

# **Building a Latinx Resource Center for a Hispanic-Thriving Campus: A Proposal for a Latinx Resource Center at the University of California, Irvine**

***Prepared by:***

Mesa Unida/Latinx Resource Center Committee



Image created by : Jon Lopez

Contact(s):

Primary Student Contact Names: Allison Anaya, Teresa Gaspar, Clara Leopo

Primary E-mails: [amanaya1@uci.edu](mailto:amanaya1@uci.edu) , [cleopo@uci.edu](mailto:cleopo@uci.edu) , [tgaspar@uci.edu](mailto:tgaspar@uci.edu)

Primary Phones: (310) 953-7766, (714) 418-7914, (760) 277-1635

Contributors: Allison Anaya, Teresa Gaspar, Clara Leopo, Evelyn Mejia, Mariela Padilla, Michel Ramirez

Additional Contributors : Sergio Cervantes, Stacy Encis, Jonathan Lopez, Misty Gasca, Victoria Madrid, Lydia Natoolo, Estelita Pascual, Jessica Perez, Vanessa Perez, Veronica Zamora

## Introduction

What is Mesa Unida ?

- The purpose of Mesa Unida is to:
  - Promote Latinx culture and expression at UC Irvine by providing a space for students to engage in dialogue about issues affecting Latinxs
  - Encourage unity among the UC Irvine Latinx community and its allies by fostering a strong sense of community for Latinx students at UC Irvine
  - Develop programming to support the growth and retention of Latinx students at the UC Irvine
  - Serve as a resource for Latinx students to connect with other Latinx faculty, staff, and students.
  - Create a united front through event planning and weekly meetings to foster a stronger relationship between Latinx organizations
  
- Values:
  - Cultural Identity/Awareness
  - Educational Enhancement
  - Student Retention
  - Community Engagement

What is the Latinx Resource Center Committee?

- A group of student leaders and contributors to *Building a Latinx Resource Center at a Hispanic-thriving Campus: A Proposal for a Latinx Resource Center at the University of California, Irvine.*

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## I. Executive Summary

- a. This proposal summarizes the needs of the Latinx community gathered through a Chicanx/Latinx Seminar and led by Mesa Unida along with the input of its affiliates, UCI alumni, faculty, staff and students. This proposal outlines topics and programs discussed in the seminar led by Andrea Gutierrez and Adelí Durón and worked on by a committee of students called the “Latinx Resource Center Committee”. This proposal serves as an outline to how a Latinx Resource Center supports UCI’s message of not only being a Latinx *servicing* institution but a Latinx *thriving* institution.

## II. Statement of Need

### a. Background

- i. With the university’s Latinx enrollment reaching 25.7 percent, the University of California, Irvine was named a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI) for 2017-18 by the U.S. Department of Education. Latinx student representation makes up one quarter of the student body. Thus, greater investment in providing Latinx students with the tools and resources to excel, transform, and engage with their education is vital.
- ii. In addition to its HSI designation, UCI has recently been identified as one of the ten top-performing institutions for Latinx students by The Education Trust, a nonprofit advocacy organization. The continuation of fostering and advocating for the representation of these marginalized communities are essential.
- iii. Among UC campuses, UCI received the most Chicano/Latino California-resident freshman applications for Fall 2018.

### b. Purpose

- i. The purpose of the center is to demonstrate the UCI’s commitment towards providing a superior education to every student, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, citizenship or immigration status, and despite their financial, social, academic, and political challenges.
- ii. This center will serve as a foundation from which they can connect with peers, faculty, staff, and community members to develop their personal, academic, and professional skills to be ready to enter and engage as a competitive candidate in the global arena.
- iii. The establishment of this institution will provide them with physical spaces where they can engage in dialogue where they can challenge themselves to learn more about their identity and take pride in their journey such as first generation, .

**c. Current Issues facing the Latinx community at UCI**

- i. No physical space on UCI campus that holds and supports all current Latinx-serving programs that address the needs of a growing UCI Latinx student population.
- ii. Latinx students take longer to complete their degree and lack access to higher education (e.g. Graduate, Med School.)
  1. During the 4th year of the average Latinx Student, there is a 15% gap<sup>1</sup> in retention rate compared to Non- Hispanic students. - *UCI as a Hispanic Thriving Campus: A Report of the Administrative Work Group on Campus Designation as a Hispanic Serving Institution*
- iii. Limited institutional support towards current resources and events catered to UCI's Latinx student population. (e.g. RAZA Grad, La Bienvenida)
  1. Raza Grad total expenses and income, see Appendix a.
  2. La Bienvenida
- iv. Loss sense of belonging (1st generation, low-income) navigating and fitting inside the UCI Institution
- v. Barriers to Accessing Mental Health Care
  1. Cultural stigma associated with mental illness (American Psychiatric Association)
  2. Common stressors that can trigger distress, family and academic balance, cultural incongruity, micro aggressions linked with political climate, DACA, undocumented, TPS (Jessica Ortega Ph. D, UCI Counseling Center, Chic/ Lat Seminar)
  3. Financial, Health Insurance
- vi. Academic Support/ Resources

**III. Mission Statements**

- i. The values the LRC will uphold are the importance of family, community, and other essential relationships as being a crucial center point in a students' education
- ii. Open opportunities allowing for students to engage with their education by providing them with physical spaces to engage in dialogue and strengthen their leadership
- iii. Help Latinx students advance to go on to the next stage of their education by creating a support system that will prepare them to enter the work field.
- iv. Consistent collaboration between staff, faculty, student, and alumni should be addressed and targeted through the facilitation of dialogue and the creation of safe spaces.
- v. As noted in the 2016 UCI strategic plan titled, "Bright Past. Brilliant Future," HSI designation aligns with the campus aspiration to be a national leader and global model of inclusive excellence.

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#### IV. Goals

##### a. Objectives

- i. Foster unity between the Latinx community and overall UCI student population
- ii. Empower Latinx students to achieve personal, academic, inclusive, and professional excellence
- iii. Increase retention programs and graduation rates for the growing Latinx student population
- iv. Provide a space with resources and programs catered to the the Latinx student population
- v. Increase visibility of the Latinx student population
- vi. Secure institutional support for Latinx-serving programs and events

##### b. Workshops/Activities to reach Objectives

- i. [SEE APPENDICES A: PAGE 9]

##### c. Methodology for Tracking LRC

- i. By tracking the rate of usage of the LRC, the center will be able to allocate resources as needed. [SEE GROWTH MODEL: PAGE 8]
- ii. Careful monitoring of the graduation and retention rates of both the Latinx and non-Latinx population after the establishment of the Latinx Resource Center.
- iii. Implementation of yearly surveys that will measure the effectiveness and usefulness of the LRC resources. This way the Resource Center can better accommodate the concerns of the students to further assist them in meeting their needs.
- iv. Through yearly comparisons statistics will prove the results and overall importance in having a resource center. This can be used to apply for funding for new resources in the center, such as HSI grants.

#### V. Location and Layout

##### a. On Campus

- i. The LRC needs to have a permanent space within the UC campus that can physically meet the growing needs of the Latinx student population and provide the necessary institutional support students have the right to.

##### b. Possible Resources at the LRC:

- i. Computer Lab
- ii. Latinx library
- iii. Office spaces
- iv. Study space
- v. Lobby area
- vi. Kitchen with fridge and microwave
- vii. Conference room
- viii. Professional support staff

## VI. Staff

### a. Full-Time

- i. Director
- ii. Assistant Director
- iii. Program Coordinator
  1. Raza Grad Coordinator
- iv. Academic Advising
- v. Counselor in Residence

### b. Part-Time

- i. Student Coordinators: Work-Study Assistants
- ii. Social Media/Marketing/Tech
- iii. Events/Outreach

## VII. Advisory Board

- a. **Student Board-** Through student led initiatives, this board will seek to strengthen the voice and role students can have in an educational institution by empowering them to take action.
- b. **Faculty Board-** Diverse faculty/staff across departments will start dialogues on the matters concerning the Latinx community by bringing in perspectives from various academic disciplines. These relationships will foster strong relationships between students and professors and allow them to engage in decision making, improve mentorship relationships, and collaboration.

## VIII. Budget

### a. 5-years Growth Model of Undergraduate State-funded (3TA)

- i. Below is a growth model that illustrates the incremental growth of Latinx enrollment in the last 5 years.
  1. <http://www.oir.uci.edu/files/enr/IIA07-enr-by-ethnicity.pdf>

Mo/Yr.	# of Latinx Students	% Change
2012-2013	4,230.7	%
2013- 2014	4,923.7	15%
2014-2015	5,653.0	13%
2015-2016	6,029.0	6%
2016-2017	6,877.7	13%
Increase	+2647	270%

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Based on the number above we can predict that enrollment trend of Latinx population will continue to substantially grow and the need of additional faculty/staff will intensify in order to work efficiently. Below is a tentative plan of staffing at the LRC on basis of student usage.

Initial Phase (100 Students)

- Counselor in Residence
- 2 Work Study Assistants
- 1 Intern
- 1 Dedicated Outreach Study Assistant/ Seminar Course TA
- Offer Chicanx-Latinx Seminar/University Studies Course (Winter 2019)

Phase 2 (200 Students)

- Counselor in Residence
- 4 Work Study Assistants
- 2 Interns
- 1 Dedicated Outreach Work Study Assistant/ Seminar Course TA
- Offer Chicanx-Latinx Seminar/University Studies Course (Winter 2019)

Phase 3 (400+ Students)

- 2 Counselors in residence
- 6 Work Study Assistants
- 4 Interns
- 1 Dedicated Outreach Classified Full-Time Staff
- Offer Chicanx/Latinx Seminar/ University Studies Course (Winter 2019)
- Provide space for events

**IX. Appendices**  
**a. Raza Grad Budget**

## 39th Annual Raza Graduation Celebration Ceremony

Stationary & supplies		\$50.00	
Wristbands (done)		\$200.00	\$142.75
Photo Thank you			
Programs		\$1,000.00	\$1,012.00
Thank you cards			
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$1,250.00</b>	<b>\$1,154.75</b>

Decorations		Estimated	Actual
Balloon columns			
Photo Booth (each \$25) - ORDER THROUGH ASUCI		\$100.00	\$0.00
Decorations (99 centstore : \$51) (\$119) Amazon: \$250 (16')			
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$100.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

Lecture / Entertainment: Honoraria / Performers		Estimated	Actual
Mariachi (@\$300/hour) - Martha's Friend		\$300.00	\$300.00
Entertainment Insurance -		\$175.00	\$0.00
Student Photographer (main) \$375	Confirmed: Deposit paid by Andrea 5/22	\$375.00	\$375.00
2 student photographers ( Andrea to Sanjanaa & Robin (confirmed)		\$60.00	\$60.00
Melanie Cervantes \$200 (Andrea: )		\$200.00	\$0.00
Speaker Honorarium (Two \$25 starbucks gift card)		\$50.00	\$50.00
Graphics work (100 cash)		\$100.00	\$100.00
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$1,260.00</b>	<b>\$885.00</b>

Materials		Estimated	Actual
<b>Totals</b>			<b>\$60.00</b>

Miscellaneous		Estimated	Actual
MC's gifts (CHIPOTLE CARDS)			\$0.00
Stoles(\$23.95/stole; 205 stoles)		\$4,909.75	\$4,909.75
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$4,909.75</b>	<b>\$4,909.75</b>

<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$29,077.25</b>	<b>\$27,072.31</b>
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**b. Townhall Notes**

- i. Student Programs
  - Student Peer Support (Similar to Pathfinders)
  - Academic
  - Latinx Anteater Mentorship Program
  - Overnight Program to visit campus before they SIR
  - Workshops
  - Transportation
  - Celebrate UCI Day
  - SPOP
  - Undergraduate Freshman Volunteers
  - Before SIR'ing Family Conference
  - Financial Aid Reps
  - Living Advice
  - Housing
  - Classes
  - Why College is Important
  - Parent Panel
  - Outreach Programs
  - EAOP
- ii. Retention
  - BRC
  - Affects the students who are coming
  - 2 Day - Event
  - Create a family on campus
  - Retention
  - START FRESHMAN YEAR
  - Scholarships
  - Law School Resources
  - Scholarship/ Fee waiver for ProctorU
  - AP Emergency Support
  - 1st Year Challenge / Support
  - Undecided/Undeclared Support
  - Transfer Student
  - Introduction Crash Course for Transfer Students
- iii. Director Roles and Responsibilities
  - Collaborate with other resources, department, centers on campus
  - Have experience writing grants
  - Transparent with money
  - Have a connection with Chicanx / Latinx Department / Faculty
  - Open to students leadership
  - Students involved in hiring interviewing
  - Run workshops

Coordinator of students  
 Graduate school advice , connect to UU  
 Professional development  
 Scholarships  
 Build Alumni (Kirk Alumni Center) Network  
 Freshman Support Specific Program

- iv. Appendix
  - Academic
  - Possible Resource School of Education Rents Computers
  - Mental Health
  - Pláticas - “Estamos Unidas”
  - “Reporting Microaggressions Online”
  - Building Communities
  - UCI Worker Rights Committee
  - Professional Development
  - collab with Alumni Center (LETS Be REAL WORKSHOP)

**c. Program Themes (Chic/Lat Leadership Seminar)**

- i. **Mental Health:** The LRC envisions a safe, healthy, and empowering space where students can express themselves and find a support system for their mental health despite barriers. Those include Latinx stigma, economic, language, cultural value, natural remedies, and faith. Mental health counseling needs to be tailored to Latinx needs, and the stressors they may encounter as people of color such as; microaggressions, political climate, family-academic balance, and intersectionality.

1. Mental Health Counselors at the Center
2. Stress-Free Events/Wellness events
3. Sana Sana Colita de Rana Event

- ii. **Building Community: On & Off Campus:** The impact the LRC will have on the UCI campus’ staff, faculty, students, and the overall Orange County community can be seen through different community programming. Community programming will help to bring about a compassionate UCI institution which values unity and strengthens relationships we have with one another for generations.

1. Latinx Family Conference (LFC)
  - a. Invitation to low income middle school and high school students/family/counselors/teachers
  - b. Transportation provided
  - c. Application Component
  - d. Tour of UCI Campus
  - e. Faculty/Counselors/Professor/Dean attendance
  - f. Conference with workshops on topics such as:

- i. Ways to support Students as Parents
- ii. Ways to Support Students as Counselors
- iii. Ways to Support Students as Teachers
- iv. Resources on Campus
- v. What is College?
- vi. Financial Aid
- vii. College Life
  - 1. Dangers of Smoking
  - 2. Sexual Assault Awareness
  - 3. Homesickness
  - 4. Stress
- viii. How to Prepare Students for College
- ix. Latinx College Experience Toolkit

## 2. UCI Latinx Parent Teacher Association

- a. Meeting to bring together Latinx families and faculty to partake on:
  - i. Ways to increase Latinx visibility on campus
  - ii. Address national/political climate
  - iii. Work on policies to provide more support for undocumented families

## 3. Platicas/Roundtable Discussion about various topics

## 4. Raza Grad

- a. An intimate, festive, and culturally inclusive graduation ceremony aimed to highlight the achievements of the Latinx community at UCI. Raza Graduation strives to amplify student voices and create a space that celebrates diversity, Latinx accomplishment, and serves to empower students.

## 5. La Bienvenida

- a. An annual fall quarter event hosted by Mesa Unida, in which all Latinx organizations unite to welcome the incoming UCI freshman and transfer students onto campus, as well as to showcase the services offered on campus by inviting departments and centers to booth. In 2017, the event welcomed over 600 students, faculty, staff, and community members. La Bienvenida has been featured in the Los Angeles Times.

- iii. **Academic:** Incorporating an Academic Program in the LRC in order to increase the retention and graduation of the Latinx student population. Bringing diverse, and high-quality resources will allow them to take control of their own education will be a priority.

### 1. Rental Program:

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- a. Students will be allowed to rent one item of choice per quarter. Rental items are available on a first-come, first-served basis
- b. Rental Equipment:
  - i. Calculators
  - ii. iClickers
  - iii. Textbooks
  - iv. Rentals lasting one quarter
  - v. Laptop rentals
- c. Materials
  - i. Pens/pencils; office supplies
  - ii. Collaboration for book loan program
  - iii. Might involve help from the library or The Hill
  - iv. Donations
  - v. Personal Academic Advisor(s) and/or Academic Peer Tutors

2. Free printing, scantrons, and blue books

3. Latinx Student Retreat

**iv. *Identity Exploration:*** These programs will consist in three sections: Identify, Advocate, and Celebrate. It will be an opportunity for Latinx students to maintain the knowledge of cultural traditions, heritage and practices. This program in turn will support Latinx students to develop their ethnic identity and instill a sense of affirmation and belonging in their Latinx communities.

**1. IDENTIFY:** “Identify” will support the UCI Latinx community to explore and affirm their ethnic identities.

**a. Intersectionality Workshops:** This program invites students to discuss on the nature and meaning of intersectionality, the idea that people experience oppressions/disadvantage in overlapping ways.

- i. Example of Identities: Afro-Latinx, Indigenous, Latinx-LGBTQA+, unDACAmented, underground scholars, disability, non-traditional students, and student parents
- ii. Latinx Womxn’s Programming: Create sisterhood between female faculty and students to help build confidence within these individuals to dismantle social barriers imposed by society’s gender schemas.

- 1. Latinx womxn Hour-listen to Latinx podcasts and partake in dialogue

Workshops:

- A. What is beauty?
  - B. Social Construction of the “womxn role” in public and private spheres
  - C. Gendered Stereotypes
  - D. Females in the Working Environment
  - E. Sexual Assault
  - F. Celebrate legacies and geniuses of womxn of color (WOC)
- iii. LeadHERship Program
    - a. Educate
      - i. Share personal stories about your their own experiences and identities
    - b. Activate
      - i. Build a community with other women through mentorship with middle/high schools to work as a team to address gender issues in our local community to strengthen our individual and collective capacity to make change and raising our voices to
    - c. Advocate
      - i. Development of LeadHERship project that can stem from this three step program to keep the movement of change going and help elicit the leadership capabilities of younger generations of womxn.
  - iii. Noche de Historias/Latinxs-Night: Mentorship participants can share testimonies of their journey to present to families
  - IV. “Name TBD”- Living a healthy life to boost self esteem and self worth
    - a. Free photoshoot session

- 2. **ADVOCATE:** “Advocate” will support the UCI Latinx community voices to create social change to fulfill students’ needs to succeed in a Hispanic Serving Institution. Supports the community building program at LRC.
  - a. Community Engagement on and off campus.
  - b. Service Oriented Solutions to disparities

3. **CELEBRATE:** Celebrating in the many traditional ways of Latinx cultures. Examples of celebratory occasions are:
  - a. Indigenous People's Day: a day where indigenous roots are celebrated through revival of traditional rituals and values
  - b. Afro-Latinx Day: celebrations that highlight, recognize, and affirm often underappreciated African contributions to culture in different South American countries
  - c. LGBTQ History Month: October
  - d. Pan American Day: "commemorative symbol of the American nations and the voluntary union of all in one continental community"
  
- v. **Professional Development:** The Latinx faculty in all departments will serve as a crucial link that will enable students to gain connections and further support.
  1. Sit with your Professor for Latinx Students- lunch/go to a restaurant
  2. Employment opportunities inequality
  3. Graduate School Preparation
    - a. Collaboration with Career Center
    - b. Mentorship Program:
      - i. A quarter long program where a student commits to having three meets with a faculty member of their choice (preferably in the field they're interested), building rapport and networking to potentially use for letters of recommendation, references, guidance for grad/law/professional school etc.
  4. Bringing in guest workshops/speakers: ie. alums
  5. Leadership Collaboration Program: Addressing Higher Ed Admin,
  6. Conflict Resolution, continuing the leadership; conflicts between identities, ensuring there isn't exclusivity
  7. Research and Conference Preparation
  8. Student Leadership opportunities

### **Bibliography**

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