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Higher Education Marketing to the Hispanic Student Population

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Introduction

The Hispanic population in the United States has become the largest and fastest growing minority group in the country. The United States Census Bureau reported the Hispanic population grew 50% from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000. After the 2010 census, a large increase was again reported, at 43% to 50.5 million (United States). These growth rates indicate a unique and important consumer target for corporations across the country.

Higher education entities are not left out of this equation. As these numbers rise, so too does the need to educate the Hispanic population to a higher degree. Pew Hispanic projects that by the year 2050, 31% of the United States' population aged 18-64 will be made up by Hispanic residents (See Figures 1 and 2 Below). This projected figure increases to 35% of the population aged 17 and younger (US. Population Projections). While this statistic is fundamental in continuing the "melting-pot" tradition of the United States, there exists a disparity between the education level of the Hispanic population versus the education level of the United States population as a whole. If the United States is to maintain its current education level, the government along with higher education institutions must take action to promote further education amongst the Hispanic population and attract them to their organizations.

Figure 1

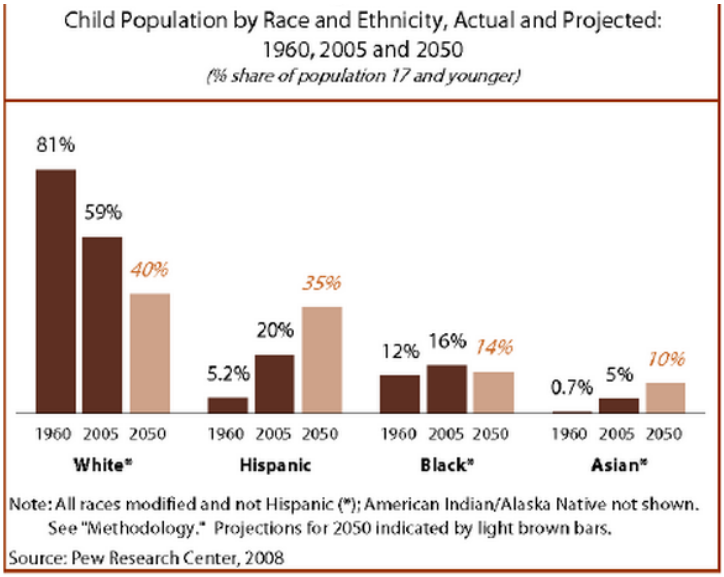
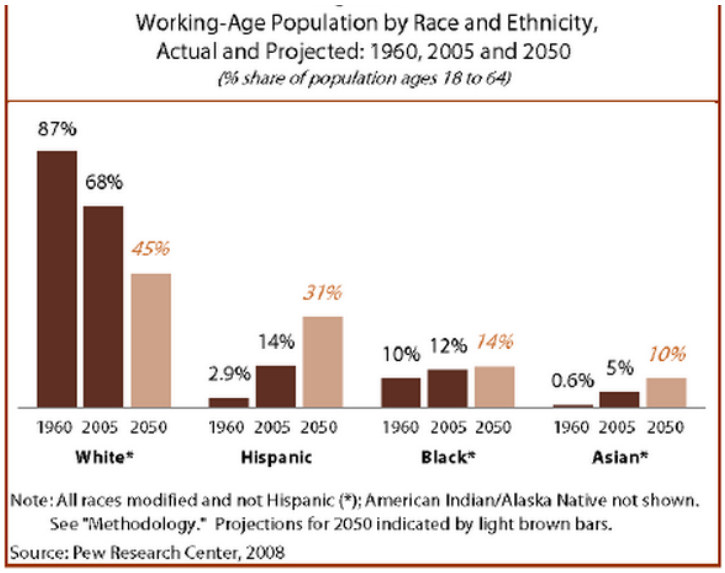


Figure 2



Some progress has been made towards increasing education amongst Hispanics. Pew Hispanic reports that the share of young Hispanics enrolled in college rose from 13% in 1972 to 32% in 2010. Additionally, it was reported that the number of Hispanic high school graduates enrolled in college increased from 39% in 2009 to 44% in 2010 (Hispanic College Enrollment). While these numbers are promising, some legal issues involving affirmative action impede direct methods with which to ensure an increasingly diverse population on college campuses. Other factors prohibiting improvements in this area include financial burdens, social barriers, and lack of a general understanding of the higher education system in the United States.

This thesis discussion will address characteristics of the Hispanic population in the United States of America, explore the importance of a diverse student population including Hispanic students on a college or university campus, evaluate the competitiveness University of New Hampshire's current situation with regard to Hispanic students, and recommend methods through which the University of New Hampshire can improve its approach in marketing its services to Hispanic students.

Hispanic Culture

Targeting the Hispanic population has provided a challenge for marketers to learn about the Hispanic culture, values, ethics, behaviors, and other factors that influence the effectiveness of advertisements. In approaching the growing population of Hispanics in the United States, higher education institutions must evaluate these different characteristics and learn from successful Hispanic marketing campaigns in order to attract Hispanic students to their campuses. In order to draw a more diverse student body including Hispanic students, the University of New Hampshire must develop a relationship with these students on a more personal basis and show them how they can be successful in higher education. Understanding the intricacies within the Hispanic population is crucial in making these efforts a success.

There are several major differences in culture between Hispanics and the typical United States citizen which play a key role in college recruiting. First, Hispanics are collectivists, meaning they are group or family oriented and value success of a group rather than individually. In this way, many Hispanic students may struggle in separating from their families in order to attend college. Additionally, Hispanic students will yearn for a sense of community on a college campus that may be difficult to find if diversity and inclusion is not fostered. Family members may play a key role in a student's school selection. It is important to provide integrated marketing communications to both Hispanic students and their families in order to deliver a message successfully.

Hispanics also value face-to-face interpersonal interaction more than the typical United States citizen. Higher education institutions must acknowledge this in their efforts to deliver effective marketing messages to students. A more personalized approach will be better accepted

than methods such as mass emails or general statements on a website. For example, student testimonials placed on a prospective student site may make the Hispanic student feel more at ease and deliver a more personal connection for them. Additionally, providing interactive resources such as chat features on a prospective student site would help draw students in. While it is difficult to deliver the true face-to-face personal interaction that many Hispanic students desire, adding personal features such as these will help a college or university to develop a closer and more positive bond between the student and the institution's brand.

The Hispanic population is also more deeply emotional than other population segments. The excitement and anxiety that comes along with beginning a journey through higher education may be more intense than that which is experienced in a typical United States family. Establishing a true emotional bond with the University of New Hampshire and making students and their families aware of the great successes possible through the school is crucial in attracting the Hispanic segment. In this way, it is important for the University of New Hampshire to market to the emotions of both parents and students when working to draw in the Hispanic population. This type of emotional connection can be established through the types of interpersonal interactions described above and will be further addressed in the Recommendations section of this report.

Collectiveness, interpersonal interaction, and emotional bonds are important in marketing to the growing number of Hispanics in the United States; however the challenge becomes more complicated. As segmentation is crucial in marketing strategy in order to convey the right message to the right group of people, it is also important within the Hispanic market. Marketers must create effective strategies to target the differing segments that exist within the Hispanic

population using ethnic and cultural values as cues (Villarreal, 1). These different segments include Hispanics who identify with Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central America, South America and Spain. Each of these groups possesses different traits which marketers need to pay close attention to in designing marketing plans to target them successfully.

For example, Hispanics who identify with Mexico are the largest Hispanic group in the United States. They identify strongly with their Mexican root, and are very proud of their heritage. They are young, collectivist, have medium income, larger households, and are typically practice the Catholic religion. Mexicans typically are warm, passionate, and quieter than other Hispanic groups.

The second largest group of Hispanics in the United States is Puerto Ricans. Many Puerto Ricans are undecided about feelings towards their relationship with the United States. Puerto Ricans are of the lowest socioeconomic status among Hispanics, and typically reside along the East Coast in states such as New Jersey, New York, and Florida. Puerto Ricans are typically loud, fun, emotional, and passionate.

Cubans are the third largest Hispanic group residing in the United States. Cubans are considered war refugees and are typically wealthier, older, professionals. Their decisions are typically more high involvement than other Hispanic groups as they are more intellectual. Additionally, Cubans are less collectivist and more individualistic when compared to other Hispanic groups in the United States.

These three groups categorize the largest subgroups of Hispanic culture that exist in the United States. However, there exist countless others which must be taken into account. For the

purpose of this research and thesis discussion, “Hispanic” will encompass those people from the following regions: Spain, Mexico, Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, or other Spanish speaking regions of the globe.

A focus on Hispanic origin and Hispanic cultural values is crucial in developing a sense of trust between Hispanic consumers and a higher education institution. It is also important to learn from Hispanic marketing campaigns from the past, and to improve upon these efforts with the new knowledge and techniques that are available today. The Hispanic market in the United States is growing at about 12% each year. As this growth continues, Hispanics in the United States will have great influence in society. Providing students with an educational environment that includes a Hispanic influence is critical in producing the best quality graduates.

Hispanics in Higher Education

According to the Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, Hispanics are the fastest growing minority in regard to enrollment in grades K-12. From the year 2000 to 2005, Hispanic enrollment in these grades increased by 20%, while white enrollment actually decreased by 11% (Ortiz). While this growth trend remains to be seen through today, Hispanic enrollment in higher education institutions still trails that of any other major demographic group.

In 2010, Pew Hispanic reported that 31.9% of Hispanics aged 18-24 were enrolled in higher education institutions. This number was 43.3% for white students, 38.0% for African American

students, and 62.2% for Asian students (Hispanic College Enrollment). The lagging enrollment from Hispanic students could be due to a number of factors including limited financial resources, limited access to education involving the English language, and limited knowledge of the United States higher education system.

A number of different solutions have emerged to address these enrollment barriers. In regards to funding, scholarship programming has become a major source of financial support for underrepresented students. Programs such as the McNair Scholars at the University of New Hampshire aid qualified minority and underreperesented students in funding their college educations. Without these types of resources many very well qualified students would not have toe ability to continue their education, and ultimately may not reach their full potential. The government and higher education institutions must work together to make these types of programs more available to students across the country to increase their chances of achieving a degree in higher education.

In discussing limited access to education involving the English language, many programs now exist which are geared towards preparing students to begin studying at a higher education institution. One such program, called Upward Bound, offers its services to high school students whose families have low-income and who are first generation higher education students. The program, funded by the United States government, is available to higher education institutions, local education agencies, non-profit organizations, and state education agencies. The program funds additional academic instruction in subjects such as mathematics, literature, and foreign languages, and provides assistance to students with limited English proficiency. The program also provides students with information about Federal Student Financial Aid and guidance about

entering into postsecondary education. Programs such as Upward Bound provide crucial resources to Hispanic students who would otherwise be unprepared to continue their education after high school.

While programs such as Upward Bound do provide information about the higher education system in the United States, it is imperative that efforts to convey this information to students and their families be improved. Often students are deterred from continuing their education simply because they do not know enough about how the enrollment and payment processes occur. As mentioned earlier in this report, Hispanics value community and family more than the average United States citizen. This means that Hispanic students will look more to their family members for guidance in their educational experiences and decisions. However, often Hispanic parents did not complete a higher education degree, and therefore are less knowledgeable about how the system works and which opportunities are available. In a research study conducted in 1996, it was found that 99% of Hispanic parents think that higher education is important (De La Luz, 17). However, families are unaware of opportunities such as funding and programs like Upward Bound, which could facilitate the continued education of their children. Parents of these Hispanic students must be educated about the opportunities that exist in order to encourage Hispanic students to take advantage of these opportunities.

While enrollment remains an issue, Hispanic students also trail behind other demographic groups in regard to completion rates. In further Pew Hispanic research, it was reported that 13% of all Hispanics aged 25-29 had completed at least a bachelor's degree. This number was 39% for whites, 19% for African Americans, and 53% for Asians (Hispanic College Enrollment).

Much of the lagging completion rates from Hispanic students could stem from issues such as delayed starts, community college as a first option, part-time schooling, insufficient academic preparation, prejudice and discrimination, financial problems, and complicated family life.

Various philosophies exist for solving the problem of Hispanic student retention and completion in higher education. Community based methods are a population solution which many institutions have implemented. Community based methods include promoting diverse community building through student housing and hosting multi-cultural events which promote bonds among diverse students. These methods would allow Hispanic students to share their culture with other community members in a structured but relaxed environment. Witnessing other community members' excitement or interest about the Hispanic culture could make the Hispanic students feel more at ease and more comfortable in a new setting such as a higher education institution.

Another method for improving retention and completion involves support services such as first-year interest groups, tutoring, and mentoring. First-year interest groups help students become active in the community more quickly. These groups allow them to meet new people and form bonds with community members who can serve as a support system throughout the student's time on campus. Dedicated tutoring services supporting students who may need extra help in achieving success become essential in ensuring the completion of higher education. Without this type of support system, some Hispanic students may become overwhelmed and discontinue their education. Similarly, mentoring programs would allow Hispanic students to overcome overwhelming situations they may encounter while on campus such as language

barriers and cultural differences. Mentors can offer extra guidance and support for those students who may otherwise discontinue their education.

Financial support is also crucial in ensuring retention and completion. Scholarship programs offer both financial and emotional support for Hispanic students. Institutions can offer scholarship programs solely available to the Hispanic population. The program would automatically form a support group of like-minded individuals who can share successes, failures, concerns, and goals for the future. This ability to interact and share ideas with others will improve the students' satisfaction with their lives in higher education. Additionally, the financial support that comes along with a scholarship program without question would ease the burden that many Hispanic students and their families must take on in order to pay their way to a higher education degree. Work study opportunities also aid students in paying their way through higher education. Educating students about available work study opportunities is essential, as often this option goes unnoticed. The financial support that work study positions provide can truly benefit a student in their ability to live comfortably while attending school.

While all of the above mentioned methods should be part of an integrated effort across campuses to improve retention and completion, one of the most popular methods at this time is culturally responsive teaching, or CRT. CRT is carried out on the level of the classroom. Professors using CRT choose to integrate diverse cultural topics into their course curriculum. For example, an economics professor might assign students the task of evaluating the economic situation of South America, thus integrating the Hispanic culture into the classroom setting. Faculty involvement at this level is crucial in engaging Hispanic students. Often, Hispanic

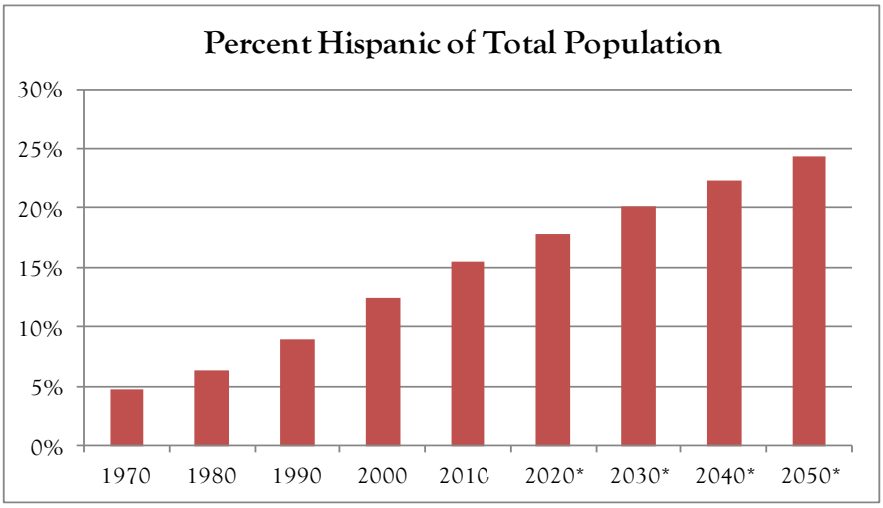
students will feel more at ease when such familiar topics are discussed in class. Once students are more comfortable in a classroom setting, they are more willing to ask questions, participate in class, or seek out guidance or support when it is needed. When it comes to retention and completion, these actions are essential to take into account.

Importance of Diversity in Higher Education

These above mentioned issues seem daunting. Colleges and universities must dedicate time, effort, and funding in order to improve these enrollment, retention, and completion metrics. One may find it easier to dismiss these issues as unimportant rather than attack them in order to improve the situation for minorities, especially Hispanics, on college campuses. The factors driving the need for improvement in the continued education of the Hispanic population are significant.

As discussed earlier in this report, the Hispanic population is the fastest growing minority group in the United States. Figure 3 below illustrates the United States Census Bureau's projection that by the year 2050, the Hispanic population will make up nearly 25% of the entire United States population (Population Profile). While this growth in population is great for the diversity of the country, there remains a disparity between the level of education that exists among the Hispanic population and that of the rest of the United States population. If the United States does not address this inequality, by the year 2050 the education level of the country will be significantly reduced. It is the task of the Federal Government and higher education institutions of the United States to address the enrollment, retention, and completion rates.

Figure 3



The education level of the country affects several key metrics which are essential to its viability and success. First, the health of the United States economy is largely based on the skills and abilities of its workers. As economic conditions become increasingly competitive across the globe, it is crucial that the United States remain a highly educated country in order to remain viable in such a globalized market. A higher education level will lead to lower unemployment rates and higher levels of innovation, ultimately propelling the country to a successful position in the global economy.

Secondly, higher education leads to lower levels of incarceration or need for public assistance. An educated population will make healthier decisions and contribute positively to communities across the country. The costs of incarceration and public assistance are substantial, and replacing these costs instead with efforts to improve higher education for minorities, including the Hispanic population, will lead to a healthy economic environment.

The benefits of higher education for Hispanic students can also be seen at the university level. Students exposed to greater diversity while studying at a college or university will be prepared for a future career in a globalized world. Doing business across international borders has become easier and easier over the past 20 years as technological advances have shrunk the

time and effort required to conduct business overseas. The goal of a college or university should be to produce the best product, that is students, possible. Educating students in a diverse environment prepares them more fully for careers in the world's ever more diverse markets. Additionally, students will gain greater perspective and develop more fully as individuals when exposed to a diverse population. Discussions in and out of classroom settings will be enriched with ideas, values, and goals from a diverse population. These types of interactions will allow students to grow, learn, and prepare to be citizens of a global world.

Legal Issues

While it is essential to increase the education level of the Hispanic population, there exist several legal obstacles impeding this progression. Many colleges and universities have begun to implement processes to increase the minority presence on their campuses; however, doing so on the basis of simple multiculturalism in place of merit has caused turmoil among activist groups and within the United States government.

Efforts to increase minority presence in education began in the late 1950s. *Brown v. Board of Education* declared the separation of African American students and white students in public schools unconstitutional. This court decision was followed by several Executive Orders by presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson which aimed at delivering equality to employees and students on the basis of race, creed, sex, color, or national origin.

Legal efforts directed at increasing minority presence and equality in organizations and institutions have become known as affirmative action. Affirmative action formally addressed the

discrimination problems that existed in the United States, however created controversy surrounding the approach to which organizations and institutions implement policies to do so.

The 1978 *Regents of the University of California at Davis Medical School v. Bakke* illustrates the problems that arose from these affirmative action laws. In this case, the court ruled that The University of California Medical School's action in reserving 16 places for qualified minorities was illegal. However, the court did recognize the importance of developing a diverse student body and maintained that efforts should be made in the admissions process to uphold this goal.

In 2003 this court decision was further implemented. In the case of *Gratz v. Bollinger* the court declared colleges and universities had the right to consider race in admitting students. However, using strict point systems was ruled unconstitutional.

Today, colleges and universities use multiple approaches in admitting a diverse student body. Their strategies have come under scrutiny by anti-affirmative action activist groups who promote the equality of all students. These groups, including The Center for Equal Opportunity and The Center for Individual Rights, oppose affirmative action as they claim it leads to discrimination against those qualified applicants who are not part of a preferred minority group.

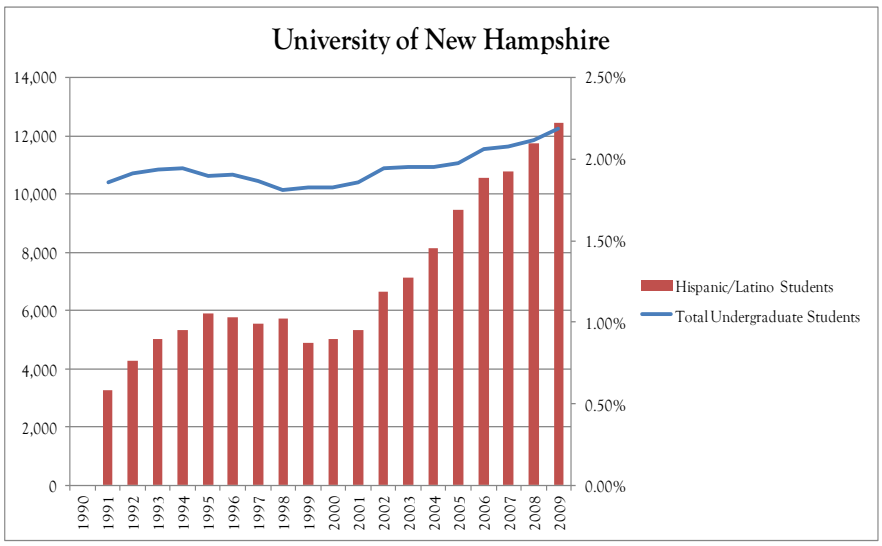
John Brooks Slaughter discusses this issue in his article, saying "diversity in the absence of equity is meaningless, or at best, of questionable value". He continues to argue that "the mere presence of diversity does not ensure the presence of equality and opportunity…something within the institution must be in place" to achieve the benefits that a truly diverse student body can deliver. Slaughter's argument is one which must be carefully tended to. It should not be the

goal of colleges and universities to simply acquire a diverse student body; it is important that this student body be filled with well qualified students who will contribute positively to the institution and ultimately be successful upon graduation.

Competitive Landscape and Best Practice Approach

In secondary research conducted in the Fall of 2011, it was found that the University of New Hampshire's Hispanic student population has grown from .59% in 1990 to 2.2% in 2009. However, this rate is far lower than that of the country's overall Hispanic population growth rate. In addition, this rate is lower than that of competitors such as the University of Massachusetts Amherst, University of Connecticut, and University of Vermont, who maintained Hispanic student populations at 3.9%, 6.6%, and 2.4%, respectively (Greenwood). The diversity which these competitor schools can provide draws forward thinking individuals away from the University of New Hampshire.

Figure 4



UNH can learn from the efforts its competitors make in the area of diversification in order to improve the experience it delivers to students on its own campus.

Several schools have risen to the top when it comes to diversifying their campuses and providing an environment conducive to the success of students across differing backgrounds. Rutgers-Newark, the state university of New Jersey, was ranked by U.S. News as 2011's most diverse national university in the United States. In exploring the resources available for promoting a united and diverse community at Rutgers, this ranking comes as no surprise. Rutgers University has made a strategic decision to integrate the importance of diversity into every aspect of its operations. Rutgers' diversity mission statement is as follows:

> "Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is committed to the ideals of excellence in fostering an enriching learning community of students, faculty and staff from a broad spectrum of nations, cultures, and historical perspectives. Diversity is an integral component of human experience, and encompasses but is not limited to issues of race, ethnicity, culture, social class, national origin, gender, age, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, mental ability, and physical ability. Our collective goal is to create an institutional consciousness of diversity reinforced with equity and excellence through our policies, practices, and programs of inclusion, non-discrimination, and pluralism for all members of the University Community" (Diversity at Rutgers).

This mission statement emphasizes Rutgers' efforts in fostering diversity in all aspects of the campus community and doing so in a way that is beneficial to the success of students, faculty, and staff.

Diversity on the campus of Rutgers University is apparent. There exist 28 cultural student organizations which contribute to some facet of diversity on campus including the Japanese Cultural Association, Chinese Dance Troupe, Portuguese Language Community, and the Latino Student Council. Student involvement in these organizations infuses the campus community with interesting and different perspectives and inspires interaction amongst differing groups of people.

Rutgers also integrates diversity into student curriculum as a whole. The university sponsors 6 community outreach programs which aim to connect the diverse student body with the diverse communities that surround Rutgers' campus. The Center for Urban Entrepreneurship & Economic Development, Portuguese and Lusophone World Studies Program, Eric Neisser Public Interest Program, Ironbound Oral History Project, Clinical Programs at the School of Law-Newark, and the Domestic Violence Advocacy Project are all part of this outreach effort which fosters connections amongst diverse groups of people. For example, The Center for Urban Entrepreneurship & Economic Development is focused on research, education, and economic development of surrounding minority communities. Students participate in this program through integrated class assignments and projects mainly through Rutgers' entrepreneurship course offerings. This integration through course work truly highlights the university's efforts to foster and promote diversity across the entire organization.

Rutgers' slogan, "Jersey Roots, Global Reach" drives home these important efforts. Rutgers stands out among all United States universities as a true advocate for and believer in the importance of diversity. It is crucial to note that these efforts do not go unnoticed. Feedback through Rutgers' yearly student survey shows that students greatly appreciate the diverse

environment they are a part of at school. One student is quoted saying, “The Rutgers-Newark campus, indeed, is a microcosm of the global economy that enables us to interact with students from more than 150 countries and learn about their culture and traditions. This has helped me tremendously in my job at Merrill Lynch. I am repeatedly called in to manage projects that are more global, as well as contribute to building my company's multicultural business” (Diversity at Rutgers). This student points to the importance of educating students in a diverse environment in order to prepare them for their future careers in a globalized economy.

Boston University, one of the most prominent universities in the Boston, MA metropolitan area, is also well known for fostering a diverse student body experience. Boston University’s unique approach to diverse recruitment is a great model to follow in recruiting Hispanic students in higher education. BU works in collaboration with a student organization on campus called the BU Admissions Student Diversity Board. This organization is made up of students that are committed to fostering diversity on campus and recruiting more diverse students for years to come. The organization is broken up into three committees, the Community Outreach Committee, the Communications Committee, and the Campus Visit Committee. The Community Outreach Committee is responsible for fostering relationships among the different multicultural organizations that exist on the BU campus. The Communications Committee is responsible for putting on a Fall and Spring phone-a-thon during which they call under-represented minority students who have expressed interest in the school. The Campus Visit Committee is responsible for organizing tours, hosting events, and making presentations in order to attract and interact with prospective students. The dedication of this student organization

makes a large impact on the amount of time and effort that is allocated to fostering diversity on campus. The University of New Hampshire could certainly put together a similar type of organization in order to allow students who truly care about fostering diversity on campus to make a difference.

One may find it hard to compare the University of New Hampshire to Rutgers University and Boston University however, as the communities surrounding Rutgers and BU are innately more urban and diverse than that of New Hampshire. However, the University of New Hampshire can take away some key factors for success such as those mentioned above in an attempt to incorporate them into its own school environment. Comparing the University of New Hampshire to another New England school provides further insight.

The community surrounding the University of Vermont is very similar to that which surrounds the University of New Hampshire, rural, affluent, and majority white. However, the efforts the University of New Hampshire puts forth regarding diversity fall short of those going on at the University of Vermont. The Office of the President at UVM states that "diversity and academic excellence are inseparable". Vermont makes great efforts to ensure that their students are well rounded and successful upon graduation through several key methods. First, UVM made a large effort to improve faculty diversity. From 2002 to 2008, UVM hired 41 diverse instructional and research faculty members. The addition of these faculty members ensures that minority students feel more at ease and comfortable surrounded by instructors they can relate to. Additionally, UVM requires students to fulfill a diversity requirement, which is accomplished by completing two courses in the areas of race and diversity. This requirement engages students in

the diversity conversation across campus and opens up discussions inside and outside of the classroom. This type of environment fosters the sharing of new ideas and learning about different cultures and values which students can take with them in the future career endeavors (Multicultural).

University of New Hampshire Current Efforts and Focus Group Results

When comparing the University of New Hampshire to its competitors in the area of diversity, UNH excels in its focus on future strategic planning. However there exist some areas for improvement which will be addressed in the recommendations section of this report.

Recently, the University of New Hampshire has shifted its diversity efforts to a strategic plan which incorporates the term "inclusive excellence". This term is aimed at delivering a truly diverse environment to students on campus instead of continuing to use the diluted term "diversity" which has become overused. Hispanic students who participated in a focus group on the UNH campus were excited and enthused by the use of this "inclusive excellence" term. One student described the term saying "'Inclusive excellence refers to diversity on all levels including race, sexual orientation, disabilities, gender, socioeconomic background, etc. I believe diversity encompasses all of these things, but this new term re-shapes the current perception of diversity to embody what the term truly does mean." In essence, this student described the University's effort to get to the root of the idea of diversity, which is to include all people from all walks of life at UNH in order to foster a more interesting and well rounded campus community. The University of New Hampshire is doing well incorporating this new term in its future strategic plans to foster a diverse atmosphere for students at UNH.

As far as efforts to encourage diversity across the campus community, the University of New Hampshire is also making an effort to include faculty in this equation. The university currently facilitates a faculty mentoring program which prepares junior faculty to thrive in their futures and promote diversity across the campus. In the recommendations section of this report, alterations to this mentoring program will be addressed which will allow the program to further foster diversity on campus.

Like at Rutgers University, many student organizations on the UNH campus exist which are aimed at fostering diversity and cultural experiences on campus. At UNH, these groups include the Black Student Union, Chinese Scholar Association, Committee Rights Justice, Dobro Slovo Society, Fia-Chait Irish Dance, French Club, Indian Subcontinent Students' Association, Korean Culture Club, Mosaico, Native American Cultural Association, and the United Asia Coalition. These student organizations are great for encouraging diversity, and the recommendations section of this report will address how these groups can be used as a catapult for improving recruitment and retention of minority students, especially Hispanic students, on the University of New Hampshire campus.

Focus group participants also discussed to great extent the impact that the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs had had on their experiences at the University of New Hampshire. Many students felt the OMSA office was the one place on campus they felt safe, secure, and entirely welcome. The University of New Hampshire is doing a great job with this effort, and must continue focusing resources here and including information about OMSA in its recruitment efforts in order to convey to students that there exists an outlet on campus where diversity is not only fostered, but celebrated.

The University of New Hampshire offers a unique orientation program for minority students called CONNECT. Through the program, minority students entering UNH have access to academic support, advocacy, campus survival skill advice, peer mentors, pre-college programming, and a social and cultural orientation to UNH. Students in the focus group praised the benefits they received from the CONNECT experience, and noted this was a strong point that existed on the University of New Hampshire campus.

The University of New Hampshire is also making a great effort in working with Upward Bound, a program which provides tutoring, guidance, and advising to underprivileged and underrepresented high school students. These students, who might not otherwise have the necessary resources available to prepare for and take part in higher education, are provided with the help they need to succeed. Programs such as Upward Bound are essential in ensuring the success of minority groups, for it is often the case that talent or great ideas go unnoticed because a student lacks the necessary knowledge or resources necessary to further their education. As Roy Flores states in his article, "*The New Face of America: Hispanics, Immigration, and Higher Education",* "No one can map the possibilities of a young person who has yet to master the skills and knowledge needed to navigate the society in which he or she lives" (Flores). Flores points out that these minority students must be given the tools and resources they need to be truly successful. The recommendations section of this report will address how UNH can further develop this program to continue preparing the Hispanic student population for the great opportunities available to them in higher education.

Recommendations for the University of New Hampshire

As mentioned above, the University of New Hampshire currently has set a strong strategic plan for promoting diversity in future years through inclusive excellence, faculty mentoring and various student and university organizations aimed at fostering a diverse community. However, UNH could make several additions to these efforts which could lead to improved recruitment, retention, and the future success of a Hispanic student population on campus.

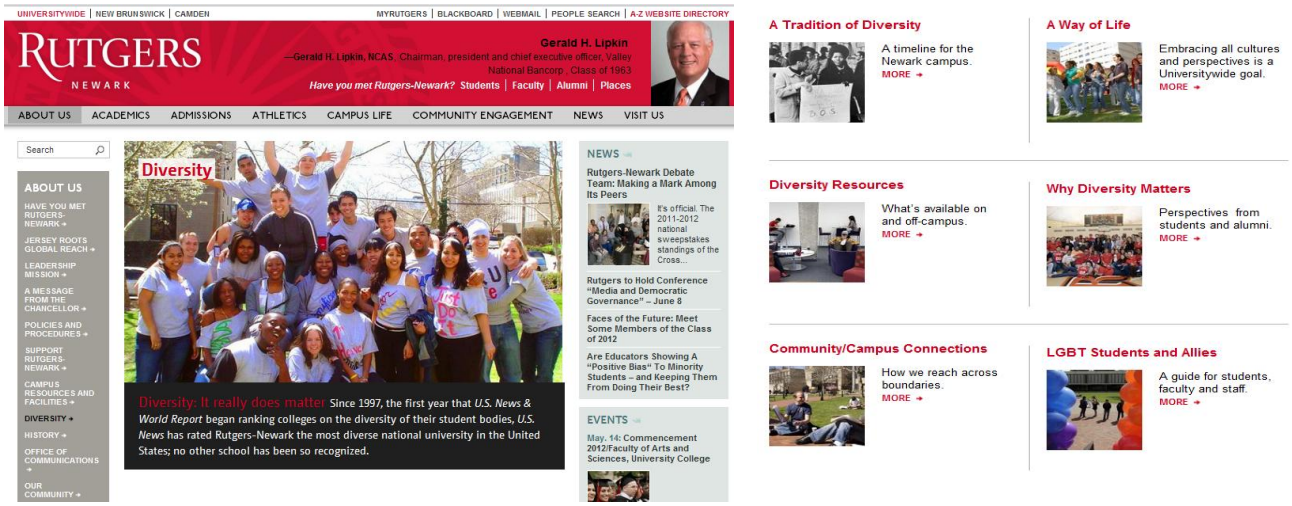
Recruitment of the Hispanic student population begins in the early years of a student's education. The University of New Hampshire currently works with Upward Bound to begin supporting students at an early age who have less access to the resources necessary to ensure a successful future in higher education. UNH must continue to invest in Upward Bound and similar programs in order to continue this effort. It is crucial to begin preparing Hispanic students at an early age for higher education as many are indeed first generation students who have little knowledge about how to get there or how to be successful once on campus. UNH must reach out to policy makers and K-12 institutions in order to work collaboratively to prepare the Hispanic student population, especially those New Hampshire residents, for a higher education experience.

Once Hispanic students reach high school years, the University of New Hampshire must begin direct recruitment. These direct recruitment efforts include comprehensive and comprehendible online resources, direct mail, high school visit days, and involving current Hispanic and other minority students to get involved in the recruitment process. To begin, online resources must be easily accessible, understandable, and actionable. The University of New

Hampshire must develop a central webpage which links to all other pages promoting a diverse community on the campus. To attract the Hispanic student population, UNH must make their webpage interactive and personalized. Individual student testimonial videos, detailed descriptions such as “day in the life” of a student, or specific information about support and resources available on campus will all be beneficial in attracting the collectivist Hispanic population.

All of this information must be organized in a simple way which both students and their families can navigate. Currently, there exist too many differing locations where information about diversity exists on the University of New Hampshire website. Rutgers’ diversity homepage should be used as a model, as this webpage is simple, comprehensive, and easy to navigate. This modern page is inviting and simple to use, which is beneficial from both the students’ and parents’ perspectives. (See Figure 5 Below)

Figure 5



Secondly, direct mail must be addressed. Direct mail communications should be suitable for both students and their parents, as Hispanic parents play a very large role in the lives of their children. This collectivist society leads to group decision making, meaning direct mail must be

targeted to both of these key groups. Essentially, direct mail in communication with the Hispanic population should be bi-lingual. This will make both the student and the parent more at ease with the decision making process and generate a deeper connection between the family and the University of New Hampshire.

High school visit days are also crucial in attracting the Hispanic population. As mentioned earlier, Hispanics belong to a collectivist society in which group interaction is of very high importance. Developing interpersonal relationships with these students is key in making them feel comfortable in a group environment at the University of New Hampshire. High school visit efforts are an area in which current minority students at UNH can get involved in the recruiting process. It is recommended that the University of New Hampshire develop a student organization that connects all cultural student organizations to develop a united front in addressing diversity issues on campus. This newly formed student organization can also act as the face of diversity on the UNH campus to prospective students. Just as the Boston University Admissions Student Diversity Board aims at fostering a diverse student body at BU, the University of New Hampshire could develop a group to interact with prospective students. This method would work especially well in recruiting the Hispanic population, as this collectivist society thrives with interpersonal relationship building.

After successful recruitment, it is crucial to retain students and ensure they are successful in attaining degrees once they begin studying at the University of New Hampshire. To do this, UNH must foster a community on campus in which minority students feel accepted, welcome, comfortable, and one in which they have access to the resources they need in order to succeed.

As mentioned above, it is recommended that UNH develop a student organization which connects all cultural student organizations. This student organization will foster connections between different groups in the community, linking students to new ideas, people, and cultures. Ultimately, this group would foster community across the campus and make all students feel welcome and connected. The group could be responsible for organizing different cultural events on campus, sparking conversations surrounding diversity, and recruiting future minority students to the campus. This type of group is especially important in retaining Hispanic students as they look for group success rather than the success of an individual.

Including faculty in the diversity equation is also critical in creating a diverse community across the campus. The University of Vermont made a large effort to increase the number of minority faculty working on staff. The University of New Hampshire should adopt a similar strategy in recruiting a diverse group of faculty and staff in order to truly develop a diverse community. A diverse faculty and staff will allow minority students to feel more at ease on campus and especially in the classrooms. The University of New Hampshire could extend its current faculty mentoring program to incorporate minority faculty members mentoring others on the importance of diversity or the issues that may be facing minority students on campus. These faculty would then serve as mentors to minority students on campus, ultimately making these students feel more comfortable in their new environment at the University of New Hampshire. Additionally, the whole campus community will benefit from the new perspectives that diverse faculty and staff will bring to the UNH campus.

Classroom integration will aid in sparking the diversity conversation on campus as well. Both Rutgers and the University of Vermont can also provide models for improvement in this area. Rutgers offers curriculum which ties student research and projects to improving the lives of minority communities in the region. The University of New Hampshire could develop similar courses to aid minority communities in New Hampshire and throughout the United States. These types of classes will allow students to understand the true impact of globalization and prepare them for their futures in a diverse work environment.

However, often it is difficult to encourage students at the University of New Hampshire to become engaged in topics such as these. Recently an article was published in UNH's student newspaper, The New Hampshire, which stated minor coursework in the areas of American Studies, Africana Studies, and courses in Race, Culture, and Power were in threat of being discontinued due to low enrollment. These types of courses are crucial in educating students about the importance of diversity and the impact that different cultures have on the global economy. To solve this issue, the University of New Hampshire could adopt programming similar to that of the University of Vermont which includes a diversity requirement in their students required curriculum. Each student must enroll in at least two classes with a focus on topics in diversity. This requirement leads all students into the discussion of diversity on campus, in the United States, and across the globe. Including topics like this is the regular curriculum for all students across campus will allow minority students to feel integrated into the campus community and see their peers discussing topics which are important to them. Additionally,

these types of courses will ultimately educate the entire campus community and prepare students for their careers in a global environment.

It is also very important to provide minority students with the resources they need to be successful while on campus. Joining a campus community such as the University of New Hampshire is a large change from the environments that many minority students are coming from. Providing them with a solid orientation program, counseling services, tutoring help, and career planning advice is crucial in ensuring their success. During this study's focus group, many students pointed to the fact that minority students on campus feel overwhelmed, and once overwhelmed are more apt to leave campus without finishing their degrees. It is important to make minority students feel supported and at ease while on campus in order to ensure they finish their degrees and go on to successful futures.

Finally, it is important for the University of New Hampshire to ensure the success of their minority graduates after they finish their studies on campus. UNH must make available to these students career planning resources as well as after-graduation support in order to ensure their graduates are entering their desired fields and becoming successful upon graduation. Additionally, emphasizing the success of these minority graduates in marketing to future minority students, especially Hispanic students, will show students they too can be successful on the University of New Hampshire campus. These success stories should be promoted in direct recruitment mail, website communications, high school visit days, and beyond in order to truly drive home the successes that minority students have had in the past when becoming a part of the University of New Hampshire community.

Final Argument for the Importance of Hispanic Students and Diversity at the University of New Hampshire

The Hispanic population in the United States is growing at an unprecedented rate. U.S. Census Bureau projects estimates the Hispanic population to make up nearly 25% of the entire United States population by the year 2050 (United States). This population growth points at a huge market for products and services in the U.S., including higher education. Not only is it in educational institutions' best interest as far as generating revenue to target the Hispanic population, but it is also in the best interest of the country. There exists a disparity between the education level of the Hispanic population and that of the overall United States. If higher education institutions do not do a better job of recruiting and retaining Hispanic students, the education level of the country will significantly decrease by the year 2050.

Improved recruitment and retention of Hispanic students will increase revenues and the education level of the United States as a whole, and it will create a more well rounded population. Students who study in a diverse environment will be exposed to new ideas, cultures, and challenges which will aid them in their learning. Students who are products of a diverse campus community will graduate well prepared to enter the workforce in an increasingly globalized world.

The University of New Hampshire currently has in place a strong strategic plan to improve diversity on campus. Its efforts in orientation through CONNECT, campus life through OMSA, and overall campus diversity through Inclusive Excellence stand out as its most successful diversity efforts. However, much can be learned from competitors who are also striving for excellence in diversified communities. These competitors such as Rutgers

University, Boston University, and the University of Vermont provide insight into best practices in diversification.

The areas which the University of New Hampshire could stand for the most improvement include integrating classroom projects with the idea of diversity, dedicated student organizations who aim at fostering diversity across the campus, and increased faculty diversity. These and other areas mentioned in this report are crucial in improving the diversification of the campus community.

The world is becoming ever more globalized as technology connects people across continents in a matter of seconds. This phenomenon coupled with the unparalleled Hispanic population growth in the United States makes the importance of recruiting and retaining Hispanic students at the University of New Hampshire crucial in the university's success in the future and to the success of the entire United States population. In taking action on the above mentioned recommendations, the University of New Hampshire can achieve greater fiscal success, attract a more diverse population, and educate its students as well rounded global citizens.

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