog/schools-dual-enrollment-ap.html>; ISBE, Illinois School Report Card

**Key Issue #2:
High School Counseling
and Other Support for
College Enrollment**

One of the biggest things that I think is crucial [for college access and success] is the mentoring and having the conversation early. I don't think that necessarily happened early enough for me.

I had friends in high school [who] already knew where they were going to apply, what they needed to do, their parents already had college funds. And I just don't think that conversation . . . happens early enough.

-Latino college graduate



Teachers

Teachers of color matter for students' post-secondary enrollment:

- Having a teacher of the same racial background in high school increases likelihood of college enrollment for Black and Latinx students, especially in STEM

In Illinois:

- K-12 Hispanic enrollment has grown from 19% to 27% from 2007-2022, but the proportion of Hispanic teachers has only grown from 5% to 8%, leading to a teacher-student mismatch.

Counselors. For districts serving *high schools*, majority-serving Hispanic and Black schools have *lower* student-to-counselor ratios than majority-serving White schools.

Student-to-Counselor Ratio: Districts Serving High Schools			
	Hispanic	Black	White
All	502	502	502
25%+	434	412	507
50%+	484	361	517
75%+	480	399	524

**Key Issue #3:
Navigating the Pathway
To and Through College**

I had to be the person who connected with my academic advisor versus having [the advisor check in with me].

I definitely understand that it's a college setting. You're becoming an adult, you're figuring [it] out, you're navigating those things. But I do think that might be where some people could struggle in a class and then kind of drop off because [you] don't feel that support unless you actually do the reaching out yourself.

But I think it has to be on both ends [...] And sometimes if you see your designated students struggling, you reach out because I think that's when it gets hard, and people just leave.

-Latino college graduate



Support for college navigation

Latinx students report lack of readiness for understanding how colleges work

- E.g., transfer expectations, role of faculty and advisors/counselors, etc.
- Families often do not have this college-specific navigational capital.

Potential Solutions:

- High school-to-college collaboratives
- Orientation programs
 - *For students*
 - *For families*
- Intentional faculty, counselor, and peer connections
- More Latinx faculty and counselors

Transition Points

There are key transition points and choices that relate to college persistence:

- “Summer melt”
- Delayed enrollment after high school
- Late registration for a semester
- Financial holds
- Dropping out of a class
- Stopping out

Potential Solutions:

- High school-to-college partnerships
- *Monitor worries about college during summer, particularly financial concerns*
- *Encourage immediate enrollment*
- Develop college “early warning indicators” for these points
- Enlist college mentors/advisors to keep tabs on these points
- Inform students during high school counseling and college orientation programs about these critical points

**Key Issue #4:
Understanding College
Financing**

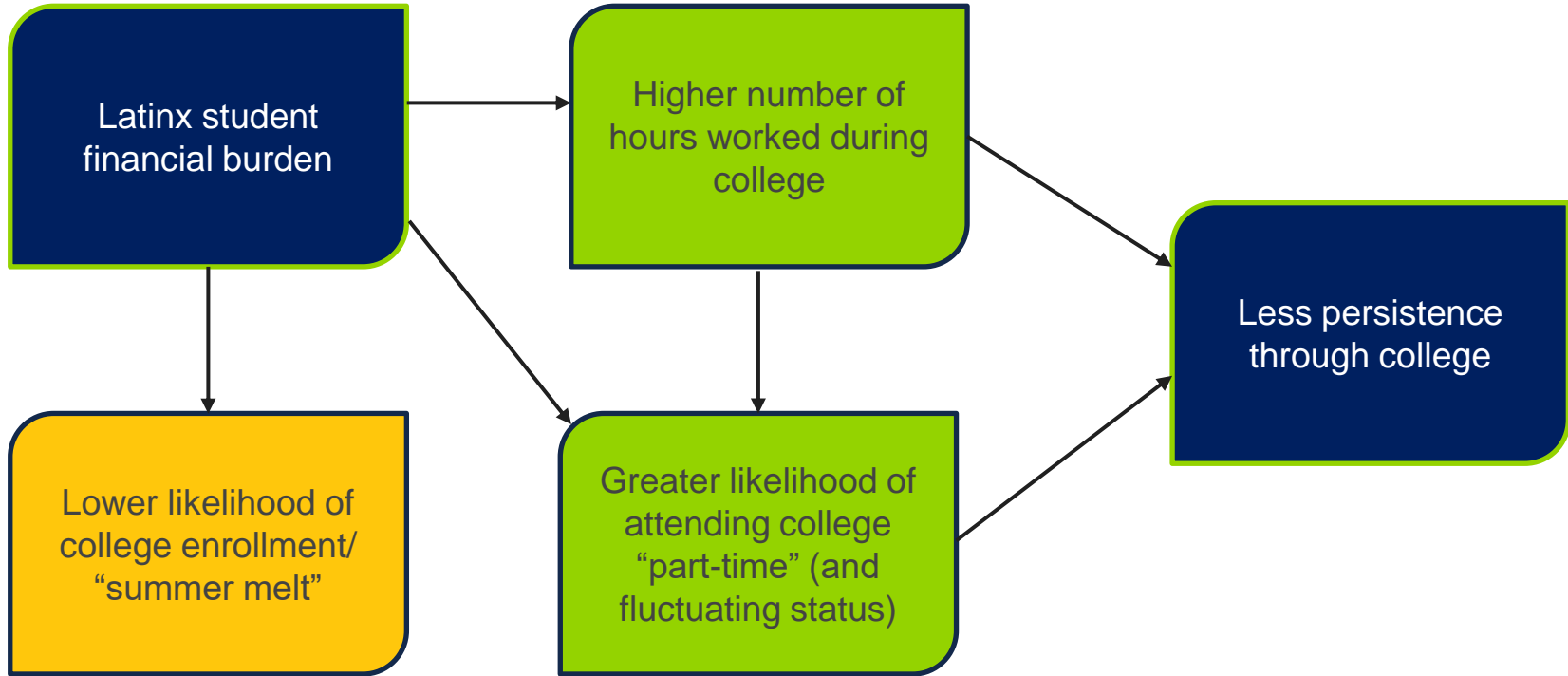
I worked almost full-time in college at a retail job to help my family financially at home.

This time could have been used to work on my own educational goals (internships, etc.)

-Latino college graduate



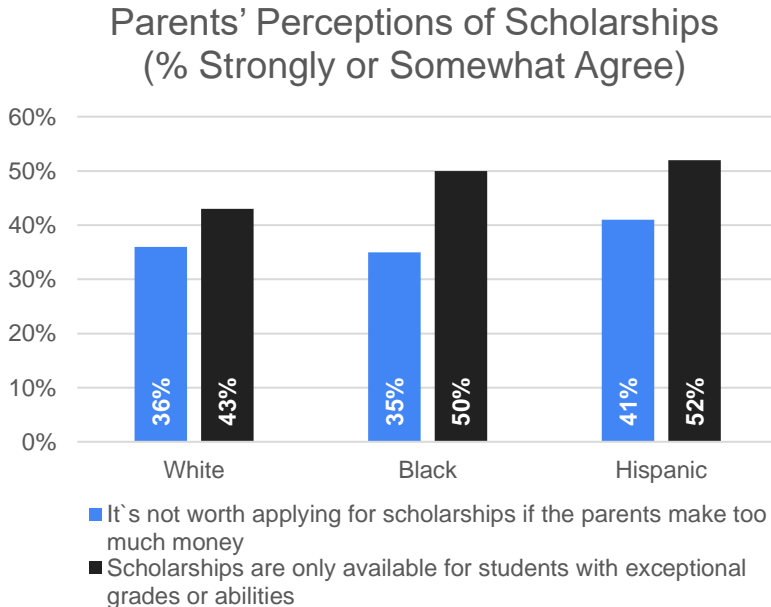
Financial Issues



Based on findings from: Crisp et al. (2015); Crisp & Nora (2010); Genthe & Harrington (2022), Langenkamp & Hoyt (2019), Margarit & Kennedy (2019); Perez & Ceja (2010); Salinas Jr & Hidrowoh (2017)

Financial Issues

Black and Latino Parents most likely to think that scholarships are only available for students with exceptional grades or abilities.



Financial aid, particularly need-based aid, can increase Latinx student success.

Leads to more full-time enrollment, fewer working hours.

However, Latinx students and their parents lack access to financial advising in high school and college settings.

**Key Issue #5:
Importance of Family
(and Community) During
the College Journey**

Growing up, it was difficult for me. My parents couldn't give me the best education, so I made a promise to myself to always do better with my kids.

I started communicating these aspirations to them, from when they were in elementary, then high school. You are going to do better, you're going to go further in education, you have to get the best.

-Fathers of Latino college students



Family responsibilities and expectations

- Family responsibilities/contributions (Gloria & Castellano, 2012)
 - Sibling care-taking, financial contributions, language/cultural brokering
 - Group needs prioritized over individual needs (*familismo*)
- Parent expectations about post-secondary experience (Vasquez et al., 2015)
- Whole family central to post-secondary decision making of Latinx students (Flores et al., 2021; Kiyama, 2011)

*"My mom has a hard time. She's like get As, go to school, do your BA, but she wants us to have like, like a miracle or something. 'Cause I'm like, "Mom, it takes studying and reading and homework." . . . I'm like it's not just gonna happen, I need to do it . . . **she wants me to get the As. She's so happy, right, but she wants me to do all this other stuff so she doesn't get it**" (Sy & Romero, 2008, p. 220).*

I remember questioning whether I wanted to stick it out with [biology as a major] and I met my mom for a pollo asado and I was sobbing . . . but she was very calm and she provided the emotional support that eventually helped me finish my degree.

-Latino college graduate



Family support

Latinx students report that their families provide social and emotional support.

Latino students (males) build off family expectations and support in the community college environment. At times, these students report difficulties balancing these expectations with the support.

Latinx students report that their parents often misunderstand the college workload/expectations, and college outreach to parents (particularly bilingual materials) is lacking.

Mothers are particularly significant in the college success of Latinos.

“My family is very proud of me. I mean, because I’m the first one to go off to university. Because I have other cousins. They all graduated from high school, but they just didn’t continue on. My dad’s pretty proud of me.”

-Student in Michel & Durdella (2019)

How Family & Community Influence College Choice

Table 3. Summary Statistics by Four-Year College Application Rates for Texas High School Graduates

	Black (1)	Hispanic (2)	Asian (3)	White (4)
Applied to any college	0.351	0.267	0.524	0.364
Applied to any college or enrolled	0.393	0.295	0.613	0.434
Applied to flagship	0.050	0.054	0.295	0.141
Applied to flagship or enrolled at higher-ranked campus	0.053	0.056	0.326	0.147
Applied to an open enrollment (nonselective) campus	0.154	0.024	0.032	0.052
Applied <i>only</i> to flagship	0.016	0.017	0.144	0.076
Applied <i>only</i> to open enrollment campus	0.077	0.010	0.011	0.029
Applied to multiple campuses	0.183	0.110	0.304	0.174
Applied to a high-SAT campus	0.094	0.079	0.365	0.204
Applied to a low-SAT campus	0.159	0.077	0.047	0.046
Number of graduates	67,215	188,835	19,405	213,486
Percent of graduates	0.14	0.38	0.04	0.44

Notes: Includes all Texas high school graduates from 2008 and 2009. Application data are available for students who applied to Texas public universities. Additional enrollment data are available for all U.S. universities through the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). A high-SAT campus is defined as one in the top quartile in the state in terms of median SAT score, and a low-SAT campus is in the bottom quartile in the state in terms of median SAT score.

Sources: Authors' calculations from Texas Workforce Data Quality Initiative Database, graduating student cohorts from spring 2008 and 2009. NSC data from the 2008–09 and 2009–10 academic years. Schools ranked higher than Texas flagships universities were identified from the 2008 U.S. News & World Reports U.S. college rankings.

There are systemic informational barriers to Latinx students' enrollment decisions, but **undermatch** may also be motivated by a desire to be closer to home and to attend institutions with history of Latinx enrollment/success.

Related to this, Latinx students enroll heavily in “Hispanic-Serving Institutions” (HSIs), or those with 25%+ Hispanic student population.

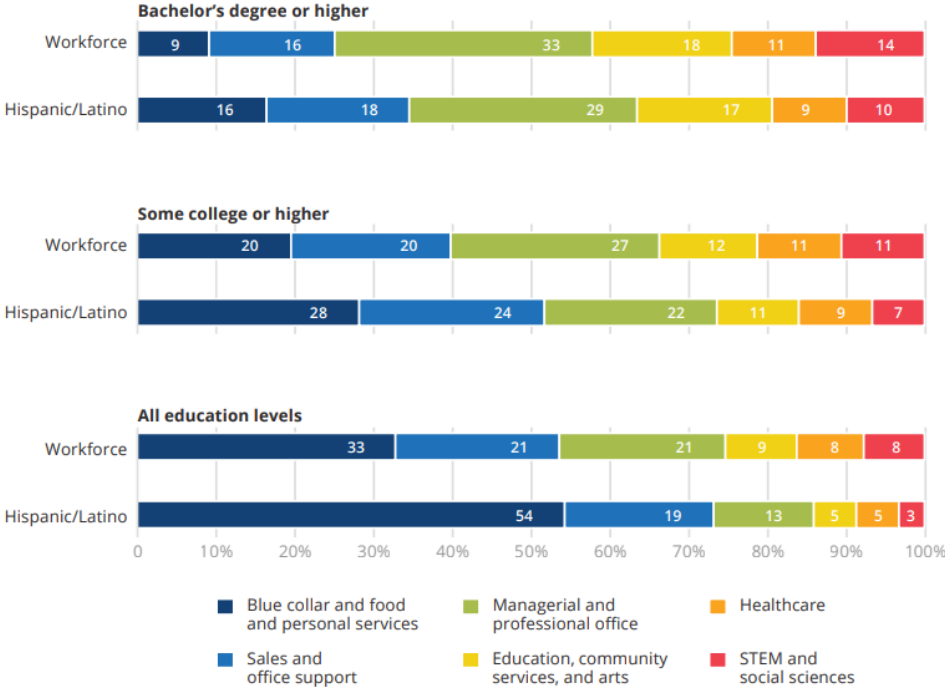
**Key Issue #6:
The Post-College
Landscape**

Hispanic students who attained Bachelor's degrees in Spring 2020 were less likely to be employed, to be employed full-time, or to be continuing education than their White, Asian, Native, and multi-racial peers.

	Native	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Hawaiian/PI	White	Multi-Racial	International
% Employed	53.5%	55.2%	50.9%	51.1%	51.4%	59.9%	55.5%	44.1%
% Full Time	46.7%	49.5%	44.5%	43.9%	46.6%	54.4%	48.3%	41.0%
% Part Time	6.7%	5.7%	6.4%	7.1%	4.8%	5.5%	7.2%	3.1%
% Continuing Ed	24.1%	23.3%	22.3%	20.6%	18.3%	21.7%	20.8%	35.1%
Mean Starting Salary	\$51k	\$73k	\$56k	\$56k	\$52k	\$57k	\$58k	\$72k

Some of these disparities may be explained by occupational choice or “occupational segregation.” However, this is not the full explanation.

FIGURE 5.3. Latinos are less likely to work in STEM occupations and more likely to work in blue-collar and food and personal services occupations compared to the average worker.



Note: Rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey*, 2016.

As seen in this table, there are still disparities by gender and by race/ethnicity within the same degree group.

TABLE B.5. Median Annual Earnings for Terminal Bachelor's Degree Holders by Major Group, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity

MAJOR GROUP	WHITE MEN	BLACK/ AFRICAN AMERICAN MEN	HISPANIC/ LATINO MEN	WHITE WOMEN	BLACK/ AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN	HISPANIC/ LATINA WOMEN
Architecture and engineering	\$91,600	\$67,100	\$66,100	\$75,100	\$66,100	\$51,600
Computers, statistics, and mathematics	\$85,100	\$66,100	\$65,100	\$70,700	\$55,100	\$51,600
Business	\$79,100	\$55,700	\$58,000	\$59,800	\$50,000	\$47,400
Health	\$77,400	\$59,800	\$61,900	\$63,200	\$61,100	\$55,100
Physical sciences	\$76,300	\$56,000	\$56,800	\$55,400	\$48,000	\$48,500
Social sciences	\$75,100	\$51,100	\$56,800	\$52,700	\$46,100	\$45,100
Biology and life sciences	\$66,100	\$50,100	\$54,400	\$51,600	\$46,500	\$46,500
Law and public policy	\$65,200	\$52,700	\$58,000	\$47,000	\$43,000	\$43,500
Communications and journalism	\$65,100	\$50,900	\$52,200	\$52,700	\$46,500	\$47,500
Agriculture and natural resources	\$63,200	\$46,500	\$51,600	\$46,500	\$46,500	\$43,400
Industrial arts, consumer services, and recreation	\$63,200	\$45,100	\$48,800	\$45,100	\$37,900	\$40,200
Psychology and social work	\$61,100	\$48,100	\$50,100	\$45,100	\$40,700	\$41,200
Humanities and liberal arts	\$59,900	\$45,800	\$50,600	\$49,300	\$44,800	\$45,700
Arts	\$55,900	\$42,200	\$47,400	\$45,700	\$41,300	\$43,000
Education	\$52,700	\$48,400	\$45,300	\$43,400	\$43,500	\$41,300

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce analysis of data from the US Census Bureau, *American Community Survey*, 2011-2015.

Panel Discussion

MODERATOR: SYLVIA PUENTE

Literature findings: 6 key factors

Academic
preparation for
college

High school
counseling and
other support

Navigating to
and through
college

Understanding
college
financing

The importance
of family during
the college
journey

The post-
college
landscape

Policy Directions and Educational Conditions

REBECCA VONDERLACK-NAVARRO

Systemic support to and through college



Policy directions and educational conditions



Increase exposure to careers

P-20



Enhance academic preparation

P-12



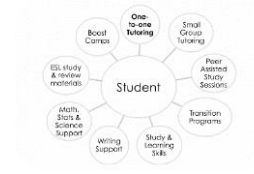
Increase financial aid information and affordability

P-20



Enhance college pathways and navigational capital

P-20



Cultivate student-ready colleges

Higher Education

Increase exposure to careers

- Learning about careers
- Having role models
- Providing students with a college course on preparing for the labor market

Increase academic preparation for college

- Ensure Latinos have access to college prep courses
- Create a seal of college readiness

Improve college pathways and navigational capital

- Require students to have a postsecondary plan
- Increase and strengthen counseling
- Create a direct college admissions program
- Scale culturally and linguistically responsive issue education on college-going

Increase information about financing college and undocumented status

- Scale culturally and linguistically responsive issue education on financing college
- Increase information and support for undocumented and mixed-status families
- Increase college affordability

Improve college pathways and navigational capital

- Create a direct college admissions program
- Streamline and improve 2- to 4-year college transfers
- Simplify process and market re-enrolling in college
- Support students planning for graduate school

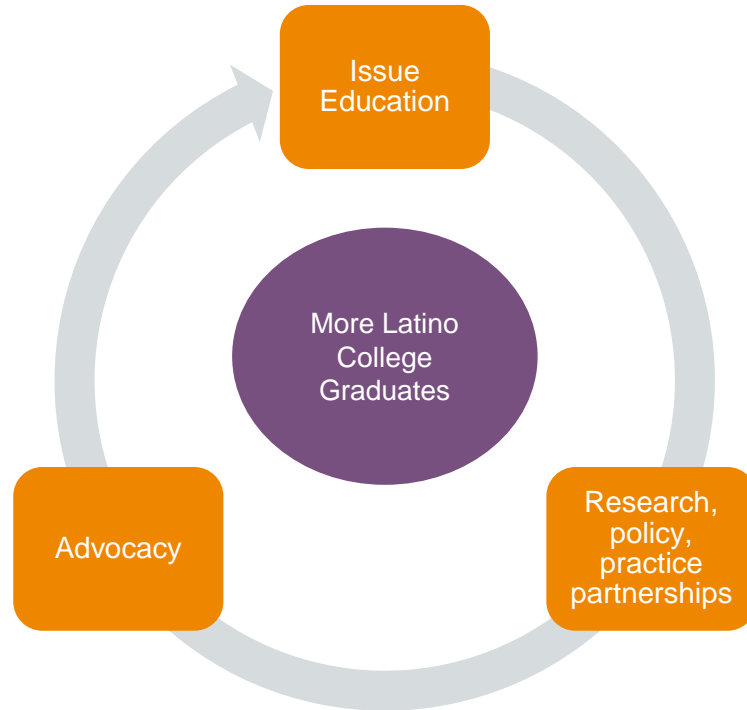
Student-ready colleges: Support the whole student

- Include families in student engagement practices
- Provide students with additional academic support
- Support students' mental well-being
- Provide wrap-around supports

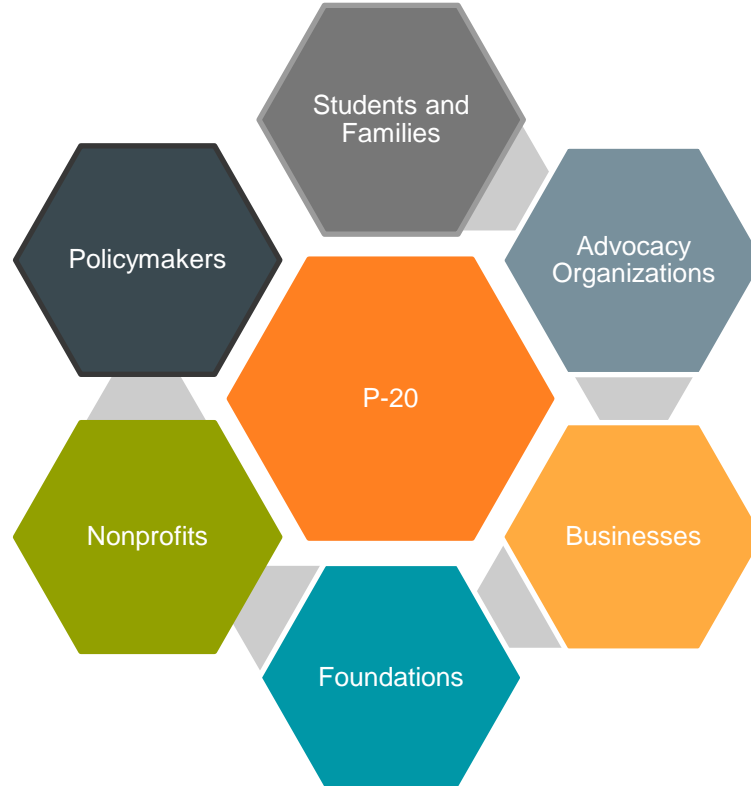
Student-ready colleges: Create more inclusive college campus environments

- Make ‘intrusive’ advising the norm
- Ensure faculty and staff receive training in DEI and how to support first-generation college students
- Increase Latino faculty and staff
- Create and administer a common campus climate survey (such as the 5Es in P-12)

Advocacy for Latino college access and completion



Partnerships to help Latinos fulfill their promise and potential



Latinos and higher education

As Latinos in higher education, the stakes are higher for us. It feels like we are not only doing this for ourselves but for our families, our home countries, and our people. Our need to succeed is great because if we don't, it feels like we will be failing not just ourselves, but our culture.

-Latino college graduate