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Forum: "Sustaining, Replicating, and Bringing Up-to-Scale those Programs that Work for Latino Youth"

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LEAD Original Programming

“Sustaining, Replicating, and Bringing Up-to-Scale those Programs that Work for Latino Youth” (2012)

START – 00:00:00

[Music]

>> Dr. Enrique Murillo, Jr.: Bienvenidos and welcome to the next installment of LEAD Media Programming. From Studio 54 campus of California State University San Bernardino, the digital media platform for inspired educators, leaders, and community activists, and advocates. Taking our message directly to the people, to the gente. Thank you for sharing our common interest in the analysis, discussion, critique, dissemination, and commitment to the educational issues that impact Latinos. I'm your host, Dr. Enrique Murillo, Jr., and this episode is a syndicated replay from season three of LEAD Summit 2012. The theme for the 2012 LEAD Summit, sustaining, replicating, and bringing up to scale those programs that work for Latino youth was of particular importance because the Latino population was large, growing, and relatively young, but had lower educational achievement than other groups in the nation. Addressing the educational needs of the fastest growing community in the United States, the Latino community, was therefore vital to our local, regional, state, and national interest. Given this importance, it was imperative to continue the work of identifying, and cataloging those programs across the US that show evidence of increasing the access, opportunity, and achievement gaps for Latino students. Some programs were shaped specifically to serve young Latinos, while others served the broader populations, or focused on raising student achievement in general, but have shown strong benefits for Latino young people. We know many of the programs making the difference in our community concentrated their limited funds on direct service provision rather than evaluation, or marketing. Our defining role for the future, as leaders and influencers, was to sustain, replicate, and bring up to scale those actionable practices, most promising, and unveil a road map that was hopeful, solution oriented, and forward thinking. This session highlighted a few such programs making a positive difference in the lives, and educational development from early childhood through higher education. Participants offered descriptions, and practical information shown to be effective. Continue, and enjoy the full value, and complexity of this episode. We extend our appreciation to all our LEAD sponsors, and partners, planners, volunteers, speakers, and panelists, production team, affiliates, and town hall chapters, and commend them all for lifting their voice, and uplifting the plight of Latinos in education. Thank you. Gracias. Placer concerte.

[Music]

Gracias. Welcome back again. Please, take your seat. Throughout the day as we get folks coming in, we want to acknowledge some of our special guests who are here today. So, I want to acknowledge Randall Cenicerros. Can you stand up, or raise your hand, Randall, so we can see? There you are. There's Randall. He's a board member, Colton Joint Unified School District, and a great supporter of our projects. So, thank you for being here. John Fudge, where are you, John? There you go, John. Thank you for being here. He's a member of board of trustees for the San Bernadino Community College District, who's one of our major, well, they're both sponsors, and our partners. So, thank you, John. Okay, so I wanted to just take a second to point that there's an ad in the back of your program, it's called, 'You could help make a difference.' Okay, so as you know our, our registration is free, even the parking is free, right. So, it just doesn't happen magically, right, we do it with donations, and sponsorship. So, if you can, I want you to see if you can help us, help the cause a little bit, donate \$20, whatever you can give. It all goes to what we're doing. So, we also are doing a scholarship fundraiser. You probably saw the big sign in the lobby. So, during your break time if you can help us out and buy a ticket. 100% of the proceeds go to scholarships. So, you're going to get a free Jaguar for the weekend. You're going to get two hotel nights in Los Arboles Hotel in Palm Springs, and you're going to be able to get on the aerial tramway that weekend. So, \$10 for one ticket. Get three tickets, we'll sell it to you for \$25. So, hay está. Also, this morning it seems that that running theme seems to be civic engagement, and political participation. So, one of our sponsors, and partners, is our local Assembly member for District 62, which is Wilmer Amina Carter. They have a table out there, and they have California voter registration forms. We also have one of our partners, Voto Latino, is that what,

>> F: Mi Familia Vota.

>> Dr. Enrique Murillo, Jr.: Mi Familia Vota. So, we have a lot of partners who do voter registration, civic engagement. So, please, if you're not signed up you can do that. Okay, so now I want to turn this over to Sonia V. Scott [phonetic], who will offer the introductions to the first of several forums today. Sonia is a special education teacher for the Eduana [phonetic] School District, a teachers' union leader, alright, there you go with the union, and she's a doctoral candidate in the educational leadership program here at CSUSB. So, Sonia, all yours.

[Applause]

>> Sonia V Scott: Good morning. First, I wanted to say it is an honor as an aspiring educational leader to be here, and to participate in the LEAD Summit to address minority issues in education in San Bernadino. So, I want to talk about our first forum, which is sustaining, replicating, and bringing up to scale those programs that work for Latino youth. This session highlights a few programs currently making a positive difference in the lives of students, and the educational development for early childhood through higher education. So, I first want to share with you, and introduce the first moderator, who's my cohort mate. She's my colleague and friend, Asia Enriquez. She's a writing instructor at the Cal Baptist University, and she's also a doctoral student at the

College of Education here at Cal State San Bernadino. Next to her, to the left of her, is Mr. Frank Garcia, Jr. He's the executive director of the Puente Project, a national award-winning academic preparation program, serving high schools, and community colleges statewide. To the left of him is Ernie Reals [phonetic]. He's a program director for the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership Pathways to Success scholarship, and student services program. To my left we have Mr. David Rogers. He's executive director for Dual Language Education of New Mexico, a non-profit organization committed to promoting the effective design, and implementation of the dual language enrichment education. Next to him I have Elena Carrasco. She's the regional coordinator for the Cash For College, also known as C4C Inland Empire. It's a partnership between LEAD and C4C, with support of the California Student Aid Commission. Lastly, we have Dr. Jeff Nevin. He's a professor of music, and a director of mariachi activities at Southwestern College in Chula Vista. Where he also was a part of the implementation of the world's first college degree in mariachi in 2004. He's also the director of youth programs, music programs, in San Bernadino. So, I would like to welcome all of you, and I would give it over to my moderator, Asia.

>> F1: Hello. So, what our panel has decided is that they are all going to give a brief presentation describing what their programs are about, and then we'll discuss some of the challenges of scaling up those programs, and then we'll open it up to questions. So, Frank, if you would like to start.

>> Frank Garcia, Jr.: Okay. Good morning. Can we cue up the, so Puente is an academic preparation program. What we've been doing is we're celebrating our 30th year anniversary of serving Latino, and under-served student populations. We have gained state and national recognition because of our best practices. For example, in 1998 we received the Innovations in American Government Award. That's through Harvard University Kennedy School of Government. What they did is they looked at a number of programs throughout the, every year they look at a number of programs throughout the state. Look at what best practices are. Look at their sustainability, their replicability, and give the award. So, we were able to get that award in '98. In 2008, we received the Inland Empire Image Award for non-profit organization of the year, and because we're in the Inland Empire I wanted to make sure I brought that one up. Then thirdly, is that in 2009, we received the Examples in Excelencia Award. We were the 2009 winner for the community college program, and Deborah Santiago is here, and will be joining us in doing a presentation as well. So, Puente's mission is to increase the number of students, educationally under-served students, enroll them in four-year colleges, earn college degrees, and return to the community as leaders and mentors. Our mission, we take it very seriously. What we do is we want to make sure that students just don't gain access to four-year institutions, but they go on to earn their degrees, completion, which is what the buzz word is right now in Washington. Complete, and then return back to the community. We want them to be leaders, and mentors. You'll be seeing an example of our students in the next panel, at the one o'clock panel, and they were in a leadership institute participating yesterday. So, key to our program is who we serve, and currently we serve about 14,000 students across the state. We also serve about 120,000 students, because we train our instructors, our

college counselors, and instructors to participate in an in-school program. We're not an add-on to what the school does. We actually provide in-school programming. What we do is we train each of the teachers and counselors, so they not only serve the Puente students in the Puente cohort of classes, they also serve the other student population for the rest of their day. So, we don't take credit for doing that work, but in a sense, we are still serving those students. We're currently in 60 colleges across the state, and in 36 high schools. We have an exciting project. Remember, we started with one community college, and have now within the 30-year span, increased to 60 colleges. In 1993, we developed a high school pilot with a handful of schools, and that was proved to be successful, and we received funding to be able to implement across 36 schools. We're barely touching the tip of the iceberg in being able to serve our high school population, California, much less with a changing demographic serving other states. We have an exciting announcement, and that's that we've just partnered with a group from Washington, DC that are an affiliate of PBS, and they're called Catch The Next. In addition to partnering with a Texas higher education coordinating board. We've received funding so that we can implement programs in Texas. It will be our first effort going out of California, and implementing programs in El Paso, San Antonio, and also the Rio Grande Valley, McAllen area. So, we'll be with South Texas College. So, we'll be at three sites doing larger cohorts, which is going to be a pilot for our scaling up, because we're going to serve more students than we currently serve in the cohorts that we do now. We also are negotiating with the San Juan, the Alamo San Juan Independent School District to implement a high school program as well. So, our negotiations are going really well. So, I think we can say that we're moving in the right direction. Our program, I can't do justice to describe the program, but I'm going to try to do a brief version of it. We actually do integrate three important areas. Counseling we do, intensive counseling with students. We have in-school counselors that are part of the school, either community college, or the high school. They are dedicated to the Puente students. Then we also have an English component where we use process writing Latino literature, and that's the second circle of our component. Thirdly, we use mentoring, and community leadership as the third component. As they intersect with those three that's the kind of work that takes place with the students, the influencer, and the impact that we have on students.

>> F: One minute.

>> Frank Garcia, Jr.: What?

>> F1: One minute.

>> Frank Garcia, Jr.: One minute already. So, important to what we do is to have consistent and quality training. So, what we do is we have ninth and tenth-grade English classes. The students stay in a cohort through the two years with the same instructor. The counselor stays with them all four years. We use process writing in Latino literature as part of what we do. So, what we try to do, we do a portfolio assessment, and then we also do college visits, and conferences. For the community college program, we take them through the year, and then stay with them until they transfer. As you know, it's

taking six or seven years for students to transfer from a community college to a four-year institution. So, our students transfer much more quickly within a five-year period. We have family and community involvement. We also have professional mentors as part of the program. I just quickly want to do some outcomes. 96% of our students pass their English and math sections of the California exit exam. Our students pass it at the first administration. We also, 79% of the students, of the high school students enroll in college. 55% of the community college students transfer to four-year institutions. Significantly, 86% of UC, and 68% of our CSU transfers, graduate, or complete their degrees within a five-year period. So, our students, it is working. We're trying to scale up. With these times, with the economy as it is, we're getting less and less money, but what we're doing is doing the opposite, is growing more, and more. I'll stop with that.

>> F1: Thank you, Frank Garcia. Next, can we hear from Ernie Reals, please?

>> Ernie Reals: Sure, thank you. My name is Ernie Reals. I am with the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership Pathways to Success program. We're a non-profit that's based out of the Coachella Valley Southern California, so Palm Springs area. One of the things that we're doing is we're aligning our education, and economic development strategies. We believe firmly that education is economic development. So, we're making sure that our educational leaders, and our business leaders, are working hand-in-hand to support our students. In 2005, our business community approached our educational leaders and informed them that they had a concern about the preparedness of our students who were entering the workforce. Our students really weren't prepared based on the needs that our business community had. That caused concern within our educational institutions. It also prompted the forum that helped bring together our education, and business leaders, to help address these issues. What came of that forum in 2005, was a strategy to make our education relevant for our students in the region. We decided to launch career academies in our high schools that aligned with the economic development strategies of the region. We had identified key industries that we thought were critical to the economic development strategies of the area, and specifically looking at arts, media, entertainment, renewable energy, the cleantech industry, healthcare, as industries that we wanted to prepare our students for. Our educational leaders, and our business community took that one step further, and started to look at the resources that we thought were necessary to help our students get into, and through these programs, and then pursue higher education. The challenge though was that the majority of our students, as in the case in many regions across the country, our students predominantly were first in the family to try to go to college, low income. We had a huge drop-out rate in our area. So, we had a lot of challenges that our area was faced with, but we decided to bring our business community in, and have them support us. So, we started to get support from the community, internships, mentoring opportunities, support for scholarships, so that we could get our students into that next stage of their progress towards higher education. What we've done over the past four to five years is develop a scholarship component that is attached to this work that's happening in the high schools with our students. We've aligned our education, and business strategies, and we've engaged our community as a whole to make sure that we're all moving in the same direction. Our scholarship organizations are all coming

together and sharing data to help support our students. We're using scholarships as an economic development tool to help get our students into these careers. We're also bringing our partners in again to mentor our students and provide internships. One of the other things that is also unique about the work that is being done in the region is that the business community has taken ownership of these strategies. They're really leading the way with our FAFSA completions in the area providing more support for students as they progress with their college education. Our program also tracks students. Students must sign a contract with our program that allows us to track them as they are completing their education in college. That provides us the opportunity to be able to deliver services to them while they're trying to complete their education. We provide workshops, one-on-one counseling, advising, and mentor opportunities, internships for the students while they're in college. We're also now preparing for life after college, and that's where our business partners come in. Really, this has been the big focus of our program, is that the business community has stepped up, and they're really now looking at ways of bringing these students back, and finding them employment opportunities, because at the end of the day that's the goal for our region. We want to make sure that as students graduate from college, we're going to be able to employ them. So, our business community has been very active. Just this past year, we launched a FAFSA competition to get more students to complete the FAFSA. This was one of the goals that we had in the region. It wasn't enough simply to provide scholarships. We needed to make sure that the students were going to get additional support, and they were actually going to tap into some of the state and federal funds that are available for them, in addition to other resources at the colleges and universities. Our FAFSA competition has been very successful. In our first year, we were able to increase our FAFSA completions at the high schools by 25%, and in some instances up to 35%. This year we've been able to see up to a 60% increase in FAFSA completion over the previous year just by some of the strategies that we're implementing around the FAFSA completion, and business engagement with our educational leaders. We are also using scholarships, and the FAFSA, as an economic development strategy. When we meet with our civic leaders, we're able to demonstrate that by helping support students in completing the FAFSA that money is coming back to the community. Last year, the first year of our FAFSA competition, we were able to help our students secure over \$8 million in financial aid. We use that as a tool when we go to the community to try to engage our business, and educational leaders, or civic leaders. So, that they can help our students continue, and pursue higher education, and get them back into employment opportunities. Thank you.

>> F1: Thank you so much. Next, Mr. David Rogers.

>> David Rogers: Thank you. Excuse me, thank you, Asia. I'm going to wait for some PowerPoint slides to go up. I am very honored to be a part of this panel discussion, and I'm also honored to be representing dual language education programs in our country. I am with Dual Language Education in New Mexico, just one technical assistance non-profit in this country, who is working with schools, and districts, who have taken on dual language as a model program for their student body, including their Latino students. The demand, and the need for dual language education programs continues to grow. It

began 20 to 30 years ago here in our country, even though we've had dual language programs here for 40 or more years. Certainly, the research goes back that far, and this idea of engaging in a curriculum that's delivered in two languages, and setting expectations for our students that will allow them to succeed academically linguistically, and socioculturally in at least two languages, if not more. Our motivations for dual language education, or beginning a dual language program, are diverse. You have board of ed people sometimes who look at the research closely, and they say, 'Dual language education is going to be our model program for helping to close the achievement gap for some of our students who have not performed academically well.' You have other motivations by school communities, where a non-English language is a heritage language, i.e., Spanish for many of our traditional New Mexican families, and because grandma, dad were punished for using their heritage language in school, the language was certainly not used for instruction in the classroom. Now we have students, and grandchildren, who are passively fluent in Spanish, but really have no command of the language, or the ability to engage in academic level conversations in that language. So, families want dual language education for that purpose. Then, of course, we get into the motivation of the importance of language in connection to culture, and to cultural identity. When you have students that come to still a traditional school system it does not appear like them, because it's still Eurocentric in so many ways from format, to content. The idea of dual language education just makes school look more like me. Looks more like our kids that we're trying to reach, and that's extremely important. Then, of course, you have this lofty motivation that's being taken on by many districts, and even state departments of education. That we want to prepare global citizenry, a student body that not only is proficient academically, but speaks two or more languages, and is ready to compete on a global level in education, business, science, the arts, this kind of thing. So, there are several motivations that are there. The folks that are, sort of, leading the way, or being smarter about this, are the districts, and the state departments of education, who are, sort of, working hard to set policy, and support systems in place, that do an effective job of supporting those school communities that choose to engage the design implementation of a dual language program. I have up here on the screen just several vision statements from districts in Illinois, in El Paso, which I've met a lot of people here who are originally from, or still are, in El Paso. We have folks in Canada that we have worked with in Edmonton, for example. There's still a wonderful attitude about this idea of multilingual education in our sister country to the north of us. These are all folks who are, sort of, trying to stay ahead of his huge demand for dual language education, and are doing so by making sure policy, and support systems are in place of that. There are many challenges that are facing this idea of dual language education, you know, it's not for the faint-hearted. That's something that we say in our office very often. I mean, this isn't a Rosetta Stone approach to second language development as was mentioned earlier. This is fully engaging at all levels, including at the academic level, students in a curriculum that's delivered in two or more languages. We're talking about academic proficiency here, not just oral fluency in a second language. So, there are some challenges. It's a very complex program. It is a program that requires a shift in paradigm for those of us who have been site administrators, or district administrators. There's a whole different approach in a dual language program to what curriculum piece we design, or adopt, and

how we prepare teachers, and how we bring in new teachers into the school environment, into the classroom, and support them. How we assess, you know, how do we assess students when they become emergency bilinguals? How do we identify that cognitive strength, and flexibility that exists there between their languages, not just how are they doing in the two, or more languages that they're approaching? It's a very different way of approaching education. That shift requires good communication, and having stakeholders, all the stakeholders at the table. One of the things that we are facing now is a lot of elementary schools who have gone for the dual language, the dream, and the promise of dual language education, have done a fantastic job with that, but what do we do when the students get to fifth, or sixth grade and are transitioning to secondary? Are those secondary programs ready to provide the same caliber, the same level of curriculum to extend that program? We're not engaged in this endeavor alone. Besides some of those school districts that I mentioned that are taking the lead, there are also others that weren't on that list today. I talked to some students from the Bay area, for example. San Francisco has a phenomenal history with dual language education. The San Diego County Office of Education, wonderful history there. Our own Deming Public Schools in New Mexico. Portales schools in New Mexico are all working on this. In addition, we do have some organizations like Dual Language Education in New Mexico that are working closely to, kind of, provide guidance, and some commonsense approaches to the policy, and supports that we need. I just listed a few here. Your own [inaudible] organization, which is part of your statewide organization. The other one is Resource Center, Center of Applied Linguistics, The Center for Advanced Research and Language Acquisition at the University of Minnesota and, of course, ourselves. So, that's just a little bit about dual language education, and the promise of dual language education. I think I'll just stop there.

>> F1: Okay, thank you very much, David. Next, we have Elena Carrasco.

>> Elena Carrasco: Good morning. It's truly an honor and a privilege to be on this panel with such distinguished guests who have accomplished so much in our communities across the state, and across the country. I am the regional coordinator for Cash For College. It is an organization under the auspices of the California Student Aid Commission, and it's funded by the Californian Student Aid Commission. What we do is we offer financial aid workshops for students. Primarily, first-generation, low-income students, throughout the State of California. My particular project was in the Inland Empire. It was the first time we had done a regional approach to offering workshops. The challenge for us was that our Inland Empire is 27,000 square miles. So, the geography itself was a challenge. What we did to accomplish the workshops, the financial aid workshops that offered, was we partnered with existing organizations. We used the existing infrastructure in communities. We worked with community colleges, Cal State, La Sierra University, UCR, just about every community college in the Inland Empire was a partner. We also worked with most of the high schools in the region, and financial aid counselors from the colleges, the high school counselors. To set up a model at each of these sites where the parents and their children would attend a workshop that was scheduled in the evening, and they would be provided one-on-one assistance in completing the FAFSA. The importance of this assistance is that financial

aid is the critical piece for our children, our youth, to attend college. That's often the barrier, is that barrier to having financial aid is the knowledge, the lack of knowledge, that our families have. So, that is the gap that Cash For College attempts to fill. We conducted 95 workshops throughout the Inland Empire. We served over 3,000 students. Our numbers are still coming in. The economic impact of that is \$30 million of financial aid went to the students that we served. Beyond that, what we're doing is we're educating our parents in financial aid. We're providing them assistance. One anecdote that I'd like to share is one workshop that was attended, that we offered with a partner. A woman came up to me, and was so grateful, because we offered her assistance in Spanish. The next day she went to another workshop in the region, and she brought her friends. So, the fact that we were able to connect with her, and she was able to serve as a madrina to bring other parents, other mothers to our workshop, so that they could get the assistance that they needed to fill out their FAFSA. FAFSA is really important for our students because the average financial aid package is \$10,000. That makes a difference between a student attending college, and not attending college. Some of our students get a lot more money depending on which school they attend. Up to \$17,000, or more, if they go to a private school, or a UC school. \$5,000 if they go to a community college. So, filling out that FAFSA is a very critical piece in access to education. Some of the key points I wanted to emphasize are the partners that we established. We worked with municipalities. We worked with mayors. We worked with the education institutions. Each brought a list of best practices to the table that we were able to share as a region, and that had not been done before. We had counselors coming from one end of the county to the other, driving 60 miles, using their own gas money, to provide assistance to parents. Bringing translation equipment, providing translator. So, it truly was a regional effort. This was our first year. In the State of California there are over 600 workshops. In the Inland Empire we did 95 of them in our first year. So, next year we anticipate that with more planning, with building more partnerships, that we'll increase that number, because the need is so great. The other partners that we work with, are that we work with the faith-based groups, we work with the African American churches. We work with the diocese who opened up one church for us, and we conducted a workshop at that church that was very, very low income, an under-served part of the city, and it was conducted in Spanish. These are parents that normally would not feel comfortable going to a university, or a college. So, we came to them, and that I think was the key to our success, is we were coming to where our parents were. Some of the best practices that we used to really increase our attendance was one of our municipalities put announcements in their utility bills. They listed our FAFSA workshops on the city's electronic signs. Each of the schools would put it on their billboards. So, that was really critical to attendance. The other piece that is really critical is the students themselves, is generating that excitement. Explaining to them that they really have a stake in completing their FAFSA, to be coming, and engage in the process. So, one of the ways that we did that was we did a, 'Why I apply,' contest, so that we could use social media. So, students were asked to submit a video, and they uploaded it on YouTube, and the videos were judged, and then they were also judged on the number of hits. So, there was one video that got over 3,000 hits. So, we used social media to spread the word. So, peers were spreading the word among themselves. So, that was really key to some of our success. We also use media that students listen to. We played

a really cool rap hip song that was developed just for us in the Inland Empire. It was played on the intercom during the morning announcements at the high school. So, students were really, really excited about attending. When I went to that workshop they said, 'Wow, we heard that. That rap song was really cool.' So, we needed to bring it down to their level. We couldn't be in this ivory tower, you know, 'You need to fill out your FAFSA.' We had to make it really real and generate that excitement with them. Then, so, they can also share the message with their peers, and I think that was the key to our success. One of our most successful workshops, the students painted all of the signs. They helped do the setup. They were volunteers. They wore the t-shirts. They guided people. They provided assistance to the parents in filling out the FAFSA. So, not only were they teaching parents, but they were learning about it themselves, and I think that was the key. So, they're going to go out into their communities, they're going to talk to their peers, and they're going to say, 'Hey, this is how you fill out the FAFSA. It takes fifteen minutes. Fifteen minutes for your future.' That's a huge investment. Volunteers were key to our success as well.

>> F1: One minute.

>> Elena Carrasco: We were able to engage parents, community leaders, teachers who volunteered after school time to help our parents. So, it really was a community effort, and it takes all the stakeholders participating, everybody bringing something to the table. Next year we'll start earlier, as I said, the need is really great, but we were able to make a real difference in the lives of our students, and the parents.

>> F1: Thank you so much, Elena.

[Applause]

Next, we have Dr. Jeff Nevin.

>> Jeff Nevin: Thanks. It's good to see you, everybody. Good morning. It's a pleasure to be here with you folks. What I was struck by, what you've all said, which was so great, is that we all have the same goal I think, which is to help students stay in school, continue their education, higher education, and just do better. There are so many different ways of approaching solving that problem, and so many different things that you can do. With different perspectives, we all can do good in our own ways, I think. What we've done down in the south of San Diego, it's in Chula Vista, which you might not have known. In between San Diego and Tijuana there's a couple of hundred thousand people. We live in Chula Vista. About fifteen years ago, the president of Southwestern College gave me a call. I was finishing my doctorate in music composition at UCSD, UC San Diego. I had been playing mariachi music since I was fifteen years old. When I was fifteen, you know, just I was playing in the high school band, and somebody said, 'Hey, you play trumpet. Do you want to play in a mariachi?' I was, like, 'Yes, okay, I don't know. What does that mean?' I didn't exactly know what a mariachi was at that time, but it was a heck of a lot of fun. Very quickly after joining the group I felt sincerely like those were my best friends. Just, I wanted to keep playing with them. At that point in time, the mid-

1980s, there were not very many educational mariachi programs in the United States. There were a few out in San Antonio as far back as the 1960s. UCLA has had a mariachi class since the late 1960s also. There were a few youth groups from around the 1960s, but it wasn't really anything systemic. The classes, or the group that I joined wasn't part of the school. It met in a church. It was a, you know, weekend after-school activity. And after that point, in Tucson and in San Antonio, some folks began mariachi conferences and I went to one of the first mariachi conferences in Tucson, and Mariachi Vargas was performing, if you've ever heard of them. Lola Beltrán was singing and Linda Ronstadt, who's from Tucson, she sang a little bit, but this was before she did her big mariachi albums. So I actually had a chance to play for her, I played soccer with her nephew. So they heard that. There was a big birthday party they were having, and they knew that I was into mariachi, so they invited us. And she was listening, she said, 'I'm thinking about doing a mariachi album sometime.' And it was interesting to be there at that point. A couple of years later, she made her mariachi album with Mariachi Vargas and the entire United States heard what mariachi is supposed to be, I mean, really, really good mariachi. She didn't do it with a couple of guys, you know, it was very, very authentic. They used musicians from Mexico City, they used the same music director that Lola Beltrán had used. Rubén Fuentes is the one who wrote all of those arrangements, and he wrote for José Alfredo Jiménez, he wrote for Pedro Infante, they used the real deal. So Linda Ronstadt went on Saturday Night Live, she went on The Tonight Show and she went on The Muppets and brought Mariachi Vargas with her. And in the late 1980s, early 1990s, the United States knew what really, really good mariachi music was. And at that point, there were isolated individuals, actually, there had been for a while, they're isolated teachers, who said, 'You know what? I want to have mariachi in my school.' And they had to fight, I've heard, battles with their administration, 'You can't teach mariachi in school, what are you talking about? Mexican music, I don't know those guys. You can't do that in school.' But there were certain people that were very successful with this, and then, others saw how successful they were, and wanted to replicate those programs. So for the next 10 or 15 years or so, these mariachi programs flourished, and at some point, it received the recognition of the higher-ups in the school districts. So for the last 10 or 15 years, now since the late 1990s, there are several places where the school administrators have actually said, 'You know what? I saw all those kids playing mariachi over in San Antonio,' or 'I went to Tucson and I saw that there was this mariachi conference now, and there's a thousand people and there's 800 dancers and they get together and spend four or five days learning about mariachi music and it's a big part of the community and it's in all the newspapers. So you know what? I want to have mariachi programs in my school just like that.' And that's what happened around 1997, I got a phone call from Dr. Serafin Zasueta, who was the president of Southwestern College, and I was just finishing my degree at UCSD, and he said, 'I went to Tucson, and I saw all those kids playing mariachi music. I want to have a mariachi degree at my college, just like they have out there.' And I said, 'I'm from Tucson, there are no mariachi degrees.' I said, 'There's a class, you know, the high school I went to didn't have it when I was there but now, you know, second period you can take a mariachi class. Or after school, and there's mariachi in a lot of those schools.' Even at colleges, you see Elena mentioned, has a mariachi class. But they don't have a bachelor's degree in mariachi music. The same at

the University of Arizona in Tucson has had a mariachi class, but it's not part of the program. But I said, 'You know what? If you really want a mariachi degree, I'll do it for you.' So to his credit, and he took a little heat for this, he opened up a full-time position at the school for Mariachi Professor. So I walked in there with the mission of creating this degree. And then I didn't want to tell anybody because I wanted to be the first one. But the word got out and there was a little bit of an arms race, as they say, but I'm very proud to say that we were the first college or university, we were the first institution to offer a legitimate, accredited degree in mariachi music. And that was in 2004. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

Now it's a partnership, also, with the Sweetwater School District which is the high school and elementary school district in this area. And the president of the board and the superintendent of Sweetwater, together with Southwestern College, with myself, with some of the principals and some of the other teachers, right before I got there, so I was involved in the naming, but they had their board, Greg Sandoval was involved at the beginning, I don't know if you remember. So we have a board that raises money and promotes the awareness of the programs, so we raise money and give scholarships. We give out about \$30,000 in scholarships per year, so it wasn't quite that big in the beginning. So we're around \$250,000 total that we've given out in the last fifteen years. And just as important as raising the money and giving college scholarships is promoting the music, because we think just being involved in music is important. Kids that have nothing to do after school. They're going to have more trouble than somebody who has a teacher who's saying, 'Show up on time and practice your instrument.' We all get together, we sing together, we perform and then we go to events. With my group, we've traveled to Europe, we've traveled to China, we've been to Russia. Many of the other high school groups, I know travel to conferences across the country, down in Guadalajara. So just that experience of being involved in these musical activities, not to mention the skills that they acquire and the team building and everything like that, that just goes without saying. But you know, there's something special about mariachi music. The choir is fantastic. Certain people I know love to be in the choir, it's wonderful, it's just an environment for them. Certain people just say, 'Yes, I'm not really a choir guy.' But then they have band, and band is great for some people, but it doesn't attract everyone. Mariachi is really special for Latinos. It's not just Mexicans, by the way. I mean, I'm not Mexican, you can tell. But it's not just for Mexicans. But all of Latino America, down in Guadalajara we've met mariachis from Colombia, from Venezuela, from Puerto Rico, from Cuba. There are mariachis all over Latin America. There are mariachis in Europe, now, in Asia. Mariachi is becoming a global music. But there really is something special. And I want to tell two quick anecdotes. One, I have a friend who's a historian in Mexico City. Jesus Jauregui, he's written a lot about mariachi. We talked about the difference between mariachi in Mexico and the United States. And in the United States, mariachi is surging. It's even more popular here in many ways than it is down in Mexico. And in some ways, the heyday of mariachi in Mexico was in the 1950s, and then in the 1960s and '70s, Vincente Fernandez is still around but there aren't too many other really, really, superstar mariachi singers. So there's a little conversation

about that. But in the United States, it's growing. And he said the reason is that Mexican people in the United States, as we've mentioned, there's the second or third generation of Mexican people, they sort of begin to lose a little bit of their Mexican identity. Whereas Mexican people in Mexico, they don't have to prove they're in Mexico. Mexican people in the United States, maybe they get together and make homemade tortillas at Christmastime, but the rest of the time they're going to Taco Bell. And that's, for our grandparents, I've seen it in their eyes, it's sad to know that your grandchildren don't speak your language anymore. Or that they dress differently, or something. So for them, there's something very important about proving their Mexican identity. And things like Mariachi do that immediately. So the minute you see your grandkids showing up with a traje de charro and they're playing La Negra and singing El Rey, it's like, it makes everybody feel better. And it makes the family come together, and how many other musics in any genre, how many other musics are there where a twelve-year-old kid and grandparents can get together and sing the same songs in the same way? So for them, mariachi is almost essential, or something like that. So that's one of the reasons I think mariachi has been so popular. And so successful in the United States. And one other quick anecdote, before we stop, I'm sorry. So I was teaching for a few years at Southwestern and one of my students who was a big guy, you know, he looked like he could have been a linebacker. And I know this guy, in high school, he had a little bit of trouble but he's very musical. He played saxophone in band, in marching band and the jazz band. But he played accordion, also. So he would go, after high school, one of the reasons he had trouble in high school was that used to go to Tijuana and play professionally at night on school nights so that he could make some money and then come back and he'd have trouble in school. But he just loved playing accordion, loved being in the band, just loved being involved in this, and he came to Southwestern, and we were doing a performance, and he said, 'What's that instrument?' I said, 'The guitarrón'. 'Oh, I could play that.' So he picked it up, learned to play it really quickly. Just a really talented guy, he's been performing in music since he was in fifth grade in school. And about a year after he was in my program, we had a big concert. And he introduced me to his mom. I was like, 'Wow, I've known this guy for a year [phonetic] and I've never met his mom.' And his mom was so nice, and only spoke Spanish, and she said, 'Oh, I'm so happy. I've seen the change in him that he's spending time with you.' By the way, I've known the guy for ten years, I've never heard anything about his dad. I don't know if he passed away, I don't know anything about the story. But he's always talking about his mom. So I met his mom and she said, 'He's been spending time with you, I can see the change. He's doing better in school, and it's so important.' And I was looking at the kid and he started crying. A big guy, and I was like, 'What's the matter with you?' So his mom left and I turned and said, 'What's going on?' He said, 'She's never seen me perform before.' I said, 'You've been doing this forever.' 'No, she's working, or she doesn't, or we have something at school, and she doesn't feel like she wants, you know, why would she come and hear me play in the jazz band.' But now, he's into mariachi, and she came. So mariachi has that effect in these communities. Not to mention all of the great effects of just being in music, but for these people, joining and helping unite families and generations and keeping them in school. And he, by the way, got his bachelor's and his master's and he's a music teacher in [inaudible] right now.

[Applause]

>> F1: Thank you so much. We've heard about a lot of programs now that are anecdotally and statistically successful. I would just like members of the panel to talk about any challenges that you see your programs facing, even though they are successful.

>> Frank Garcia, Jr.: So, I'd like to begin by saying, how do you take a program that we've been able to replicate with important elements to it? Some of the elements that we have, for example, in our program, are that we develop a sense of familia for first-generation college-going students. That's an important element that most educators won't look at as an important element, but for us, we believe it's really important. And to incorporate Latino literature, where you have culture, you have the identity of the student, that's very important to their education, that transforms students from maybe thinking about college to actually going, saying, 'I am going to transfer, and I am going to go on to a four-year institution.' You take those elements, and you introduce them to administrators, to reformers, and the first thing they say is, 'We really like what you do, but it's too expensive and it's a boutique program.' And so, I get shivers when people call it a boutique program. Because what we're doing is we're taking some important elements of a program and implementing those and trying to scale them up so we can serve more students. Because scaling up, after all, means that what we're doing is we're taking what works for a particular population or a group of students, taking those elements, and then offering it to more students. We've been able to offer it by replication, but we haven't been able to do it for scalability to serve more students. And that's because most administrators or school reformers aren't willing to spend the money that it takes to deal with a critical issue. For example, we know that 75% of the students that go to community college say they want to go on to four-year institutions, but only 24% of them actually get an AAA transfer or get a certificate. And really, only 17% of that 24% are Latino students. So we have a problem, and that problem is not just money, but agreeing with those elements that are important to us, but not really necessarily important to that institution.

>> F1: Thank you. Would anybody else like to talk?

>> Frank Garcia, Jr.: Sure. Adding to that, in addition to the financial challenges that many of our organizations often have, I think one of the big challenges that we're faced with in our program, and I see it across the country, is the change in leadership. Oftentimes you have key leaders that are involved in our programs, they help support our efforts, a lot of time is spent engaging the leadership around these initiatives, but as soon as they leave, we have to start up again. And that takes a lot of time, and it's one of the bigger challenges that we have in trying to make sure that everyone is engaged in our initiatives. I think it's critical to begin to develop the leadership, young leadership, to be able to take up some of these key positions within our community. And I applaud my colleagues here, and many of you that are helping develop our young leaders, because I think it's critical. Especially if we're going to sustain our work long-term, we need to

make sure that we have key leaders that understand the work that we're all involved in, and they're going to support it at every level.

>> David Rogers: I would just add, if you find yourself as a key leader in showing that these programs are alive and well and sustained and thriving, I think something we must do as some of these successful leaders if you will, is be sure that we're building capacity around us, as well, whether that's through policy or procedure initiatives, or just mentorships, because that is where these good programs begin and end, often, is in a change in leadership. And we need to make sure that capacity-building for the next director, for the next professor, for the next board member, for example, they're prepared in a way that they understand the significance of these programs. Especially when these programs represent a culture that is not presently represented well in the traditional school system. Or the use of the Spanish language, for example, as Latino students have as a heritage language. We really need to work hard to elevate the status of that, in decisions that are made about curriculum, about programming, so it's not just Frank's program coming on and being an additive program. We have to make sure this isn't an additive program, this is a new way of thinking about reaching our students so that our programs truly represent those children that are coming, and they have something to come to, and they have something to stay in school for, and they have something that's going to motivate them to go on and be not only successful, but also to contribute back to this community that they belong to.

[Applause]

>> Elena Carrasco: I think that one of the challenges is capacity, and we've touched upon it, but finding out where the resources are in our communities and tapping into the existing resources, existing infrastructure so we don't have to start from scratch, so that we don't have to reinvent the wheel. By building capacity, we can use this sort of synergy with the resources that we bring to the table, and as we know we're all doing our programs with limited resources so developing these strong partnerships and really building capacity in the region, and finding out who's doing what, who's got the translators? Who's got the translator equipment? Who's got the financial aid expertise? Whatever that expertise is, in my case, it's financial aid, but really sort of building a bank of resources so that we can build capacity across the region.

>> F1: Thank you. And we only have a few minutes left, but I do want to save some time for questions, so at this time I'll turn it over to Aaron, are there any questions?

>> Aaron: Actually, we do have some comments and one of them is coming up on my screen. The comment was, 'Thank you for your words of wisdom and encouragement of Latin civic engagement and underscoring the voting imperative. And also, all of you, the success.' One of the questions that did come in is, 'What is it that you need in order for your programs to flourish, to get to the rest of the public?'

>> Frank Garcia, Jr.: I think, sorry, advocacy is really important, for example, with the dual language program, not having a one-size fits all kind of approach. I think that we

need to advocate for programs, like my program Puente, but like a dual-immersion program. My son worked for a dual-immersion program and he's working with teaching students bi-literacy skills. How many of us understand, I mean most of us here understand that those are just some fantastic skills for any young person to have, but what they'll do is they'll have a K-6 program and then they stop it at that level, and students then lose the ability or the capacity to continue. So what we need to do is make sure that we're advocates in our communities for not just sort of, your own initiative, your own effort, but other efforts that are important in the community. I mean, financial aid workshops, I want to make sure all of our students get that financial aid information. So we all need to be part of that and create networks that will do that.

>> Jeff Nevin: Just to jump in quickly, is this still on? Or not on? It's not quite on yet. Just to jump in quickly, one of the things that is the biggest hindrance to establishing more mariachi programs and having them be successful is just the nuts and bolts of it. We don't have enough teachers that know anything about mariachi music. So that's one of the reasons that the college program we have is so important, and I'm actually going to begin a program at Arizona State University next fall. I'm taking a sabbatical from Southwestern to begin teaching at Arizona State. And then I'll split my time for a little bit. But Arizona State is the biggest university in the country, and it has one of the top music programs. So we're going to be inviting some of those mariachi students to go to Arizona State. And then also, again, just the nuts and bolts, having materials. Major publishers, for the longest time, haven't wanted to publish music for high school mariachi because there weren't that many programs and so we've been creating these things, every teacher creates their own music and now we're convincing, and some of the major publishers are actually beginning to publish more method books and things like that. We just need the nuts and bolts of things to get it going.

>> F1: Okay, so we have some questions from the audience.

>> Juan Valdez: Yes, thank you. Hi everyone, my name is Juan Valdez, I'm a grad assistant in the California State University, Fullerton. I'm completing my degree in anthropology, my master's degree. And I have a very general question for Professor Elena Carrasco. This is regarding the DREAM application. Are there any efforts or any things that you have come across that would actually disseminate information on how to fill out the application, or is there already something that mirrors the program Cash for College that you're doing?

>> Elena Carrasco: Our workshops are open to all students. We provide assistance in the form of information for our DREAM Act students. So one of the things that I forgot to mention was one of the incentives that we have for our programs is a \$1000 scholarship just for attending that all the students who attend get put into a pool, and so that's a huge incentive and that's open to AB540 students. To answer your question, on April 2 the California Student Aid Commission will open an online application for DREAM Act students. It's still being developed, but the deadline, it's going to open up in a few days, and although the application is around the corner, the financial aid won't go into effect

until next year, and that's for institutional aid. So, this application is for aid in 2013. So go to www.csac.org and there will be information on that application

>> Josefina Canchola: Buenas tardes, my name's Josefina Canchola, I'm Associate Director of Partnerships for the Puente project. More than anything, I wanted to make a recommendation, particularly because Lead is connected to the White House Initiative for Hispanics. And I would like to recommend that instead of reinventing the wheel like Mrs. Carrasco mentioned earlier, is to really look at programs that work, and best practices like we're doing today. Particularly with the Puente Project, you know, we have a 30-year history, as does the Chicano Youth Leadership Project in California. So if you have two programs that have been serving for 30 years, students and are producing successful students that are going and mentoring and doing wonderful things, not only in the state but in the nation, we should continue to duplicate them and not start from scratch. Thank you.

>> F1: Thank you.

[Applause]

Okay, so, go ahead and if you could just make it brief, thank you.

>> Jessica Campan: Okay, yes. My name is Jessica Campan [phonetic], I'm from San Diego City College. I'm a current Puente student, and as a student, I've been really involved in my campus, what I've seen is Frank Garcia said, like, it's not enough to say all of the students have changed. So my question is, what is something that we can do because, due to the budget cut, they want to cut our program, especially Puente and Umoja and other programs they're in? So my question would be, what should we do to avoid getting cut?

>> Frank Garcia, Jr.: I would suggest making sure that your administration and your school district understand the importance of what programs like these do, as well as going to the Board of Trustees and working through advocacy to make sure that they understand that these programs are successful and that they're doing what we need to do for our community. And it's transforming individuals. Telling your personal stories of your success and folks that have been successful through those programs. I think it's really important.

>> Jessica Campan: Thank you.

>> Frank Garcia, Jr.: Thank you.

>> Elena Carrasco: I wanted to add one thing if I may. As you all may be aware, Cal Grants are on the chopping block. So I would encourage you to register to vote, and to vote. Because the legislature is considering these cuts and the only way we're going to protect our financial aid is for you to have representation. And the only way to do that is for you to register and to vote. So I want to encourage you to do that.

>> F1: Okay, we have time for one last question.

>> Diana Lopez-Jones: Good afternoon. My name is Diana Lopez-Jones and I'm a Puente teacher at Centennial High School and I can attest to the wealth and what we're getting back from the students. 99.9% pass the [inaudible] the first time around and we've just been an institute for three years. My question, however, is the following. When we are recruiting Puentistas, we look at the data, and the data of our second-language learners that they're able to be in the program, but it's the CELDT testing. And my question to the panel is basically, your advice. If you have a district that uses the CELDT as a placement, which is erroneous to do, so when you have a misplacement of students and they cannot achieve these programs that are there for them, what would you suggest? Because that's what's being, like, gatekeepers. When we're talking about Latinos, and they're not being well-assessed and they are A through G, because when we look at the whole gamut at high school level, 'Oh, you can't take this class because you're a CELDT three.' And we're using that as a determinant to place these kids, that is erroneous. And the state's been telling districts to fix it, so I need your advice.

[Applause]

>> David Rogers: I'm not familiar with this particular assessment, but I am familiar with the problem. And that is just using any one assessment to decide whether a student qualifies or even where they are to be placed for appropriate services in any school program. This is a short, quick answer, and maybe it's in part because of the time, but also if you don't feel that the data that's being provided through that assessment is the appropriate data to use in making a decision, what else do you have to offer? And I think that's what you go to, whoever the decision-makers are, whoever the policymakers are, that's the kind of data you have to go with. Go, complain, highlight, bring light to this issue, but make sure you've got some other data. And I'm not talking about another test. It could be qualitative in nature. What do you know about this child's family? What do you know about their history? Why do they need to be in my program? And you'll find that to be very compelling evidence as to why policymakers and especially Board of Ed folks will all of a sudden change their mind on access or even strengthening the program that you want to place this child in.

>> Diana Lopez-Jones: It's the California English Language Development which is assessing their language proficiency, and it's getting the parents aware so that the parents can advocate, going back to the advocacy. So if the parents can advocate and have knowledge of that exam, and know that they're being placed in classes, I mean, the damages are irreparable once they're in.

>> Dr. Enrique Murillo, Jr.: I understand. Thank you. Yes. We have to cut it off, sorry about that. Any last words from our moderator?

>> F1: I want to thank everyone for coming, and everyone who came and listened, and I hope this was helpful for everyone listening.

>> Dr. Enrique Murillo, Jr.: Thank you Asia, and thank you panel. Another round of applause.

[Applause]

>> Aaron: What a great morning, that was a very great panel talking about things that work. Finally, things that work. That's important, right?

>> Mabel: Well, it was great, we had numerous organizations being represented, talking about the different programs that are currently available that are actually making a difference. So it is, it's about the solutions. We talk about the problems but now we're finding solutions. And talking about solutions, we're here with one of the gentlemen --

>> Aaron: Mariachi.

>> Mabel: Engaged in one of the panel discussions.

>> Aaron: Yeah. In fact, I'm Aaron, this is Mabel, by the way. Thank you for coming.

>> Mabel: Nice to meet you.

>> Aaron: Now, we had a question from our audience here that we didn't get to ask. The question was, 'Is there a listing of mariachi youth programs in the US?'

>> Jeff Nevin: That's a good question, I don't know of any comprehensive listing. There are individual school districts, there are places I can tell you that have a lot. For example, San Antonio has a lot, Las Vegas. It's the Clark County School District has a lot, Sweetwater, where we are in Tucson, has a lot. There actually are some up in Washington state, there are isolated ones in other places. If you're looking for one place, probably the best place that has a lot of information stored up is a group, they just changed their acronym. It's the Music Educators' National Conference, MENC.

>> Aaron: You got that right; it was pretty good.

>> Jeff Nevin: Well, no, I didn't because they changed their acronym about five years ago. I'm trying to remember the new one. But if you search MENC, Music Educators' National Conference, that's for all music education. So there's a band section, a choir section, and about seven or eight years ago, they implemented a mariachi section. So that's probably the best place that has records of people all over the country.

>> Aaron: What is your vision for the next, people always say five years and that's way out, what about two to five years?

>> Mabel: Dr. Nevin, if you could face a little more to the camera, we want to make sure our online viewers can hear your question and see you.

>> Jeff Nevin: So two years actually, for us, is short because the scope of what we're doing is much bigger than that. For me, in the next couple of years, I want my group to get a little bit stronger. I'm going to start teaching at Arizona State so hopefully, I can get that program up and going. They're interested in perhaps having a mariachi degree also there, and a bachelor's degree. But that's also something big. If the program is successful, if I can attract students, then I can do the work that I did at Southwestern to get it started, which would be at a minimum four or five years. But the bigger thing for, I see mariachi, this might seem strange, but I see mariachi right now at the same moment in its evolution as jazz music was in let's say, the 1950s. So back then, jazz music, well, you played in bars, right? And it was only African Americans performing and you wouldn't teach it in a university. And there was a lot of resistance to incorporating it into education. Classical musicians tend to be a little pretentious, 'Our music has to stay the way it is.'

>> Aaron: I've met a few, I've met a few, I understand. We're all the same way. Everybody has their thing. Interviewers say, 'Oh, if you want to be an interviewer you have to wear a tie.' It's like, well, I'm a guy who doesn't. We all have our rules, right?

>> Jeff Nevin: The musical establishment has its rules, and back in the 1950s, jazz musicians, they're making it up as they go along. What are they really doing? But it took a little while for people to really realize and appreciate really what they were doing. And then there's a large body of incredible musicians, lots of recordings, the music infused itself into so many aspects of culture. It's not just African Americans performing, it's not just done in bars and so now, most universities that have a strong music program at the very least have jazz bands, and there are many of them have jazz degrees. They have jazz vocals, they have jazz composition. It's normal now to go to any school that has a large music program, they're going to have a jazz department. And mariachi is exactly that way. People say, 'How can you teach mariachi in college, it's just Mexicans who play it.' They're not reading. The techniques, it doesn't make sense. But it actually does fit very well with the program.

>> Mabel: Do you think it's likely that mariachi programs will expand to other parts of the country? Because most of the universities that you talked about were here on the West Coast. Do you see it expanding to the East Coast?

>> Jeff Nevin: It definitely is. I have some friends in New York that have, they call them academies, private schools, not private schools, they're private training programs. So on Saturday afternoon, you can come for a few hours and learn mariachi. And also, I did some workshops in Idaho a few years ago, Kansas has mariachi. I mean, any place that, it seems a little strange, but any place that Mexicans go and settle is going to have this. And case in point, there are mariachis in Croatia. There are mariachis in France. And what it is, is that some Mexican guys went there and met a local girl and got married, and then they brought their local culture, exactly. So literally, in every one of these places, there are one or two Mexican guys who are living there, but then they brought the local people and --

>> Mabel: You brought up a good point. You said it's not only in Mexico, you see it in other countries, in Colombia. Just now when you made the comment, something clicked with me. My sweet 15, I celebrated in Colombia and I had a mariachi band who sang for me at midnight. So you're right, it's not just Mexico, it really is in different parts of Latin America.

>> Aaron: And I want to say, our online viewers said, 'Thank you for asking, I'm familiar with the one in the Bronx, New York.' So they know, they know. Well, thank you so very much for stopping with us.

>> Mabel: Thank you so much.

>> Aaron: Thank you for adding that part of history for us.

>> Jeff Nevin: My pleasure, thanks.

>> Aaron: We've got again, a couple of other people coming up. But wow, wasn't that exciting?

>> Mabel: I have to say that was rather new for me, from someone from the East Coast, I have to say I wasn't terribly familiar with mariachi programs.

>> Aaron: Right. Now we've got with us

>> Mabel: We have Mr. Garcia, Frank Garcia from the Puente Project.

>> Aaron: Thank you, I'm Aaron, this is Mabel.

>> Mabel: It's a pleasure to meet you.

>> Frank Garcia, Jr.: Hi Aaron.

>> Mabel: I have to say, you were talking about the Puente Project and you talked about the three components that make it successful. Which really has to do with counseling, teaching, and leadership. Can you elaborate a little more on that? And is this a program that you think can be applied to other parts of the country?

>> Frank Garcia, Jr.: Yes. The nice things about it is that we know counseling is a necessary element to schooling as well as the teaching of English, and to have role models as well as mentors. So what we do is that we intersect those three by having intensive counseling, our counselors don't just wait for students to come in and say, 'I want to look at my program, what do I need to take?' What we do is we train them to be advocates for the students, to make sure that they're taking, that they aggressively look at their educational plans, that we convince them that they are college material, that they can be positive. What we have is a counselor that really cares, that works with our

students. We have an English instructor that helps students develop not only their sense of identity, validates their culture, who they are, but develops critical thinking and writing skills so that students can develop a voice and get a sense of empowerment. With the counseling and the critical thinking, understanding their role in society, who they are. And then having mentors who are very much themselves in the professions that they're in, that students might be interested in. And then we do parent involvement, and in the classroom what we do is we create a sense of familia so students feel very comfortable with each other. So you have a counselor who's saying, 'You can do it, this is how you do it.' You have an instructor who's teaching them, 'These are the skills you need to be successful, you have to be a good writer, you have to read, you have to do the things that you need to do. Look at society and look at your role.' You have mentors that are saying, 'I did it.' And then you have parents who are saying, 'Yes, you can do it.' So everybody around them is telling them.

>> Mabel: So a lot of nurturing is taking place on a personal and professional level.

>> Frank Garcia, Jr.: They're transforming and that's what the literature now calls college-going culture. And that's really what we're doing, we're developing and transforming these young people. But we want them to also come back to the community and be leaders, and you'll see in the afternoon some of our student leaders who are going through that process now and are already doing things in the community.

>> Aaron: For those that are interested in finding out more information, where can they go?

>> Frank Garcia, Jr.: They can email me, frank.garcia@ucop.edu. So it's frank.garcia@ucop.edu

>> Aaron: Thank you so very much for taking a moment with us.

>> Mabel: We appreciate it.

>> Aaron: And we'll see you at the rest of the event here.

>> Frank Garcia, Jr.: Thank you for doing this.

>> Aaron: Again, you're seeing right here behind the scenes, you know, some of the questions we want to be able to ask off the main event. But it's really exciting to meet these people who are making changes and making things go forward, right?

>> Mabel: Oh, absolutely. And what he said, when it comes to education, it's not just, we don't want to place the burden on our educators. It's about nurturing, it's about the family involvement. He just mentioned a great point, he talked about, they're mentoring them, they're giving them the professional skills, but personally, they're providing that encouragement, you know, and that's so key, and I think for Latino students often, that's one of the inadequacies that exist. That there isn't that encouragement, sometimes at

home, they don't have those role models. And programs such as the Puente Project are providing mentors and role models.

>> Aaron: And it's working. They just need money and funds to move forward and do all that. Well, we thank you so very much for again, watching this.

[Music]

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