Voices from UC Undergraduates at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)  
What it Means to "Serve" Latino Students

Guest Lecture by Laura Romo  
Professor, Gevirtz Graduate School of Education  
Director of Chicano Studies Institute  
University of California, Santa Barbara

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Abstract: More colleges and universities find themselves today with larger numbers of Latina/o students on campus and the successful retention and degree completion of these students will depend on the institutional support provided. HSIs are faced with the challenge of how to improve existing programs and student support services and create new ones. More research is needed on how HSIs can best fulfill this specific mission. In this talk, I present key messages from the voices of Latino undergraduates who participated in a workshop designed to engage them in a discussion of how UCSB, a Hispanic Serving Institution, can best serve the needs of Latino students. Drawing from their personal experiences, the students raised a number of issues that would improve their learning and social environments. Such findings have implications for developing institutional change actions plans to improve the UC college experiences of Latino students.

Laura Romo is a Professor in the UC Santa Barbara Department of Education specializing in child and adolescent development. Her research examines the impact of the mother-daughter relationship on Latina adolescent wellbeing. Topics include how mother-daughter communication is associated with dating and sexuality outcomes, body image, and academic achievement and aspirations. A major focus of her work is how to design culturally appropriate family-based training workshops to improve communication between Latina mothers and daughters. Much of this work has been supported by a William T. Grant scholar award. She has undertaken a new project that involves collaboration with preschools that serve low-income Latino children to teach them about health concepts in the context of science activities. The important implications of this work has been recognized and funded by a major grant from the National Institute of Health.