
Executive Summary
New Horizons Media Initiative Working Group

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The union of the existing New Horizons Media Initiative and the newly initiated Latino Media Portal has resulted in a long overdue resource website. This collaboration's primary goal is to create an information portal to advocate for and enhance the personal, social, academic, and professional advancement of Latino Americans and international Latino students, while promoting equity, unity, and civic engagement.

This project advances three action steps of the Latino Media Initiative grant plan: Organizing and meeting twice a year with collaborators; planning, designing, and implementing a University of Illinois Web Portal to showcase campus Latina/o initiatives and programs; and sustaining and growing the University of Illinois's Spanish-language radio program *Nuevos Horizontes* (*New Horizons*).

Inquiry

We began this project with the inquiry question, "What human, departmental, and organizational resources exist on this campus to advance the interests of Latino/a issues?" We began investigating potential resources by dividing the topic into three primary topics: individual scholars' research and outreach, campus unit and departmental resources, and pathways to college. We later added additional fields of inquiry to add content to the planned web portal—specifically, media resources and small interview segments.

Investigation

Roy Saldana Jr. investigated academic affairs and student affairs. He identified an academic affairs unit as a college on campus accredited to grant a baccalaureate or other advanced degrees to students upon satisfying college specific requirements. He identified a student affairs unit as a department on campus that coordinates programs, services, facilities and living environments that seek to

enrich the campus experience outside of the classroom. Additional resources are listed in a miscellaneous section. These resources are more isolated "hidden gems" he happened to come across while "net surfing" aimlessly throughout the University of Illinois website.

Andrew Zimmerer researched individuals on campus who were dedicated to Latina/o issues. The investigation consisted of searching the University website and isolating individuals interested in Nuevos Horizontes. The Center for Latin American Studies, Anthropology, Latino/Latina studies, UI extension and the College of Media contained the most people interested in developing NHMI and a web portal.

Rebecca Crist compiled resource information about the college application process for Latin students. She organized information into three primary subject areas: applying to college, financing college, and support for students. Information included solid general resources, resources directed primarily at Latina/o students, information specific to the University of Illinois and Parkland college, and information directed to undocumented students. She then wrote a lengthier summary of advice for applying and searching for more information. Later, she also compiled information regarding Champaign-Urbana media programming dedicated to Latino issues or disseminated in Spanish-language broadcasting and publication.

Create

The Web portal was not completed in the course of this semester, as it was determined that the University would be better suited to handle the actual web design and construction. We have, however, created content suitable for use on the site.

Discuss

With sample proposed content in hand, we are moving ahead with a second action item—convening the meeting of stakeholders. The meeting was planned with the collaboration of Benjamin Mueller and his student partners. Andrew Zimmerer, listserv coordinator, drafted an invitation to call community partners together with the CI and Nuevos Horizontes cohort. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 11, 2008.

Reflect

Roy noted that obtaining data from academic and student units called for a simple, yet tedious process to be implemented, so to obtain the results needed to make this project a success. Internet browsing was his primary means of identifying any program or event that was being implemented at the University of Illinois. Upon sifting through countless links on the first three websites, he realized that too few colleges or student affair units were managing programs or events that identified Latina/o students as their primary focus cohort. This realization changed his procedure. What resulted was his initial reading of a program or event summary, followed by my judgment call being the determining factor deciding if the resource had the potential to enhance the personal, social, academic, and professional advancement of Latino Americans and international Latino students. With this extensive spectrum being part of the process, many resources listed on the website are broad and open to student interpretation as to their potential benefit. We feel this is a wonderful final, yet unexpected component being made available for the website.

Yet another unexpected component resulting from this effort is the compare and contrast process anyone visiting our website will have the option to implement. Some colleges on campus are doing exceptionally well in creating and managing wonderful opportunities for any student to benefit from, while others seem to fall short of a respectable list of opportunities for the enrichment of enrolled students. Collectively, this could result in student initiated advocacy exclaiming to lesser involved colleges to update their model so to accommodate the increase of diverse students within Latina/o populations that are enrolling at the University of Illinois.

Rebecca was pleasantly surprised to find that a number of fantastic resources already exist to help students along the college application process, but was disheartened to find some potential pitfalls for students searching out this information. First, many of the sites are sponsored by commercial entities and, while many feature excellent, reliable, and extremely useful information, other sites are merely advertisements or, worse, potential bait for internet malefaction. Second, some critically useful

information is presented badly in dense legal and bureaucratic form (especially information regarding legal rights of undocumented aliens, who may be facing language barriers without the jargon). Third, even information specifically directed to Latina/o communities is not often available in Spanish. To make the best use of the materials available, she compiled an annotated list of resources, noting particularly useful aspects of sites, sites available in Spanish, and sites that featured information specifically for undocumented students.

At the time of this summary, the content is at a still point. Web site development remains. The first stakeholders' meeting will help determine the course the project will follow as it continues.

The project was a rewarding experience. It is our hope that we have contributed in a meaningful way to the advancement of the New Horizons Media Initiative, and we look forward to seeing the completed portal.