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LATINA FACULTY AND LATINO MALE STUDENT MENTORSHIP PROCESSES

Aprendiendo y Compartiendo Juntos

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La luz de anlante es la que alumbra.

—Unknown

This quote is an old *dicho* (saying) that reminds us to take opportunities when they present themselves. Working in higher education and recognizing the role and value of opportunity and timing, we have a mentoring relationship that stresses the importance of professional opportunity, personal growth, and human connection. As a dyad, we identify different options facilitating multiple choices, maximize on promising educational and professional scenarios, and nurture a safe space to pursue them. This chapter provides an overview of Latino male representation in higher education and their challenges, the important role of mentorship, and the various elements that contribute to our personal mentorship relationship over a 10-year span. Reflecting on the authors' personal experiences of being in a mentoring relationship with each other places specific emphasis on the individual processes that facilitated the success of the dyad.

Higher education continues to demonstrate a meager trajectory for preparing Latina and Latino students to continue their education and even consider academia as a venue for their professional careers. The faculty figures in higher education for 2011 show that 84% of full-time professors were

White, 8% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 4% were Black, 3% were Hispanic, and less than 1% were American Indian/Alaska Native (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2013a). When we examine the Latina and Latino numerical representation by sex, we see that in 2011, Latino males (hereafter referred to as Latinos) held the majority of the faculty positions (52%), with a dismal total of 16,345 Latino faculty, followed by their counterparts, with only 14,986 Latina full-time faculty. By rank, there were 5,180 Latina and Latino full professors, consisting of 3,499 Latinos and 1,681 Latinas. A total of 3,437 Latinos were associate rank, and 3,692 were assistant professors, and there were 3,133 Latino male instructors, 753 lecturers, and 1,831 other instructors. Although historically males have outnumbered females in faculty positions (and the same pattern has been evident for Latinas and Latinos), a downward statistical pattern has surfaced for Latinos since 2005 (NCES, 2013b).

Latina and Latino Educational Pathways and Degree Attainment

In an educational snapshot of Latina and Latino educational progress in the educational circuit, Latinas and Latinos earned a mere 13.5% (112,211) of the 833,337 associate degrees awarded in 2009–2010. Showing greater underrepresentation with the examination of more advanced degrees in 2009–2010, Latina and Latino students earned 8.8% (140,316) of the 1.6 million baccalaureate degrees granted, 7.1% (43,535) of the 611,693 master's degrees, and 5.8% (8,085) of the 140,505 doctoral degrees, with males earning 45% of the degrees and females earning 55% (NCES, 2012). These figures underscore the consistent "disappearing act" of Latina and Latino students highlighted in the literature and prompt practitioners to understand why Latina and Latino students start with 15% representation in kindergarten (Gándara, 2009) and lose over half of their population in their efforts to navigate the system and access higher education.

The issue of Latina and Latino representation, retention, and success in education becomes even a larger concern when we examine educational progress by class, ethnicity, and sex. When the educational trajectories are examined by ethnic groups, it becomes clear that Chicana and Chicano students (Mexican American) and Puerto Rican youth are having the most difficult time navigating the system and completing their studies (Solórzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). Moreover, a persistent gap between both sexes underscores the multiplicity of the attrition within the Latina and Latino community and the various possible underlying factors that pull and push out Latina and Latino students (Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009, 2011, 2012). Specifically, although Latino male enrollment in higher education has increased, female enrollment

has increased even more rapidly, and educational figures suggest better educational attainment by Latinas, who are achieving greater strides than their male counterparts (Excelencia in Education, 2007; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

The dismal number of Latina and Latino students completing their degrees underscores the necessity to examine Latina and Latino educational pathways and experiences (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Castellanos, Gloria, & Kamimura, 2006). Although there are a handful of established works proposing theories and models for Latina and Latino academic success (Oseguera, Locks, & Vega, 2009), the educational system often still works from a Eurocentric paradigm that minimally addresses culture and multiculturalism. Selecting a culturally grounded and context-driven perspective, in this chapter we utilize the psychosociocultural (PSC) framework (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007; Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000) to examine Latina and Latino experiences and factors that enhance their educational stay and possible long-term pursuit of graduate degrees. The PSC examines the dynamic and interdependent relationships of psychological, social, and cultural constructs in understanding educational experiences and context-specific issues of Latinas and Latinos. Empirically tested with racial and ethnic minority students in higher education, the framework suggests the integration of the three dimensions (i.e., psychological, social, and cultural factors) to examine how they work cohesively with one another while considering that the factors can be identified individually but interact collectively. Moreover, it reinforces the need to understand the "dimensionality of students as whole persons" (Gloria, Castellanos, Besson, & Clark, 2014) as well as the need to explore Latina and Latino retention complexities at its various levels.

Latino Males in Education and Mentorship: *Sembrar para Cosechar* (Sow to Harvest)

Recent literature on Latinos and Latinas highlights the varying challenges both groups encounter, the similarities across groups, and the unique barriers each sex faces in their educational journeys (Gloria, Castellanos, & Orozco, 2005; Gloria, Castellanos, Scull, & Villegas, 2009; Kamimura, 2006; Morales, 2010; Sáenz & Ponjuán, 2009). Specifically, the literature clearly delineates that Latino men espouse different masculinity ideologies than other men and report more traditional gender adherence compared to that of other groups (Abreu, Goodyear, Campos, & Newcomb, 2000; Edwards & Jones, 2010).

In general, the literature on Latino males supports that this subgroup is less encouraged and has fewer resources and social connections than their female counterparts (Fischer & Good, 1994; Gloria et al., 2005; Hernandez, Cervantes, Castellanos, & Gloria, 2004). Moreover, literature on Latino males suggests they experience greater isolation and marginalization than their female counterparts experience and also indicates a consistent downward-spiraling trend that suggests less representation in higher education, which impacts college attainment, graduate education, and the pursuit of an academic career.

Despite the difficult experiences of Latino males in higher education and the consistent repeated findings of limited college satisfaction, mentorship has proven to be an effective tool to improve the current crisis and enhance the educational journeys of Latinas and Latinos (Anaya & Cole, 2001; Morales, 2010). *Mentorship* has been defined as "the act of providing wise and friendly counsel" (Redmond, 1990, p. 188) and has been a traditional practice of academia and the development of scholars. Mentorship includes various components ranging from assisting with the development of basic scholarly skills to emotional and social support in the process where students may need assistance to navigate their education or may lack knowledge about the process (Hill, 1989; Johnson, 2007; Redmond, 1990). Moreover, when a good working relationship is developed, this dyad is also known to increase retention, student integration, academic performance, and student satisfaction (Gloria et al., 2014; Santos & Reigadas, 2002).

Johnson (2007), however, reminded us that it is uncommon for males to have opposite-sex mentors but not uncommon for females. When opposite-sex mentorship dyads form, across-sex mentorship challenges and obstacles can arise (e.g., power issues, sexual attraction, and respect issues). In particular, female faculty have been noted for providing more psychological help than their male counterparts, who focus on instrumental help (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). Focusing on multicultural and cross-cultural dyads, Anaya and Cole (2001) emphasized that race is a salient factor to mentorship dynamics, whereas Davidson and Foster-Johnson (2001) cautioned that cross-cultural dyads potentially experience conflict with communication styles, cultural values, and subtle racial dynamics.

Examining literature on Latina and Latino mentorship by sex, Orozco (2003) highlighted the impact of mentorship on her educational advancement. Through mentorship, she learned organizational values, the key players in the process, and specific strategies on how to navigate her challenges. Similarly, Morales (2010) expressed "the legitimization of hope" for Latino males through a mentorship program and reported that mentors provided valuable social capital, academic validation, and motivation.

Examining the educational social process by sex, Vera Sanchez (2006) indicated that his mentors and peers were catalysts for his success. A positive support system reinforced the possibility of experiencing "intelligence as a masculine trait" (p. 237) and the validation that learning does not have to emasculate a male student. In a similar way, Quijada (2006) reflected on his doctoral experiences and recalled the role of his mentor, who took interest in his personal and professional goals and provided emotional support and academic guidance. Positive mentorship experiences reinforce Latino male academic identities and propel their satisfaction with the system, reinforcing their comfort with their studies while enhancing their overall satisfaction through an environment that fosters critical dialogue, academic exploration, and professional validation (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007). Although a handful of literature addresses some of the effective components to mentoring Latina and Latino students in academia with specific attention placed on the Latino male processes in certain research, minimal work has focused on the processes of the Latina faculty and Latino male student dyad and their interactions, factors that contribute to this important dyad, and ways to facilitate more of these types of relationships.

Mentee Experiences: *Navegando Juntos* (Navigating Together)

I learned about standing in line when I started kindergarten, and by the time I was about to finish college, I realized I waited in line for two reasons: out of necessity and out of desire. One of my least favorite places to wait in line is at the DMV: It's hot and stuffy from always being at maximum occupancy, you can't sit down, you wait in a line for a person to tell you which line you need to wait in, and you can even make an appointment to wait in line. I wait in this line out of necessity. Conversely, taking an hour trip from Harlem to Greenwich Village and waiting in line in the freezing cold or even in the humidity of summer just for a few moments to smell and indulge in the rich sweetness of fresh baked, warm cupcakes from Magnolia Bakery is purely desire. The summer of my senior year, I made the decision to go to graduate school, but I felt like I was at the DMV at 15 minutes before closing. I had no appointment, was outside in a line around the corner, couldn't see the front door, and didn't even know what I needed to do to get a driver's license. At the end of that summer, I met Dr. Jeanett Castellanos (I nicknamed her Dr. C), who turned, what seemed to me at the time, an insurmountable challenge of preparing and applying for graduate school into a journey of opportunity. She turned the DMV into Magnolia Bakery.

In high school, the one person I went to for advice on college (my counselor) told me I wasn't college material and I had to figure it out myself.

Four years later, I was looking at a similar situation, trying to find my way to graduate school. I was part of the Community Service Internship Program (CSIP) at the University of California, Irvine (UCI), and as a part of the program we were asked to select a mentor. I reflected on my time at UCI and thought about a few different individuals who had served as advocates for my educational experience throughout my undergraduate education. I grew up in the barrio, where learning whom to trust could mean the difference between life and death. There weren't many people I could trust at UCI. Selecting a mentor to me was about finding someone I could trust, someone who wouldn't let me fail.

During the fall quarter, I was taking a course taught by Dr. C, and we met weekly during office hours to get my graduate school applications in order. Of all the courses I had taken up to that point, she was the most demanding professor at UCI, and she challenged me to work harder than I ever had. I developed a great amount of respect for her not only because of all she had accomplished at such an early age but also, more important, because of the expectations she placed on her students. We were expected to perform academically as graduate students. Weighing all of these observations and experiences, I asked Dr. C to be my mentor as a part of CSIP. I took a lot of miscalculated risks in college; however, choosing Dr. C as my mentor was a process of thoughtful considerations.

Kram (1983, 1985) described four phases of a mentoring relationship: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. The initiation phase was a very important aspect of our relationship because in addition to the aforementioned factors, I also considered our shared precollege experiences, our similar experiences with ethnic identity formation, our lack of a generation gap, and the tone of our discussions. There was a lot of my life that I did not need to explain because of all our shared experiences. I mention "tone of our discussions" because I did not need to change my language; change my accent; change my vocabulary; or, most important, change who I was. Our dialogues were about my future; our shared research interests; and learning together by exploring alternative perspectives on the Latino pathway to the PhD, which was the most significant gap between us.

The cultivation phase of our relationship was strengthened as Dr. C learned how to develop my academic abilities. Together, we explored my PSC identity as I readied for graduate school. Thinking back, this was the first time I had really talked with someone, faculty or administrator, about my experiences growing up and connecting them to how and who I was as a student, as a person. Our weekly *pláticas* (conversations) became consistently a safe place for discussing the connections of complex theories with real-life situations. These intellectual *pláticas* became ground zero for building and

exploring the impact of race on the educational paths of students of color, mainly Latinos.

As a mixed-race (Asian, Latino, European) student, I had not explored most aspects of my racial identities, and these dialogues were instrumental in my own development as a Chicano. I had always struggled with being accepted in a single-race group in general and was often called a "mutt" growing up. Being Latino Mexicano Chicano was no different: I was told I was not Mexican enough and didn't speak Spanish enough, and especially because I had an Okinawan surname, I was not easily categorized as Chicano by others. Dr. C, unlike other Latinos who had been role models but struggled as mentors, did not question or define me by my racial background, my grades, or my involvement on campus.

As the older brother of a sister, I grew up with the expectation that I always had to know what to do and who to be and to have all the answers. In reality, I was lost and stressed to find my way. In my path, race/ethnicity was only one aspect influencing my journey: I was also facing the challenge to mature as a partner and as a father of a three-month-old while changing majors as a fifth-year senior. Setting my goals on graduate school and possible career paths available with a graduate degree with no understanding of research compounded the situation. Gender did not play a role in the selection of Dr. C as my mentor, but it did play the role in her position of *hermana mayor* (older sister) because of our close proximity in age. This fact made it easier for me to trust that she could relate to my experience and that she had gone through it just five years earlier at UCI. Dr. C shared her own challenges and path as I experienced doubt in my abilities to achieve academically.

Coming out of high school, I was fighting against the system, trying not to become a victim of my environment and the institutional discrimination and racism practiced by counselors and teachers in our educational system. Choosing Dr. C as my mentor facilitated balance between my past and my future. Up to that point, in every way possible, others were defining my challenges and obstacles; Dr. C understood that what I needed was a way to navigate these barriers. Mentorship can be described as a relationship that maintains equilibrium between challenges and support (Sanford, 1967).

Mentee Perceptions of a Latina Mentor

In the mentorship dyad, Dr. C provided guardrails to my undergraduate experience, because of our shared experiences, and she was able to anticipate and guide my path. For example, I remember being convinced that I was going

to law school. Dr. C, knowing my interests in educational equity, encouraged me to consider applying to master's programs in education. Six months later, I received an acceptance letter from Teachers College at Columbia University and knew that I had a mentor who kept me on the path. Since then she has continued to affirm her role by providing publishing opportunities, engaging in new conversations on issues facing our students and the academy, and managing our administrative roles within our various educational environments.

Many times thinking about how to describe mentorship in higher education, I had this picture of a winding road to the top of a mountain with warning signs along the path: curvy road ahead, falling rocks, slow down, or turn lights on. Mentors put up the signs or help us see them. Although not literally translated, the messages are the same: Mentors are directional. For the past 11 years, I have been on a career track and trajectory that has offered little time for reflection on the impact of this relationship. Dr. C (now Jeanett or *hermana*) and I have talked many times about getting involved in professional associations, serving the community, working with students, being a mentor while being mentored, and collaborating with colleagues. At the core of my work, mentorship has been a foundational value for success.

The scarcity of the female mentor–male protégé mentorship was described by O'Neill and Blake-Beard (2002) as a reflection of complex organizational, social, and gender power dynamics. The current demographics of higher education have provided a critical mass of females within the organizational structure to serve as mentors. While I was in college, the chancellor, dean of students, assistant vice chancellor, director of student academic advancement services (where I was a part of Summer Bridge and Student Support Services), and ombudsmen were all female. Leadership at the highest level within our institution was female and, for the time, deconstructed the power paradigm of gender within the organization.

Furthermore, I viewed college as a continuation of my K–12 education and bought into the socially constructed perception that by nature educational institutions were female dominant. Under this paradigm, I embraced the *hermana* connection to Dr. C, which in all instances sustained *respeto* (respect). It was not until after I had left for graduate school that I realized the influential nature of gender and the underrepresentation of females in leadership positions and, more specifically, women of color.

The complexity of gender within my mentoring experience is intimately connected to strong female influences in my life, namely, my mom. However, as I developed my own sense of a mixed-race identity, my mom was also learning what it meant to be a mixed-race Latina. Inevitably, given the role of culture and ethnic identity in the process, Blake-Beard (2009) reminded us, "Within mentoring relationships, understanding the difference between

cultural influence and individual attributes may provide critical guidance to a mentor" (p. 17).

In many ways, my mom served as my first female mentor. Her focus was clearly on guiding and developing my individual attributes but did not provide a space to explore the complexities of multiple cultural influences while growing up. Throughout graduate school, I have had three more females serve as both academic and professional mentors: Dr. L. Lee Knefelkamp from Teachers College, Columbia University, and Dr. Sylvia Hurtado and Gloria Taylor from the University of Michigan. In each instance, these female mentors understood how to provide a space that facilitated ethnic identity exploration through theory, practice, and dialogue.

The mentorship dyad between me and Jeanett is still a foundational aspect of our relationship and continues to develop and organically redefine itself. It has matured through periods of separation (Kram, 1983, 1985) through graduate school, which opened new opportunities to be mentored by others and coincidentally by females. The aforementioned women also became a source of sustainability for me within the academy because of their own diverse backgrounds. An important similarity between all of them is that when you became a mentee, you also became a part of a larger family of students mentored by them.

One of the most impactful lessons from this mentoring relationship was the development and responsibility of being a part of an academic family: a family of mentors and mentees. This idea was passed on to me by Dr. Shirley Hune about building capacity for the academic community of color, which is an adaptation of a Jacob Miller song: "Each one, teach one; each one, reach one." The importance of mentoring others must be a constant priority and integrated into our daily practice.

Faculty Experience: *Nuestra Próxima Generación* (Our Next Generation)

Being a product of an exemplary mentorship relationship that encompassed strong family ties, established social networks, and direct guidance, I made student interactions a central component of my career in academia. As a Latina lecturer at a research-extensive institution who started in the late 1990s, I unfortunately witnessed the dismal numbers of Latinas and Latinos in the educational pipeline, and the persistent dwindling numbers of Latino males became more evident as years passed.

A Latina of Cuban descent (with a Mexican stepfather) growing up in southeast Los Angeles with close and personal encounters with oppression and marginalization, I had a clear understanding of how my gender,

ethnicity, and working-class background impacted my educational experiences, opportunities, and realities. Furthermore, my mentor—an African American male (Dr. Joseph L. White) who was part of the Black movement and the early installation of Early Academic Outreach Programs in California—infused the importance of cultural awareness; cultural competence; and the recruitment, retention, and racial/ethnic minority student satisfaction in my academic blueprint early on in my career.

Working at my alma mater and having numerous social contacts across campus upon my arrival to UCI facilitated a smoother transition to create academic family—interpersonal academic relationships that parallel family social systems (Castellanos & Gloria, 2007) that would facilitate a pipeline of resources and opportunities for racial/ethnic minority students navigating the system. Having my mentor serve as an active emeritus faculty on campus and being able to rely on over four additional top administrators who had also mentored me made it easier to identify connections and key players for incoming students to solicit when they needed assistance at various levels of the campus.

As a Latina mentor, I have taken the active role to nurture, motivate, and inspire my students. Growing up in a refugee family, I developed a natural inclination for fostering positive attitudes and creating alternative solutions in life. Consequently, I often identify various solutions to my students' educational challenges and different ways to perceive their current experiences. In particular, I often serve as a life coach, helping my mentees get rid of their internal fears and internalized stereotypes while offering a safe space for open dialogue and communication. With respect and *confianza* (trust), I personally challenge their attitudes and beliefs and help them ground their values. Knowing their background, however, and understanding many of their challenges, I pace the interactions, the disclosures, and the heated dialogues step-by-step (*paso a paso*) to ensure my students are growing from the relationship and understanding their academic and personal lessons. Through these disclosures and interactions, I help them recognize their power within and eliminate the surmounting fear of approaching problems head-on.

As I was in my mid-20s and Latina and Mark was Latino, we shared similar struggles, a common language, histories, and similar oppressions. Espousing *respeto* (respect) throughout our encounters, we still shared an uncommon experience in comparison to most faculty–student interactions. Eliminating the generational gap and our cultural familiarity facilitated a space to share common stories and unique challenges, practicing our common values of *personalismo* (personalism), *confianza* (trust), *simpatia* (harmony), and *familismo* (family). Throughout our *encuentros* (encounters) we were natural, genuine, and filled with *cariño* (care) and acceptance. Viewing Mark as a younger

brother, I championed for his greatest success, and I put forth every effort to facilitate his educational dream. Throughout our meetings, we discussed campus climate, discrimination, cultural relations, and the means to improve the current status of racial/ethnic minorities in higher education.

Given Mark's multiracial background and my own cultural mixed heritage (i.e., Cuban American with African roots and a Mexican male figure in my home), it was natural to address social justice for the greater whole and not just Latinas and Latinos. In my relationship with Mark, I recall hearing stories about his grandfather in the fields and his mother's journey of ethnic identity and its impression on Mark and his own identity. Moreover, it was Mark's abilities to connect his realities and struggles to those of his peers that often prompted a research question, a direction for community service, or a potential consideration for a future professional pursuit. These many positive and exploratory *momentos* (moments) ignited my passion to teach and mentor while validating and reinforcing my mentee's professional, cultural, and social identities. Furthermore, these moments reminded me that my students not only were searching for graduate school placements and jobs ("Un buen trabajo no era el *único* resultado que buscaba" ["A good job wasn't the *only* result I wanted"]) but also needed to create a professional pathway that would lead them to becoming community leaders and scholars invested in social issues with a deep understanding of *La Lucha* (historical struggles) and community responsibility.

Reflecting on my experiences within the mentorship relationship, I see there are various benefits to having Latina and Latino mentees, particularly Mark. Throughout our relationship, I often found myself addressing multicultural issues and instilling the importance of cultural awareness, learning, and understanding. In particular, I instilled the value of multicultural research and scholarship while Mark's passion and interest in our community propelled me to learn more about various racial/ethnic minority communities' needs and histories. Mentoring Mark (who identified as a Latino multicultural multiracial male) made the topic culture central to our conversations. Consequently, Mark's passion for minority communities reinforced the importance of my own interests in helping underrepresented communities, while his insights resulting from community exchanges furthered my understanding of his realities, our communities, and the value of community and culture-specific research. These exchanges underscored the notion that we had a common purpose (*Tenemos un propósito juntos*) and a collaborative task to achieve as mentee and mentor, educators, and community leaders.

Recognizing the value of mentoring racial minority students and despite my enthusiasm to mentor all, my interactions with students often reminded me that the selection of a mentee is one that happens naturally and cannot be

forced. There are specific elements necessary for a working mentorship relationship. Students must reciprocate in the relationship, have a positive attitude, and respect their faculty. Working close to 16 years in academia, I have come across entitled students who believe you must do what they want and when they want it. In the past, I would simply become upset and work with these students despite their disrespect. Today, I have more respect for myself and do not tolerate bad attitudes and self-absorbed students. Therefore, part of the mentee/protégé selection is based on students' community investment, values of cultural competency, and mutual interests in areas of psychology and education. The student must demonstrate a commitment to learn and share the dream to give back to a community. Matches are not instant and automatic but develop over time and through long-term interactions.

Although the mentorship relationship with Mark has many benefits and I have found it extremely rewarding, the relationship still introduced multiple challenges. Professionally, given the time in my career, I questioned my abilities to train a young scholar and the effectiveness of my mentorship. Because I was starting my profession and Mark was one of my first mentees, there was no blueprint to follow or how-to book to instruct my mentorship. The possibility of misdirecting him occasionally stopped me in my tracks, but I would confer with his other mentors (some who were my mentors) to cross-reference our advice and perspectives. Hence, it was through the *multigenerational mentorship model* facilitated through collaboration and communication that I gained confidence in the mentorship process and learned how to most effectively guide my mentees. Moreover, I reinforced a multilayered mentorship paradigm where Mark learned various styles of mentorship by having multiple mentors (all Latino and Latina colleagues, most of whom were male in high positions at the university) and received varying viewpoints about a given matter. These practices maximized Mark's experiences, resources, and opportunities.

Another significant challenge to the mentoring dyad included having to see Mark experience a hostile campus climate and discrimination and need to prove himself or debunk stereotypes. For example, it was often that Mark came to the office sharing stories about microaggressions he encountered (e.g., being tokenized in the classroom, being questioned on commitment to his community). In fact, these experiences persisted in graduate school, where one professor actually expressed surprise once he realized Mark was the best writer in a group where he was the only minority. Consistently, I was invested in his well-being and academic success and countered these invalidations. It was emotionally challenging to witness his educational barriers and see him personally struggle with the environment. Yet, I worked by his side to motivate and remind him of his abilities and to encourage him to not lose sight of

his long-term educational and professional goals. In particular, I made myself available on the phone when he left for graduate school and even saw him during holiday breaks. Understanding the role of a student's motivation in academics and the value of social support, I consistently incorporated "*como no*" (why not?) talks to debunk any internalized stereotypes of his potential and the possibility of his future. Examples of these talks encompass topics of "why not": Why not make it despite the challenges, why not show them wrong, why not exceed their expectations, why not study harder, why not include family, why not be proud of your roots, and why not stay in education?

Navigating masculine expectations and Mark's need to prove himself as an accomplished male in his community was another challenge we encountered when we explored the possibility of graduate school and not a high-paying job following graduation. The misconception of *el niño estudioso* (the studious boy) reading books and not working with his hands created cultural distress for Mark and an internal struggle that was silent but occasionally shared. As the oldest in the family with a younger sister, he felt pressure to finish his degree and make money. Moreover, the distance to attend graduate school (i.e., Michigan) only reinforced his familial obligations and surfaced feelings of guilt and abandonment from his family for considering studying out of state. The value of *familismo* (family) consistently kept family as a central part of our discussions while we explored the means of integrating their involvement in the process. Given Mark's unique circumstances as a first-generation Latino male, I often facilitated academic family for him to identify other peers with the same educational circumstances and reminded him of the long-term benefits of his advanced degree. Moreover, we problem solved his most pressing issues and identified resources or contacts to enhance his current educational experiences.

Placement in a top graduate master's degree program—and later a doctoral program—also raised unique challenges for a student who knew very little about graduate education, its demands, and academe's political culture. To prepare him for his educational journey, I suggested that Mark complete the five educational pillars (i.e., academics, research, practical experience, leadership, and community service). These experiences required Mark to do a range of activities in his field while being integrated into the UCI community and building social and leadership skills. Through the pillars, he was required to attain knowledge of his selected field while attaining practical experience through internships and field placements that expanded his understanding of his future profession and equipped him for graduate school expectations and discussions. The pillars enhanced Mark's educational self-efficacy, reinforced cocurricular involvement, and helped shape his professional and scholarship identity through research and hands-on activities that illustrated the connection between theory and practice.

Along with the pillars, constant checks and balances occurred to ensure that Mark's confidence and motivation remained strong. His other mentors and I explained the expectations of graduate school and shared our own stories for reflection and understanding. Similarly, I emphasized the importance of including family in the process and explaining the value of an advanced degree to his important social support system. Regarding culture, we discussed Mark's impressions of the existence of prejudice in the education system and ways to navigate these encounters. For example, we addressed the value of finding a mentor in his new institution, the role of maintaining respect toward others even though he often felt disrespected, and the multiple possible consequences of abrupt reactions in a hostile environment. Our discussions also centered around developing academic skills, multiple options, academic resources, and emotional support systems to help sustain him through his educational processes and difficult experiences (e.g., feeling marginalized, isolated, and undervalued). Last, a critical and underlying success factor in Mark's progress at the doctoral level was his placement in a strong program with a good Latina mentor who advocated and guided Mark throughout his doctoral education. Knowing his advisor's work and her own research on cultural integration and campus climate, I knew she would serve as an excellent mentor and advisor for Mark. Framing the placement from an academic family perspective, I feel sending Mark to work with Dr. Sylvia Hurtado was like passing down a young son or brother to a sister or *comadre*.

Though I could believe I have been an exemplary mentor with no failed mentorship encounters, this viewpoint would be naïve and shortsighted. Reflecting on various other mentees whom I have sought to train and guide, I see that not all students are open to the learning experience and the professional relationship. Clearly stated, mentorship is not a guaranteed fit. Mentorship requires time, investment, and commitment. Students must have the desire to learn and persist. It is more than weekly conversations about campus climate and family. Although we do address PSC elements of my mentees' educational journeys, my students are simultaneously responsible for their work and academic performance. I expect weekly research progress, engagement in the classroom, preparation for our meetings, leadership in the community, advocacy, and a deep understanding of existentialism. For example, my students are given readings written by other faculty of color to attain a deep understanding of the role of culture in research. They are required to do community service hours for low-income communities (e.g., painting houses for the poor, volunteering for an education conference for youth going to college, serving at a soup kitchen). The key is that students learn the needs of the community and their role in assisting the social problem while

identifying their personal meaning in the process and purpose of existence. Challenging Mark to see the overlap between education and his community only propelled him.

Over the course of our relationship, I have learned that mentorship includes multiple dimensions of support that cannot be restricted to simply practical professional knowledge or emotional support. Although a combination of the two has shown to be most effective, I also learned that my mentorship with Mark did not follow the common mentorship parameters ascribed by higher education. Given that I was in a system where students were primarily numbers for some, I would often remind myself, *Son mas que estudiantes* (they are more than students); they are people with personal needs. Consequently, Mark's well-being, means of coping, social support, family, and community were always at the root of our exchanges.

Most mentoring relations are primarily established for academic progress and professional development, and this model included additional dimensions of life purpose, human connection, meaningfulness, community leadership, and service. Although the academic elements were certainly critical and central to our relationship, the existential element of Mark's realities (e.g., his life purpose) never escaped my assessment of the situation and therefore became a pivotal component of our mentorship process. In the center of our encounters, we often questioned why we are granted opportunities and what we must do with them. I challenged Mark on why he wanted the degree, what he planned to do with it, and what benefits he planned to give to others as a result of his leadership. What would be his legacy after 40 years of service?

As I developed a strong investment in Mark's academic and personal progress, the importance of maintaining contact in the process was clear. Throughout the years, it was essential to be flexible with our time; to be open to changes in the plans; and, most important, to keep informed of his personal wellness as he navigated his professional goals. Ongoing contact, although sporadic at times, was kept, and the value of "checking in" was reinforced as he moved through the system, attained his first job, and balanced his personal life demands. Clearly, mentorship takes time by both parties and involves one's energies and genuine interest in the wellness and progress of the mentee. Today, it is the *confianza*/trust, *cariño*/affection, and established rapport that have grown through the years that facilitate our professional relationship and reinforce the processes of being colleagues and feeling like *familia* while still providing mentorship.

Equally important in this Latina and Latino mentorship relationship was being able to counter colleagues' negative perceptions of my overinvestment in students. Having confidence in one's practices and recognizing that

what works for one group may not work as well (*no somos todos iguales*; we are not all the same) for another is critical in establishing culturally relevant and effective mentoring relations. I recall someone asking, "Why spend so much time on these students when you can be writing an article?" Today, some of my initial mentees (who have now completed their degrees) work as colleagues with me, forwarding the vision of social progress. In my perspective, the traditional mentorship model of short exchanges or no contact after graduation would not have been as effective for Mark in his continued journey through his advanced degree and his continued progress in the profession. Moreover, the impact we are making as colleagues (and he is making as a professional) may not have been possible without the value of community responsibility established early in our professional relationship.

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