

**LATINA ADMINISTRATORS' WAYS OF LEADERSHIP:**

***PREPARANDO CHICANAS***

A Dissertation

by

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to 1) identify the pathways and strategies by which Latina administrators reach their positions within student affairs, 2) examine how the intersection of gender and ethnicity influence their leadership and 3) describe their leadership styles utilizing traditional models, or something unique to Latinas. As the number of Latinas enrolling in higher education continues to rise and outweigh those of their male counterparts, this knowledge can help inform current student affairs administrators about ways to recruit and increase the pipeline of Latinas prepared to assume administrative positions within higher education, particularly in student affairs.

A naturalistic inquiry research method was employed utilizing both a feminist and Chicana feminist lens. The author interviewed 12 Mexican American women in the state of Texas who were employed at both public and private four-year institutions in the division of student affairs. Their positions ranged from that of Director to Vice President.

Family and personal influences, education, university environment and external influences were identified as factors leading these administrators to their positions. Both gender and ethnicity were intertwined in who they are and how they lead. Components of the leadership styles employed by the women studied included those of constructed knowledge for effective leadership. Additionally, these women's *Latinidad* shaped their leadership styles, operating from a collectivist orientation as experienced in the typical

Chicana/o family versus an individualistic orientation typically espoused in an Anglo family.

As our campuses experience Latino students enrolling in greater numbers, particularly women, it is important to ensure suitable numbers of Latina administrators who are able to advocate for these students.

*No esperes a que pase la tormenta – aprende a bailar bajo la lluvia.*

Don't wait for the storm to go by – learn to dance in the rain.

For all my Latina “sisters” who are waiting for the “right” time to begin their journey toward accomplishing their goals – do not waste another moment.

To my son, Aidan, who has had to learn to “dance in the rain” so early in his life.

He inspires me every day to be the best person I can be for him,  
*mi familia*, my friends, my students, my colleagues and *mi comunidad*.

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## NOMENCLATURE

- GA Graduate Assistant
- HSI Hispanic-Serving Institution
- HACU Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
- TACHE Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education
- TACUSPA Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel Administrators
- TRIO TRIO references the original three federal programs created to increase access to higher education for economically disadvantaged students in the United States. There are now eight federal programs, the first of which was created in 1964.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

America—the land of opportunity and prosperity, as it is known among its citizens and those who observe from outside the confines of its border is fulfilling this promise in many ways, but perhaps not so admirably within the Latino population. According to the United States Census Bureau 2010 Census Data, of the 308.7 million people who reside in America, 16.3% of those residents, or 50.5 million, were of Hispanic or Latino origin. This is an increase from the previous decade when the Hispanic population was 35.3 million, or 13%, of the total population. As defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the definition of Hispanic or Latino Origin used in the 2010 Census refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture of origin regardless of race (U. S. Census Bureau, 2011b, *Hispanic Population: 2010*, p. 2). For the purposes of this study, I prefer to use the term Latina/o, but Hispanic may be used interchangeably.

Most noticeably during the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and particularly during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Latino faces in America have represented a fast-growing shift in the populations of underrepresented groups. Within the Latino population, the data reveal that those of Mexican origin comprise the largest portion of the population at 63%, or just under 32 million residents. This is a 54.1% increase from 2000, when the population was 58.5% or a little over 20 million residents (U. S. Census Bureau, 2011b, *Hispanic Population: 2010*, p. 3, Table 1). Additionally, the Census

2010 data reveal that almost half of the Hispanic population (46%) in the United States resided in two states: California and Texas (U. S. Census Bureau, 2011b, *Hispanic Population: 2010*, p. 5).

As the Latino population continues to grow, the levels of educational attainment are not advancing as swiftly as its growth. According to the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) *Fact Sheet on Hispanic Higher Education and HSIs* (2011), the growth among Hispanics has occurred the fastest in the South and Midwest. The *2011 Fact Sheet* reports 13.9% of Hispanics have a bachelor's degree and 4% have an advanced degree, as compared to non-Hispanic whites with 30.3% who hold a bachelor's degree and 10.7% who hold an advanced degree. In 2010, merely 2.4 million Hispanics were enrolled in college across the United States, including Puerto Rico (HACU, 2011, *Fact Sheet on Hispanic Higher Education and HSIs*).

Among Latino college students and those who have completed a bachelor's or advanced degree, women are earning more than half of degrees at all levels, as compared to men. Per the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), women earned over half of the degrees at the associate's, bachelor's and master's degree levels in 2006-07, and 50% of doctorates and first-professional degrees. This trend is expected to continue and increase, as projected in the NCES *Projections for Education Statistics to 2018*.

As the number of women who hold degrees at all levels will continue to grow, the opportunity presents itself to review the current state of administrators who provide the educational and service components of the post-secondary educational experience. Will the ranks of faculty, staff and administrators mirror the student population in the

years to come? Currently, this is not the scenario, according to the NCES *Digest of Education Statistics* (2009). Based on the data collected as recently as Fall 2007, 4% of college and university faculty were Hispanic, as compared to 7% for Black faculty and 80% White faculty. Furthermore, executive, administrative and managerial staff representation did not fare much better. Hispanics composed 4.6% of this group, as compared to Whites at 80%.

### **Latina Administrators in Student Affairs Research**

In the *Letter from the President* at the beginning of the White House Project Report: *Benchmarking Women's Leadership*, edited by Lapovsky and Larkin (2009), Wilson states, "There's no doubt about it: In 2009, women have been making news ... in the workforce, overall, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that women were on the cusp of overtaking men on payrolls across America" (p. 3). Wilson references the country's economic downturn and asserts that women are valuable in making improvements to the current state of the country,

"... America has been turning to its women for vision, talent and leadership.

Research shows that they are wise to do so: When women are present in significant numbers, the bottom line improves—from financial profits to the quality and scope of decision-making" (p. 3).

Within academe, equal representation of women has been an important factor in the overall health of the nation's workforce and economy. For decades, initiatives and policies have supported the increase of women among the ranks of students enrolled in

institutions of higher education. During the past thirty years, according to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, the statistics from 1970 to 2007 report that enrollment for females in higher education has risen significantly, at a faster rate than that of their male counterparts. The shift from males to females holding the largest enrollment figures occurred around 1980, according to the report (Ryu, 2010). Additionally, the Hispanic student enrollment figures increased 3.5% to 11.4% from 1976 to 2007 (NCES, 2009, table 226).

As the nation's population of Hispanic residents increases, examining the state of Latinos in this environment is important. From their chapter in *The Majority in the Minority*, Haro and Lara state, "The increase in the numbers of Latino students going to college, particularly at publicly supported two- and four-year institutions, raises several questions" (2003, p. 155). One of their particular questions asks about the status of Latinos in the support staff areas.

While an extensive search was conducted to find research about Latina administrators within higher education, little was discovered. The majority of the literature about Latinas in higher education revolves around issues of recruitment and retention of students, not administrators. "The professional literature contains some important statistical and analytical studies on minority populations such as students and non-teaching faculty, but very little has been done on their status as college and university administrators" (Haro & Lara, 2003, p. 153). Furthermore, a specific focus on Latina administrators from Mexican backgrounds yielded even less research, with most



of it addressing Latinas as faculty members versus the role of a professional administrator or educator, whose primary role is not teaching.

Research conducted in the last 20 years has contributed to this body of literature with respect to Hispanic administrators in higher education, but much of it revolves around community colleges and includes both men and women. Recent research conducted by Ramos (2008) examined Latina presidents, and other administrators, at four-year institutions, indicating that the “adobe” ceiling is still difficult to “break,” but it is possible, based on the 16 women she interviewed. In 2006, Aschenbrenner studied four women, three of whom were Mexican American, who served as Presidents of four-year institutions of higher education in Texas, contributing to a better understanding of the career paths of these four Hispanic women. In 2003, Silva conducted research on four Mexican American female administrators in Texas employed within the University of Texas System. Silva (2003) found that, “Successful Mexican American female administrators proved to be well adjusted in cultural identity and grounded in family, a strong work ethic, and the passion to make a difference” (p. 150).

Given the limited research available to address the roles of Latina Administrators within higher education, virtually nothing was found which focused on the area of student affairs. According to Yakaboski & Donahoo (2011), research is minimal in this area as it relates to minority women in student affairs. Yakaboski & Donahoo posit that the lack of research in this area merits further research,

“... specifically the experiences of Asian, Hispanic and Latina women ... future research in this area should do more than simply consider the racial issues.

Instead, research should focus specifically on where gender and race intersect in the lives of these women and how this influences their professional and overall careers” (p. 282).

### **Problem Statement, Purpose and Significance of Study**

The landscape of American institutions of higher education has changed considerably over the last few decades. “Prior to 1970, almost all administrative positions in American colleges and universities were occupied by men” (Haring-Hardore, 1998, p. 279). Diana Córdova, with the Office of Women in Higher Education, asserts that while women are now earning the majority of all college degrees, they are making scarce progress in advancing to the “executive suite” (2011). To illustrate this, the 2007 edition of *The American College President*, as compiled by the American Council on Education (ACE), reports that within the higher education sector, only 23% of university and college presidents are women, with only 4.4% led by women of color.

According to statistics collected by NCES in fall 2009, the percentage of women in higher education who are currently serving as administrators is 54% and of those, only 5% are Latina, even though “Institutions of higher education have an obligation both to teach about diversity and to serve as models of diversity” (Santiago, 1996, p. 25). The importance of succession planning for the future of not only this growing population as students, but also within the ranks of higher education administrators has led to my interest in this study so that it will inform the next generation of Latinas, empowering them to hold these administrative leadership roles, and reducing the leadership gap for

both women and Latinas of Mexican origin. In *Latinas in the Workplace: An Emerging Leadership Force* (2011), author López-Mulnix writes,

Latinas constitute one of the fastest-growing segments of our population with 13 percent of the total female population and 21 percent of the under-five-year-old group, all of whom need role models. The few Latinas in leadership, however, lack visibility. As Robles put it, “It’s not easy to get your hands on information about Latina success stories to share and talk about with young women” (p. 7).

Latina leaders among college and university administrators should be a consideration over the coming decades, so that the ranks of administrators will more closely mirror, as best as possible, the student population at institutions of higher education. As the numbers continue to rise among Hispanic women who obtain graduate degrees, an examination of the experiences from those Latinas who currently hold posts as university administrators can assist in providing an examination of the paths they took to arrive at their positions and what challenges they may have encountered.

Understanding ways to support the promotion and success of Latina administrators, particularly those of Mexican origin, in higher education will assist with advancing and empowering the Latinas who will succeed them in their administrative roles, and perhaps encourage Latinas to enter the ranks of higher education administration.

### **Research Questions**

As a Latina administrator, I have often speculated about how the intersection of my gender and ethnicity has influenced the manner in which I have carried out my

professional roles and responsibilities. Coupling my interest with the relevant knowledge available in the literature, the following research questions will be examined through this research project:

- What are the pathways and strategies by which Latina administrators reach their positions?
- Does the intersection of gender and ethnicity influence Latina administrators' leadership? If so, in what ways?
- Can we describe the leadership style of Latina administrators through traditional models? If not, what is unique to Latina administrators?

### **Operational Definitions**

For the purposes of this research project, the following operational definitions have been constructed, as influenced by the literature review:

*Latina or Hispanic.* A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture of origin, regardless of race. The term Latina or Hispanic are often used interchangeably, selected according to personal preference of the individual utilizing the terms.

*Latina Administrator.* A higher education female administrator, who identifies as Latina and is of Mexican origin, is employed at a four-year institution in the state of Texas within a student affairs unit at the level of Department Head or higher, with a minimum of five years experience as an administrator.

*Student Affairs.* Within institutions of higher education, this is the component of the institution responsible for out-of-classroom programs and services that foster student growth, development, and retention. Student affairs may also be referenced as Student Services and Student Personnel in literature or within a university setting.

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is comprised of five chapters, followed by references and appendices. Chapter I delineates the reason for and significance of the study, the problem, the research questions and operational definitions. Chapter II outlines the literature review of research related to Latina administrators in student affairs and is divided into the following sections: historical roles of Latinas; women in academe; feminist lens; and the leadership gender gap. Chapter III will discuss the methodology employed for this research project. Chapter IV provides contextual background and experiences of the research participants and an in-depth analysis of the research findings. Chapter V will pose conclusions and recommendations for policy and practice as well as future research directions.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter reviews relevant literature related to Latinas in higher education. It is organized into six sections: overview, historical roles of Latinas, women in academe, the leadership gender gap, feminist lens, Chicana feminism, and a summary of findings.

#### **Overview**

In the United States, an education is considered a “golden ticket” to achieving the American dream. As our country has evolved, particularly within the last century with the women’s suffrage movement, the opportunities for women’s voices to contribute to the shaping of our society have increased. Higher education is one aspect of society in which women’s influence has shaped its environment.

Much has changed with regard to access for women in higher education in the last 50 years, but this has not translated to a more equal representation among higher education administrators. Women hold a variety of positions in four-year institutions of higher education across the United States; however, they remain underrepresented compared to their male counterparts. Within the confines of these academic institutions, the majority of women employed on campuses work in the student affairs, or student services, area of the organization.

Within this group of women administrators, there is a subpopulation of women from underrepresented communities whose experiences as student affairs administrators

have received little exploration through the body of research that exists in the literature related to non-academic higher education administrative roles. While research is available relative to African American student affairs administrators, the dearth of research related to Latina administrators in higher education, much less in student affairs, has led me to pursue this research project. Additionally, knowing how the demographic population of Texas, and ultimately the nation, is rapidly changing from an Anglo majority nation to one that is Anglo minority, with Latinos leading the minority population, brings to light the need to focus on the current state and future possibilities to increase opportunities and ensure administrative roles will support Latinas. It is this group of Latina administrators in student affairs who work in the state of Texas on which this research project will focus.

### **Historical Roles of Latinas**

The history of Mexican Americans in the Southwestern United States, and particularly in Texas, is peppered with struggles surrounding property ownership, independence and equality. Hedda Garza, in her book, *Latinas: Hispanic Women in the United States* (1994), depicts a rich history of Latinas that is not often cited when discussing the early years of our country. Contrary to the stories recounted by American historians about the “Wild West” and the conquering of “empty” lands, there was a vibrant life of Native Americans in these territories, which had been occupied by the Spaniards, who conquered Mexico in 1519 (Garza, 1994). As is often the case, early male historians and record keepers only recorded the basic information for women of

names and dates of birth and death, leaving the impression that women played little or no part in society.

Except in their roles as submissive daughters or rape victims, women are seldom mentioned in history books about the old Southwest. Recently, scholars have begun to examine church and court records, old diaries and letters, and the writings of travelers and novelists of the period. They are slowly piecing together the true stories of women's lives. Women often turn up as owners of shops and small businesses, farmers, lay ministers, godmothers, foster mothers, barmaids, servants, midwives and even doctors. (Garza, 1994, p. 19)

Garza (1994) reveals that the "vast majority of Latinas had little or no schooling, and of course could not set down their experiences on paper" (p. 31). The Mexican American women of the Southwest were mentioned rarely in books, which perpetuated the stereotype that these Latinas held no role or value within society.

### **Latino Family Characteristics**

While the historical roles of Latinas may not have been accurately captured in the history books, within the Latino family they hold significant roles.

Chicana/o families are more likely than European-American families to be from the working class instead of the middle class, to have higher fertility rates, and to value familism-family solidarity-and *compadrazgo*-extended family ties. Finally, Chicana/o families are likely to practice nonexclusive mothering, in contrast to the exclusive approach identified in European-American families. (Mirandé,



1977, 1985; Baca Zinn, 1979; 1982/83; Staples & Mirandé, 1980; Baca Zinn & Eitzen, 1987; Keefe & Padilla, 1987; Williams, 1990) (as cited in Segura & Pierce, 1993, p. 64)

“*La Familia* has been the idealized model for the ties and relationships among Chicanos in the Chicano movement” (Chavira-Prado, 1993, p. 259). An additional component of the Chicana/o family unit is that of having a collectivist orientation versus one of individualism (Segura & Pierce, 1993, p. 70). The emphasis on the family and community versus that of self “helps explain why Chicanas and Chicanos often realize their interests, skills and desires in the community and *la familia* instead of the larger public domain (Segura & Pierce, 1993, p. 81).

According to Chavira-Prado (1993) a “Latina’s identity is affected by work, education, migration/immigration and family roles” (p. 245). The three critical elements that shape Latina identity, according to Chavira-Prado (1993) are ethnicity, class and gender (p. 244). Ethnicity depends upon at least two criteria: ascription (assigned ethnicity) and self-identification (Chavira-Prado, 1993, p. 244).

### **Women in Academe**

Advancing several centuries forward from the historical roles of Latinas to the mid-1900s, the United States has evolved considerably, but is still challenged with a lack of equality among its citizens of color, and particularly women of color within higher education. Luna, Medina and Gorman (2010) write:

Although the resolution of World War II brought dramatic growth to higher education, it was not until the 1950s and 1960s with social movements of equal and civil rights that women faculty of color had foray into faculty positions ... Higher education after 1970 continued to expand due to the Civil Rights Movement, and this Movement propelled women and women of color to enter the academy. (p. 1)

Garza (1994) affirms this statement, “Most of the very small number of Latino college and university teachers, almost all of them hired since the civil rights struggles of the 1960s, have been pioneers in another important way” (p. 139). As before, the accomplishments of women throughout our country’s history are not well documented and remain marginalized. “With the advent of Chicano and Puerto Rican studies departments, the situation began to change. Latino scholars researched and wrote about the lost history of the second-largest minority in the United States” (Garza, 1994, p. 139).

In 1979, Gappa and Uehling authored *Women in Academe: Steps to Greater Equality*, a review of current research and literature about women in higher education at that time. Gappa & Uehling (1979) addressed several areas: the status of women students, institutional practices that affect participation of women students, the socialization process, women’s studies and women’s colleges, women faculty and administrators, academic careers, the law and legislation of the late 1970s and their impact on women and higher education institutions, along with recommendations to achieve greater equality and recommendations for the future. A review of the research

and literature presented by Gappa & Uehling presents a dominant theme of “transition that women and institutions of higher education are undergoing in their efforts to secure equality of opportunity” (1979, p. 2). While there has been progress since 1979, it is a bit deflating to read that similar concerns still exist today. According to Gappa & Uehling, (1979, p. 2), “While some progress toward equity has been made by women in higher education, more is needed.”

According to the Advisory Committee on Women and Minority Faculty and Professional Staff Final Report from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in 1997, “While the status and representation of women and minorities in academe has improved since the 1960’s, underrepresentation in tenured and administrative positions across university campuses are prevalent” (p. 31). With the influences of various programs and an awareness of this disparity, women may be presented with better opportunities to become more prominent, particularly women of color, within the realm of higher education administration. Recognizing the lack of women in higher education administrative posts has led to much research and literature in the last thirty years on this subject. “The literature on women in higher education reflects that they are not well represented within the academic or administrative structures, consistent with the literature on women in the workforce and women in the corporate sector” (Gorena, 1996, p. 4).

The dearth of adequate women leaders in higher education among Latinos, the fastest growing population in the United States and increasing population at postsecondary institutions, underscores the necessity to examine leadership from a

Latino perspective. Through a strong presence of Latino administrators, we might better affirm and enhance the collegiate experience for Latino students, while also increasing retention efforts at colleges and universities of Latino students. Additionally, as the demographics of our country continue to rapidly shift from an Anglo majority to an Anglo minority, there is an urgency to ensure that those entering institutions of higher education more closely align with this demographic. According to the 2010 Census Data, 50.5 million people indicated that they were of Hispanic or Latino origin, which translates to 16% of the population. In order to provide support for these students, it is also important to note that faculty and staff representation at these institutions should also reflect this change in our country's demographic.

Higher education has a responsibility to promote women's career development due to its role in creating and disseminating knowledge and educating future leaders. Universities need to "look" more like the student population, which is over 50% female and increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. To that end, higher education must create a culture and infrastructure supportive of women and people of color. This means that the culture, structure, policies and rewards must be consistent with promoting diversity and women in the organization. Harvey (1991) refers to "campus climate" as a description of the culture, habits, decisions, practices and policies making up campus life. He refers to "comfort factor" as the degree to which the campus culture is hospitable to African Americans and other non-white persons on campus (Thomas, 2004, p. 70).

Perhaps it is through speaking with Latina administrators and exploring their experiences as campus leaders that a clear picture can be painted of ways to address persistence and retention for Latino administrators, who in turn may facilitate Latino student persistence to graduation at all levels of academic course work. The future of our country rests largely with its ability to prepare its citizens for participation in higher education so that they may not only receive the knowledge and skills necessary to earn a living, but may also contribute to the fabric of our society's civic arena.

Saenz observed that, "By 2050, Latinos could represent three of every 10 persons in the United States ... Latinos have the lowest levels of education across racial and ethnic groups" (2010, p. 1). Several resources suggest that today's participation and graduation rates for Latinos in the United States do not illustrate a rapid enough increase (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011b; Saenz, 2010), which should raise serious concerns about the future of the United States. Verdugo predicted that, "As the Hispanic population continues to grow, we can expect to see an increasing amount of research and scholarship on the impact this group will have on various social institutions" (2000, p. 261), although at present, "The reality is that Hispanics are not well represented in the higher circles and among the power elite in America" (Haro & Lara, 2003, p. 163). Additionally, Silva (2003) asserts, "low educational attainment and the predicted growth of the Hispanic population warrant the need to compile knowledge from administrators in states such as Texas" (p. 5).

Despite the body of literature and research about women managers and leaders, women administrators in higher education still face difficulties. The main explanation is

that "old norms" still exist which suggests that women should be excluded from the affairs of the mind (Aisenberg & Harrington, in Witmer (1995), p 166), arguing that women seldom understand the rules of the game, do not recognize the importance of politics, ignore professional requirements in graduate school and fail to build professional networks. The second difficulty women in academe face is the reluctance to convert their educational accomplishments into professional gains, "such as publications, financial remuneration, and promotions. This hesitancy results in a 'conflict of personal identity that is reinforced by the tendency in institutions of higher education to allocate and expect of women faculty more teaching than research'" (Aisenberg & Harrington, in Witmer (1995), p. 166).

Although many of the particular difficulties Witmer (2006) discusses with respect to women's assumption to positions of leadership in higher education are related to faculty positions, she does provide some basic guides that translate to higher education administration related to student services. Her advice to women aspirants is to begin early with a career path plan, consciously and deliberately seek the friendship of a professional colleague in a position similar to those to which they aspire, play the political game of self-promotion and never be deterred from their goal (Witmer, 2006, p. 161).

Witmer (2006) sums up the positive differences between men and women as leaders in the following passage referring to women:

You are who you are, female and competent. Your style of management is your own and no other style will work as well for you. Your power is built upon both

your skill and your sense of caring for others. Be confident in your ability and keep in mind that the evidence is overwhelmingly clear that women's ways of leadership are as effective, if not more effective, than those of men. Trust your own judgment and be true to the lessons you have learned and continue to learn. And remember that you possess knowledge, energy, compassion, and power. Make them work for you! (p. 170).

### **The Leadership Gender Gap**

Many authors have produced scholarship surrounding women's ways of knowing compared with men's ways of knowing. Recent scholarship speculates how these gender differences impact the values held by leaders, and how these values influence institutional structures and infrastructures. If styles and approaches are indistinguishable between women and men, the gender gap is a numerical inequity and should be corrected for ethical reasons. But, if leadership approaches are different, the gender gap may represent an “impediment to potential institutional improvements” (Chliwniak, 1997, p. 2).

An important piece of present-day literature describing the differences between men and women is that of Carol Gilligan’s *In A Different Voice*, first printed in 1982. This set the foundation for a *different voice* in woman’s development. Based on the research from psychologists such as Freud, Piaget, Erikson, Perry and Kohlberg, Gilligan recognized that a different voice existed. “... a recognition of the differences in

women's experiences and understanding expands our vision of maturity and points to the contextual nature of developmental truths" (Gilligan, 1993, p. 174).

Studies based on the groundbreaking work of Carol Gilligan, who identified that women have a different "voice" than men, opened the doors to visiting this notion of the gender gap and what it means for women's leadership. Gilligan writes, "by voice I mean something like what people mean when they speak of the core of the self. Voice is natural and also cultural" (1993, p. xvi). The work of Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule (1986) added to this dialogue through their work in *Women's Ways of Knowing*, providing a basis for the belief that women do construct knowledge differently in leadership roles.

In the 1986 edition of *Women's Ways of Knowing*, the authors wrote in the preface, "In this book we describe the ways of knowing that women have cultivated and learned to value, ways we have come to believe are powerful but have been neglected and denigrated by the dominant intellectual ethos of our time" (p. i.x.). According to the authors, the concept of "voice" not only represented a point of view, but also served as a metaphor describing the numerous stages of women's experiences and development (p. 18). From this research emerged a hierarchy of five perspectives: *silence, received knowledge, subjective knowledge, procedural knowledge and constructed knowledge*. These epistemological perspectives were identified based on Perry's development scheme; however, unlike Perry's research that identified intellectual and ethical development as a sequential process when examined within a homogenous group of



men, *Women's Ways of Knowing* focused on a diverse group of women who did not follow obvious developmental pathways (p. 15).

The perspective of *silence* is described as a position from which women feel they have no control over external authority. The oppression of *silence* has manifested itself in women feeling mindless and voiceless. Both metaphors of silence and voice are the core upon which each of the women's stories illustrates how they "put the knower back into the known and claim the power of their own minds and voices" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 19). Women who view the world from this perspective are incapable of assigning meaning to the words of others or developing an inner voice. It is from this perspective that these women are unable to speak out or protest. "They see authorities as being all-powerful, if not overpowering" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 27).

"A position at which knowledge and authority are construed as outside the self and invested in powerful and knowing, others from whom one is expected to learn," (Goldberger et al., 1996, p. 4) describes the perspective of *received knowledge*. These women differ from those who are silent, in that they acknowledge and are open to listening and learning from others. Relationships with friends are likely to begin as a conglomeration of "group think" and evolve into relationships in which the women feel comfortable expressing their voice. However, they will view authorities, and not their friends, as "sources of the truth" (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 39). Those in positions of authority can powerfully shape how these women view themselves, positively or negatively.

*Subjective knowledge* is a perspective that is “personal, private, and based on intuition and/or feeling states rather than on thought and articulated ideas that are defended with evidence” (Goldberger, et al., 1996, p. 5). From this perspective, women begin to place confidence in their own feelings and intuitions over those of external authorities.

“Our reading of the women’s stories leads us to conclude that as a woman becomes more aware of the existence of inner resources for knowing and valuing, as she begins to listen to the ‘still small voice’ within her, she finds an inner source of strength” (Belenky, et al., 1986, p. 54).

However, the dualistic perspective of right and wrong still exists as an internal locus, versus the external locus of *received knowledge*.

Women whose “techniques and procedures for acquiring, validating, and evaluating knowledge claims are developed and honored” (Goldberger, et al., 1996, p.5) define the perspective of *procedural knowledge*, the voice of reason. It can also be further separated into two modes of knowing: *separate* (e.g. how you should think, impersonal reason or justification) and *connected* (e.g. how you think, relationship-oriented or connection). It is from this perspective that women obtain and communicate knowledge with an emphasis on procedures, skills and techniques (Belenky, et al., 1986, p. 95).

And lastly, *constructed knowledge* is “the position at which truth is understood to be contextual” (Goldberger, et al., 1996, p. 5). It is the integration of the voices that allows these women to become a part of the knowledge they are acquiring. In this last

epistemological position, Belenky, et al. (1986) characterizes constructed knowledge as, “*All knowledge is constructed, and the knower is an intimate part of the known*” (p. 137).

Narrowing the focus on women’s development to those of women administrators, Haring-Hidore, Freeman, Phelps, Spann and Wooten, Jr. (1990) conducted a study on higher education administrators based on the findings in *Women’s Ways of Knowing*. The research from Belenky et al. “provided the theoretical base for an exploratory study by our group that addressed one way in which women’s administrative performance and contribution may be different” (Haring-Hidore et al., 1990, p. 172). Women administrators were interviewed, reflecting on “how they knew things and made decisions and how this might affect their leadership” (Haring-Hidore et al., 1990, p. 172). Based on the aforementioned five perspectives from *Women’s Ways of Knowing*, Haring-Hidore et al. (1990) posed two critical questions, “What are the new skills, values, perspectives, and practices that women bring to higher education administration?” and “What does this mean to the institution of higher education?” (pp. 172-173). After conducting interviews with six administrators in higher education, based on the a slightly modified version of Belenky et al.’s *Women’s Ways of Knowing Interview*, the study provided evidence “that some women administrators use constructed knowledge as they perform their duties and that this knowledge probably influences their general leadership and specific decisions” (p. 179).

Adding to the literature on women administrators, Madsen (2007) writes about leadership styles and philosophies of women university presidents, citing, “although progress has been made, it remains clear that women are still underrepresented in

administrative positions in all types of higher educational institutions throughout the world” (p. 3). There are two leadership theories Madsen (2007) identifies with regard to the leadership styles and philosophies of the university presidents she interviewed—emergent leadership theory and androgyny, leading in “styles acceptable across many subgroups” (p. 5). “Both androgyny and emergent leadership theory speak of flexibility and adaptability, changing leadership style based on different situations” (Madsen, 2007, p. 8).

Luna, Medina & Gorman (2010) describe how “women faculty of color know their own reality—they live in a world where an academic reality ‘show’ would point out the truth, that is, all progress made in higher education does not represent them or their story” (p. 1). They further write, “personal experiences in the academic workplace are not found in percentages or other representative numbers. To understand the academic reality ‘show’ for women faculty of color, we need to listen to their stories” (Luna, Medina & Gorman, 2010, p. 2).

As a foundation for the proposed study of Latina administrators in Texas institutions of higher education, the study from Haring-Hirdore, et al. (1990) provides initial data. However, participants were from a small, homogenous group of six women who served as deans or vice chancellors of academic units, each white and employed at a public 4-year, historically white institution (Haring-Hidore, et al., 1990, p. 173). The research proposed in this study was focused on 12 women who are from a variety of higher education institutions, employed in student affairs (also referred to as student

services) units, and who identify as Latinas of Mexican origin. This supports the notion that Haring-Hidore, et al. (1990) asserted as a conclusion of their study,

We believe that it is time for all higher education administrators to begin to engage in reflective practice. However, it is especially important that women administrators do so, given that our exploratory study indicated that the fifth stage of women's ways of knowing—constructed knowledge—is capable of adding a significant dimension to institutional leadership (p. 180).

### **Feminist Lens**

While much has changed for women in today's society, women remained at a great disadvantage for many decades due to a lack of formal training, delaying their emergence as formal educators. Using a feminist theory lens, educational administration within higher education provides a foundation for the discussion of non-androcentric administrative leadership practices. In an effort to change women's plight, Donovan (2000) wrote, "Feminists hoped to assure that women be considered entitled to the same natural rights as men" (p. 1). The absence of the feminine voice and perspective is addressed through feminism. "In academia—the world of higher education and scientific research—feminism refers to scholarship and theoretical perspectives that place gender at the center of analysis and usually seek to explain the persistence of gender inequality" (Gmelch, Stoffer & Yetzer, 1998, p.8). The history of feminism (later, feminist theory) is typically categorized into three eras known as waves.

The first wave began in 1792, when British feminist Mary Wollstonecraft wrote *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, the first major work of feminist theory in history (Donovan, 2000, p. 1). Wollstonecraft's work, "defined and identified male oppression and wrote about the fallacy of the male supremacy; the need for comprehensive women's education; the correctness of opening up the professions and wider world to women; and the need to develop a society in which women and men were truly free and equal" (Gmelch et al., 1998, p. 9). In the United States, feminism arose in the mid-1800s with women fighting for suffrage, beginning with the meeting in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848. "In the 1800s, feminists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, Frederick Douglass, Matilda Gage, Lucy Stone, and Sarah and Angelina Grimké fought to end slavery, reform discriminatory laws (e.g., inheritance, divorce), and obtain the right to vote" (Gmelch et al., 1998, p. 9). This first wave ended in 1929, "culminating with winning the right to vote in 1920" (Harlan, 1998, p. 77).

The second wave of the woman's rights movement occurs during the height of American feminism, enduring from 1963 to the 1980s. "Taking up the cause of women's rights ... these feminists—Bella Abzug, Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and others—founded feminist organizations and raised consciousness of the women and men of the country" (Harlan, 1998, p. 77). Activism was prevalent during the 1960s and women joined organizations that supported efforts such as the civil rights and antiwar movements. "Soon after, they were joined by other groups that sought political change within the system through political organizations of their own" (Harlan, 1998, p. 78), such as Gay Liberation and Black Power.

Riding on the metaphorical coattails of the second wave feminists, the 1990s ushered in the third wave of feminism. The efforts of feminists now spanned the globe “with coalitions and networks forming to support individual feminist advances. Many second wave feminists are a part of this third wave” and “In the United States, the third wave is multicultural and inclusive, supporting women of all heritages ...” (Harlan, 1998, p. 78). This broad perspective of third wave feminism in the United States expanded the opportunity for underrepresented “voices” to join the movement.

### **Chicana Feminism**

The inclusion of underrepresented individuals at universities in America illustrates a fundamental difference between the opportunities for higher education provided in the United States and those of other countries. The resurgence of feminism helped support a new segment of feminism, Chicana feminism. According to Harlan (1998), “The primary goal of feminists in the United States is fairness. No matter what avenue they use to seek fairness, most feminists will agree on a few basic issues of concern. One group of issues has to do with access, the other with control” (p. 78). Chicana feminists were seeking to enter the dialog of feminism by helping to address the issues of racism and discrimination faced by Mexican American women.

It is from this perspective that calls Chicana feminists to deviate from traditional models of identity development, such as those espoused by Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1966) from their research focused on male identity development (Vera & De Los Santos, 2005). Later, Gilligan (1993) and Josselson (1987) examined women’s identity

development from a feminist perspective. However, “the effects of the dominant culture on the identity of individuals from minority groups are not acknowledged by either Gilligan or Josselson” (Vera & de los Santos, 2005, p. 104).

“Chicana Feminism informs the daily social ethnic identity management from a more micro perspective” (Espinoza, 2010, p. 320). With the addition of *Borderlands: La Frontera* (1987) to the body of feminist literature, prominent Chicana feminist, Gloria Anzaldúa, first introduced the concept of Mexican American women who straddle two cultures, their own and that of the dominant culture, resulting in the creation of a third identity – *mestiza*. “Chicana feminists point out that a necessary survival skill when living between two cultures is learning how to maintain our ethnic or cultural identity while learning to adapt to the dominant culture” (Vera & de los Santos, 2005, p. 105).

This *mestiza* identity occurs naturally for Mexican American women, moving them between both cultures, influencing their lives differently than their Anglo or other minority counterparts. “We have much to say about what it is like to walk in both worlds, including the pain, isolation, and exclusion found within our experiences” (Vera & de los Santos, 2005, p. 111). This viewpoint interconnects with the exclusion of Mexican American women as students within higher education, just a few decades earlier, as well as the lack of Latina student affairs administrators.

“In academia, feminist research and scholarship has profoundly influenced many areas of knowledge ... Feminists have also suggested tantalizing new ways of understanding and analyzing old questions about human nature” (Gmelch et al., 1998, p. 15). One such area is that of educational administration and leadership.



As the role of female administrators in higher education continues to evolve, both feminist and Chicana feminist theory provide another lens from which to view the importance of feminine and Latina contributions and perspectives. In particular, not only is the gender of the researcher an important aspect contributing to the richness of the data collected, but also the unique perspective shared by the Chicana researcher with the participants.

Moving beyond traditional, feminist, and ethnic theory, some Chicana researchers are pushing traditional boundaries by producing scholarship grounded in the experience of Chicanas to describe how we perceive ourselves as women and as members of an ethnic group with unique experiences ... A characteristic of the Chicana feminist epistemology is that the unique insight of the Chicana writer or scholar is emphasized and valued (Vera & de los Santos, 2005, p. 110).

Vera & de los Santos (2005) deem the personal experiences and insight of the Chicana researcher as vehicles to foster transformation; the research should describe the “richness and empowering aspects” of the Hispanic culture, reframing it from a deficit model to one that is valuable to greater society. “Thinking outside the disciplinary boundaries and beyond traditional structural hierarchies can open higher education to new and diverse points of view,” dismantling the barriers of homogeneity and traditional hierarchical structures (Crumpacker et al., 1998, p. 6).

## **Summary of Findings**

Early roles of women in American history, and particularly Mexican American women, were rarely documented, leaving the history books with little record of their contributions to society. This lack of historical record led many to believe minority women held little value, illustrated by their perceived lack of significant roles within the fabric of American culture. Within higher education, women were slow to gain entry to the academy, as students, faculty or administrators. With the dawning of the Civil Rights era of the 1960s, the landscape of higher education shifted demographically, with a more diverse student population attending college and the hiring of minority faculty. In the state of Texas, the civil rights movement also influenced higher education, but there still exists an underrepresentation of women and minorities in faculty and administrative positions.

At the commencement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Latino population continues to increase rapidly, with the expectation that Latinos may represent one-third of the country's population in 40 years. While the number of Latinos is increasing rapidly, the rate of educational attainment lags behind, at the lowest level, as compared to other ethnic populations. Hispanics are underrepresented among the power brokers and policy makers in America. Furthermore, women are continuing to join the work force at a rapid rate, at the same time that women comprise over 50% of the student population on university and college campuses.

Given the current state of opportunities, Latinas will continue to strengthen their educational pursuits and become influential members of not only society, but in the

confines of higher education administration. Literature exists to support that men's and women's leadership styles influence organizations based on their gender. Additionally, much of this research has concentrated on women in faculty roles or as university president. There is limited research available to examine how to best support Latinas who are seeking or holding administrative positions within higher education, particularly within student affairs. This research study will provide an opportunity to listen to the stories of Latina administrators, utilizing feminist and Chicana feminist lenses so that their "voice" is heard and recognized for its difference.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter will discuss the methodology employed for this research project. Areas to be covered include the purpose of the study, research design, population selected, procedures and elements of trustworthiness.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was three-fold. First, I wanted to identify pathways and strategies by which Latinas reached their administrative positions within student affairs. Second, this study was designed to consider how the intersection of gender and ethnicity influences leadership styles for Latina administrators. Last, I wanted to identify ways in which Latinas who are seeking roles as student affairs administrators can be supported in their endeavors to achieve these roles within higher education.

#### **Research Design**

The research design and paradigm that most appropriately provides the framework to study the three research questions posed is that of naturalistic inquiry. With the focus on research participants who are both women and Latina, this study provides additional opportunities to incorporate Feminist and Chicana Feminist theories as a part of the research design. This combination allowed me to examine the data through these various lenses to cultivate deeper, richer analyses.

### *Qualitative Method*

This study was conducted from a qualitative approach, to mirror that of the *Women's Ways of Knowing* (Belenky et al., 1986) study and the subsequent study by Haring-Hidore et al. (1990), *Women Administrators' Ways of Knowing*. The field of qualitative research may be defined as, "multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 3). This style of inquiry also complements the style of research that many feminist scholars and those who conduct research on the Latina perspective adopt. "Whatever the qualitative research style, and whether or not self-consciously defined as feminist, these many voices share the outlook that it is important to center and make problematic women's diverse situations and the institutions and frames that influence these situations, and then to refer the examination of that problematic to theoretical, policy, or action frameworks in the interest of realizing social justice for women" (Eichler, 1986, p.68).

### *Feminist Theory*

A feminist theoretical approach utilizing critical inquiry was also employed throughout the research process to gain a multi-dimensional understanding of Latina administrators' experiences. There are some additional concerns as raised in the literature surrounding research practices. These concerns include the importance of the researcher's gender in interviewing (Gluck & Patai, 1991), which has been addressed in

feminist/postmodernist studies, as well as the issue of race (Stanfield, 1985). All three researchers, Gluck, Patai & Stanfield, have found that the traditional methods of collecting qualitative research did not serve the interests of the underrepresented populations being studied.

### *Chicana Feminist Theory*

Irene Blea (1995), who gathered data from Latinos, discussed the complexities of conducting field studies on this population of individuals. She states, “When entering the Chicano/Latino community, the researcher needs to be culturally literate” (p. 50). Examining the distinct ways of leadership that Latinas employ, Chicana feminist theory provides a reference from which to begin. Gloria Anzaldúa’s groundbreaking work, *Borderlands: La Frontera* (1987), introduced the concept of Latinas who straddle two cultures, Mexican and Anglo, and respond by developing a third identity, *mestiza*.

Only by remaining flexible is she able to stretch the psyche horizontally and vertically. *La mestiza* constantly has to shift out of habitual formations; from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move toward a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by a movement away from set patterns and goals and toward a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 79).

The duality Anzaldúa (1987) describes as *mestiza* illustrates the shifting across borders for Latinas, which happens daily and constantly.

As Blea (1995) asserts, the researcher must be culturally literate when entering the Chicano/Latino community. I found that in my role as researcher, my Latina identity and bilingualism provided a level of solidarity and rapport with the participants. At times, some of the women would respond with Spanish phrases or words, with the expectation that I understood what they were saying. In those instances, I believed that not only were these women very comfortable in sharing their stories with me, but they also trusted that I, too, was a kindred spirit in understanding what they were trying to express in Spanish. This sense of trust in my role as the researcher was both comforting and a bit overwhelming. By overwhelming, I mean that I felt an even greater responsibility to both accurately document their stories and share the findings for other Latinas to learn from their experiences.

### **Population**

The participants for this study consisted of 12 administrators in higher education who identified as Latina and are of Mexican origin. These administrators were selected equally from four-year institutions that are Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and non-HSIs within the State of Texas. The participants serve in student affairs administrative units of the institution at the level of department head or higher, with a minimum of five years experience as an administrator. By selecting a small number of Latina administrators for this study, I had the opportunity for a deep, detailed inquiry into their experiences.

Purposive sampling was used to select both the universities and the participants. In Lincoln & Guba (1985), purposive sampling's intention "is not to focus on the similarities that can be developed into generalizations, but to detail the many specifics that give context its unique flavor. A second purpose is to generate the information upon which the emergent design and grounded theory can be based" (p. 201). Through my association with administrators at various institutions within the State of Texas, I sought their assistance in identifying administrators, in addition to administrators that I solicited personally. I reviewed information online for several four-year institutions in Texas, searching student affairs divisional organizational charts and departmental websites for possible candidates to participate in this research study. All participants voluntarily participated in this study.

## **Procedures**

### *Data Collection*

An interview using the research questions identified was conducted with the 12 participants for a period of 60-90 minutes. The interview questions were open-ended, providing an unstructured interview. I used this method because, "Unstructured interviewing provides a greater breadth than the other types, given its qualitative nature" (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 374). In order to obtain the data I sought from each of the participants, a face-to-face interview for this study was imperative, since "The question must be asked person-to-person if we want it to be answered fully" (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 374).



Each participant was provided a copy of the Informed Consent Form to review via e-mail once an interview date and time had been confirmed. Each participant was afforded an opportunity to ask any questions relevant to the study prior to beginning the interview. A signed Informed Consent Form from each participant was obtained prior to the first question in the interview.

Follow-up did occur with some participants, via email, to request a response to an interview question that was added during the ninth interview. The first eight participants were emailed the additional question with an opportunity to submit a response. Three of the participants responded. Once transcripts from each interview were completed, each participant was provided the opportunity to review the transcribed interview notes and ensure that the information was accurate. Each interview was transcribed, using field notes and a digital recording, as soon as possible after the conclusion of the interview.

A reflexive journal was also maintained throughout the process. This assisted in providing a greater context of each campus environment and observations made by me during the interview sessions. By both interviewing each participant and documenting observations about each participant in her environment, I hoped to maximize myself as the instrument. This is affirmed in Lincoln & Guba (1985):

There are compelling reasons for conducting inquiry in ways that maximize rather than minimize the investigator's interactions ... Finally, and perhaps most important, such interaction is absolutely essential if the full power of the human instrument's capabilities is to be realized (pp 107-108).

## *Analysis*

The qualitative approach employs “inductive analysis” beginning not with theory, but “with the data themselves, from which the theoretical categories and relational propositions may be arrived at by inductive reasoning processes” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 333). There are “mutually shaping influences” which may be encountered in a study and the naturalistic inquiry approach provides the opportunity to identify these multiple realities found in the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). More succinctly stated, mutual shaping is the antithesis to causality in that “everything influences everything else, in the here and now” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 151). While some researchers may believe that cause and effect are easily identified, such as the cause can be traced directly to the desired outcome, the concept of mutual shaping accounts for a variety of factors, which may shape and affect the outcome, resulting in a more interactive process. It is through mutual shaping that multiple, constructed realities emerge, each one distinct and subject to modification as circumstances and conditions change.

The process of data analysis, then, is essentially a synthetic one, in which the constructions that have emerged (been shaped by) inquirer-source interactions are reconstructed into meaningful wholes. Data analysis is thus not a matter of data *reduction*, as is frequently claimed, but of *induction*” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 333). Reviewing the dimensions and techniques of data processing for a naturalistic inquiry, Lincoln & Guba (1985) describe these four ethnographic dimensions and five analytic strategies as described by Goetz & LeCompte in their 1981 journal article, *Ethnographic*

*Research and the Problem of Data Reduction*. The four dimensions are: *analytic deduction-induction, generation-verification, construction-enumeration and subjective-objective*. Of the five strategies from Goetz & LeCompte (1981), Lincoln & Guba (1985) state that only two most closely align with naturalistic inquiry: *analytic induction and constant comparison*. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), there are four steps to data processing: unitizing, categorizing, filling in patterns and member checks.

Unitizing data in its simplest definition is that of creating “chunks” of data that have meaning. Lincoln & Guba (1985) declare that a unit should have two characteristics.

First, it should be heuristic, that is, aimed at some understanding or some action that the inquirer needs to have or to take. Unless it is heuristic it is useless, however intrinsically interesting. Second, it must be the smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself, that is, it must be interpretable in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry is carried out. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 345)

Once the data have been unitized, it must also be coded in multiple ways that are helpful for the analysis. Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest that the codes include the source, type of respondent, site and episode (which time the data were collected).

The next step in analyzing the data involved categorizing the data. This is described by Lincoln & Guba (1985) as a method of constant comparison in which the units of data have been transferred to cards and are assigned to a category based on tacit

or intuitive grounds and whether it is a “look-alike” or “feel-alike” with the cards in that category. Once the pile of unitized cards of data has been sorted, Lincoln & Guba (1985) recommend that you 1) review the “miscellaneous” pile to find a potential fit with the categories, 2) review categories for overlap and 3) examine the categories for possible relationships among categories (i.e. some categories may fit under other categories or should be divided further). “At the end, the inquirer will need to have recourse to rules that will guide a ‘stop collecting and processing’ decision” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 350). This is described by Guba (1978) as exhaustion of sources, saturation of categories, emergence of regularities and overextension.

After each interview, time was allocated to fill in any of the observations or information that I may have missed during my time with each participant. I noted any observations or insights gained in my journal entries each time. Once the data were transcribed from my field notes and digital recordings, pseudonyms were assigned. The participants were allowed an opportunity to review the data. The reviewed data were then unitized and each unit of data coded to indicate the interview number, the administrative function of the participant, the location of the interview, the question participant was responding to and the unit of data.

I was fortunate to have received some assistance from a colleague at Texas A&M University, Dr. Elsa González y González, who shared a method used by Villa (2010) to organize the unitized data to print the cards sequentially. The units of data were printed sequentially on 1,951 index cards to prepare for sorting. The initial sorting produced twelve categories of information, with several subcategories in each.

To further examine the data, I developed a chart that identified the number of participants providing data in each of the subcategories. Those subcategories with seven or more participants contributing were culled, as well as any subcategories identified with six participants responding. Each of these subcategories was then resorted to determine which addressed each of the three research questions in this study. Once this sort was completed, several themes emerged to address the three research questions.

### **Trustworthiness**

Assessing the trustworthiness of data can be both extrinsic and intrinsic. To assess the extrinsic trustworthiness included an evaluation of the following: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

#### *Credibility*

Some of the following techniques were employed to assess the data's credibility: 1) activities that increase the probability that credible findings will be produced (such as maintaining field journals and refraining from distortions arising from bias, prolonged engagement or involvement with participants, and consistent data-gathering techniques), 2) peer debriefing and 3) member checks. While conducting my research, I worked to ensure that each of these techniques were utilized in several ways. With respect to establishing credibility, my experience as an administrator within student affairs at the level of Director in a variety of settings and two different universities afforded me an opportunity to understand the participant's responses and pose follow up questions that

would assist in collecting data relevant to the research questions. I also asked each participant to participate in member checking by requesting that they review the transcripts of their interviews and submit any corrections.

Enlisting the assistance of fellow colleagues and administrators in student affairs to assist with peer debriefing was an additional step employed to establish credibility of the data. Two colleagues at my institution were recruited for peer debriefing. One colleague has held the position of Director in a student affairs department for a number of years, is Anglo and knowledgeable about the experiences of women administrators within higher education. The second colleague is one who has held a variety of administrative roles within higher education and student affairs, is a Latina and has researched Mexican American women and their leadership experiences. Both of these colleagues have earned a doctoral degree.

### *Transferability*

The transferability of this data is largely dependent on the captured thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This provides an opportunity to determine whether or not the data can be transferred to another similar situation. The interviewing skill must be one that is both effective and efficient so that a proper thick description can be developed and transferability can be judged adequately.

Providing a narrative of each participant's background, administrative roles and experiences augmented the data and findings for readers to best interpret this study's relevance to their own quest. Additionally, the variety of roles and campus environments

in which each of the participants serve illustrated the diversity within which Latina administrators work within student affairs. Lastly, my reflexive journal chronicled my personal journey throughout the study, acknowledged researcher bias, formulated first impressions, and prompted reflections about each participants experiences and how they related to my own experiences as an administrator.

### *Dependability and Confirmability*

Dependability and confirmability were ascertained through the audit trail and use of an inquiry auditor. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), an auditor should authenticate the records, examine them for accuracy and determine that the audit trail is complete. This confirmability audit should be conducted, along with employing the methods of triangulation and keeping a reflexive journal to ensure that the findings do not solely rely on the researcher's personal analysis. "The auditor's first concern will be to ascertain whether the findings are grounded in the data, a matter easily determined if appropriate audit trail linkages have been established" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 323).

A colleague and fellow doctoral cohort member, who has completed her degree, was asked to serve as an inquiry auditor. The methodological aspects of the research study were reviewed by my colleague, along with a verification of the completeness of the audit trail. The inquiry auditor produced a letter delineating the process and findings of the audit (see Appendix E).

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

The purpose of this study was three-fold. First, I sought to identify pathways and strategies by which Latinas reach their administrative positions within student affairs. Second, this study was designed to consider how the intersection of gender and ethnicity influences leadership styles for Latina administrators. And last, I wanted to identify ways in which Latinas who are seeking roles as student affairs administrators can be supported in their endeavors to achieve these roles within higher education.

Three research questions were addressed in this study. They were: (1) what are the pathways and strategies by which Latina administrators reach their positions; (2) does the intersection of gender and ethnicity influence Latina administrators' leadership? If so, in what ways; and, (3) can we describe the leadership styles of Latina administrators through traditional models? If not, what is unique to Latina administrators? The literature suggests that there are differences between women and men in leadership style, but little knowledge exists within the realm of higher education, and particularly for Hispanic women administrators in student affairs, to address their roles as leaders.

#### **Organization of the Chapter**

This chapter provides an overview of the participants in the study to present a framework from which to analyze their responses to the interview questions. Using



pseudonyms to represent significant women in my life, a brief narrative about each of the participants describes the background and experiences they each have in the context of their roles on campus and their personal lives. At the conclusion of each interview, I set aside time to journal about the interview, noting any observations or insights I had gained that day and how they may have differed or been similar to previous interviews for this study.

I also wanted to find a way to capture my summative thoughts and impressions about the interview in a succinct manner. For each Latina administrator, I identified an appropriate quote that summarized my impressions of her responses and included it in my journal entry after each interview. Those quotes have been included in this chapter to introduce each of the participants who graciously spent time with me to answer my questions. I will subsequently present the data and findings, relevant to how they answer each of my research questions.

## **The Participants**

The student affairs administrators who participated in the study were very willing to share their stories and their perspectives during the interviews. They are all administrators who are working at public or private four-year institutions of higher education from across the state of Texas. Most of the participants are the only one, or one of a few, Mexican American female administrative unit heads in their division, or even campus-wide. While they all have extremely busy schedules as Directors, Deans, Assistant or Associate Vice Presidents and Vice Presidents, I was very grateful to each

of them for making the time to meet with me. A majority of the interviews were held in the participants' offices, with two offering to meet with me in their homes and one at a coffee shop.

### *Adela*

I personally measure success in terms of the contributions an individual makes to her or his fellow human beings

- Margaret Mead

Adela is a Dean in the division of Student Life at a mid-sized, private, four-year university in Texas. She reports directly to the Vice President for Student Affairs, who reports directly to the university president. In her role, she has responsibility for supervising the following departments with a total of 38 full-time staff: Student Activities, Campus Recreation, Multicultural Affairs and a new area encompassing Business Affairs and Community Partnerships. The areas of the university with which she has the most interaction (aside from the departments she supervises) are: Admissions, Retention and Enrollment Management, and the Provost and President's Offices. Her campus is not a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution.

Initially, Adela's intentions were to complete her doctoral degree and serve on the faculty at her institution, but through myriad career opportunities both within and outside of higher education and some changing administrators at her institution, she pursued her current position as Dean. Adela holds a bachelor's and master's degree from a mid-sized, private institution and her doctoral degree from a large, public institution. Her doctoral degree is not in the area of higher education administration or student

affairs, but she does hold a master's degree in higher education. She has been in her current position for 6 years, with previous student affairs experience in Student Activities for 5 years. While she has a total of 11 years working in student affairs, she has another 20 years experience working within academic affairs, 10 as a staff member and 10 as a faculty member.

Originally from South Texas, she is married with 2 children. Her husband is employed as a K-12 educator. Adela is involved professionally in student affairs-related organizations at both the state and national level, along with maintaining membership in her chosen field of study for her doctoral work.

### *Carlota*

There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.  
- Edith Wharton

As a Director for Multicultural Affairs at a large, public, comprehensive four-year institution, she has served in her current role for nearly 5 years, but has a total of 19 years experience in education working with both high school and collegiate students. She reports directly to an Assistant Vice President, who reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The Vice President for Student Affairs directly reports to the President. Her institution is not designated as an Hispanic-Serving Institution.

Her bachelor's degree was earned at an Ivy League institution and her master's degree was earned in higher education at a large, public institution. In her role as Director, she supervises 3 full-time staff members and 24 student employees and

volunteers. Her areas of responsibility are: cultural programs, social justice education, the university-wide diversity lecture series and multicultural leadership development.

Growing up in a military family, Carlota moved around quite a bit, but claims the Gulf Coast region of Texas as her hometown. She is not married and has no children. Her professional involvement includes membership in both statewide and national associations for higher education.

### *Celia*

Women need real moments of solitude and self-reflection to balance out how much of ourselves we give away.

- Barbara De Angelis

Working at a small, public, regional four-year institution in Texas, Celia has served in her current role as Director for a little over 6 years, with nearly 15 years of experience working in student affairs. Her scope of responsibilities includes the areas of the management of the student union and programming through student activities. She reports directly to an Associate Vice President and Dean of Students, who reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The Vice President for Student Affairs directly reports to the President. Her institution is a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution. She has also had the opportunity to teach K-12 classes and work in restaurant management.

Celia completed her bachelor's degree at a small public institution and her master's degree from a mid-sized, regional, public institution. Currently, she is pursuing her doctorate in educational leadership from a major public institution of higher education. As Director, she directly supervises 4 full-time staff members and indirectly

supervises 8 additional full-time staff in the department, who are supervised by her 4 direct reports. There are also several student employees in the department who are indirectly supervised by Celia. While performing her duties, she has the opportunity to interact with a variety of faculty and staff across the university.

Celia's hometown is located in the Gulf Coast region of Texas. Her husband is employed within the K-12 system and they have two children. Within the field of student affairs and higher education, she is a member of three state and national professional associations.

*Ester*

I feel very strongly that change is good because it stirs up the system.  
- Ann Richards

In her fifth year as a Director, Ester is employed in Texas at a mid-sized, public, four-year regional institution. Her experience in higher education spans over 10 years. She has also been employed in city government. Ester's position reports directly to the Assistant Dean, who reports to the Associate Vice President and Dean of Students, who directly reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The Vice President for Student Affairs is a direct report to the President. Her institution is defined as an Hispanic-Serving Institution.

She earned both a bachelor's and master's degree, neither of which was directly related to education or student affairs, from a small, private university. Her current areas of responsibility include managing the student union facility and some programming

functions. She finds that the areas of the university with which she has the most interaction, outside of Student Affairs, is Business Affairs. There are 4 full-time staff members who report directly to her and almost 40 student employees who report to her indirectly, via those she directly supervises.

Ester's hometown is in South Texas. Her husband is employed in K-12 as a teacher and they do not have any children. Her professional organization involvement is mostly through two national associations in higher education.

### *Jenny*

It is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the doing. It is not how much we give, but how much love we put in the giving.

- Mother Teresa

Jenny has worked in the area of Career Services the last ten years in a variety of roles. She has served in an administrative role for the previous five years, as both an Assistant Director and currently as a Director. The institution where she works is a mid-sized, public, four-year regional institution in Texas. Her duties include all aspects of career related services. As Director, she reports to the Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs, who reports directly to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The Vice President for Student Affairs is a direct report to the President. The institution is designated as an Hispanic-Serving Institution.

Both her bachelor's and master's degrees were earned from a medium-sized, public institution and neither degree is related to higher education. She did not anticipate a career in higher education but held several career services-related positions, beginning

as an undergraduate student. Jenny supervises a full-time staff of 8 and 18 students, 4 of whom report directly to her. As Director, she has interaction within the division of student affairs with all departments, and externally to the division she interacts most with the division of university advancement. Outside the university she is involved with community organizations and employers, as they relate to career services.

Her hometown is in South Texas. She is a member of two national professional associations related to her professional responsibilities. However, she is also involved in another professional organization related to her academic work for her master's, a degree that focuses on Hispanic professionals in that industry. This involvement has added to her understanding of the limited number of Latinas in the pipeline, outside of higher education related organizations.

### *Maria*

As we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.  
- Marianne Williamson

Maria is the Vice President for Student Affairs at a mid-sized, private, four-year comprehensive institution that is designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Her original career plan did not include higher education administration. In her role as Vice President, she is responsible for the areas of athletics, campus recreation, health center, counseling center, student activities, multicultural affairs, leadership, student government, student conduct, residence life and orientation. Her position reports directly to the Executive Vice President/Provost, who reports to the President.

She earned her doctorate and master's degrees from two large, public institutions, and her bachelor's degree from a medium-sized, public, regional institution. There are 3 full-time staff members who report directly to Maria, while an additional 3 full-time staff members report to her indirectly. These 6 full-time staff members constitute the division's leadership team. The area of the university with which she interacts the most is with her staff within the division that she leads, while she also interacts regularly with her colleagues who compose the university's leadership team.

Her hometown is located in the Gulf Coast region of Texas. Though currently not married, she does have children. Professionally, she maintains membership in two professional associations. They are both related to higher education and student affairs.

### *Micaela*

I note the obvious differences between each sort and type, but we are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.

- Maya Angelou

With nearly 8 years of experience in Student Affairs, Micaela has held the position of Director for 5 years, at two institutions in the areas of college unions and student activities. Currently, she is employed in Texas at a large, public, four-year comprehensive institution currently not designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Her position reports to an Executive Director, reporting to the Dean of Students, who reports directly to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The Vice President for Student Affairs reports directly to the President.



Her bachelor's degree was earned at a large, public institution and her master's degree was related to higher education administration, earned from a large, public institution. Micaela's current duties as Director include programming and some student union facility management. There are 8 full-time staff who report directly to her. The areas of the university with which she finds herself mostly interacting are those of recreational sports and student organizations and student activities.

Micaela's hometown is located in South Texas. She is not married and does not have any children. Her professional involvement revolves around two national professional organizations related to student affairs. She has held leadership roles within one of those organizations at the regional level. She is not as engaged regularly with the second organization.

### *Minerva*

If you have knowledge, let others light their candles in it.

- Margaret Fuller

As an Associate Vice President within the division of student affairs, Minerva is employed at a medium-sized, public, four-year institution in Texas. She has served in her role for more than five years. Within her scope of responsibility are the areas of student conduct, student emergencies, orientation, career services, disability services, student media, student activities, college union, health center and residence life. Her position reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs, who reports to the President.

She earned her bachelor's and master's degrees, neither related to higher education or student affairs, from a mid-sized private institution. She completed her doctoral degree from a small, public institution in an academic discipline related to higher education. Minerva supervises 9 full-time staff directly, with a total of 45 full-time and 80 student employees in the areas for which she has oversight. She interacts with the areas of enrollment services, campus police and academic affairs on campus through the course of fulfilling her roles and responsibilities as Associate Vice President.

Originally from South Texas, Minerva is married with three children. Her professional and community involvement include membership in both statewide and national associations related to higher education and student affairs. She has previously held leadership positions with one of these organizations. Minerva also is involved with a few community organizations, holding several leadership positions.

### *Olga*

Absolute identity with one's cause is the first and great condition  
of successful leadership.

- Woodrow Wilson

Olga did not originally seek a career in higher education, but while in graduate school, she was presented with an opportunity to apply for the position she currently holds, and has remained in that position for over 5 years. She is a Director for Multicultural Affairs at a mid-sized, public, four-year university in Texas. The institution is not designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. She has responsibility for cultural diversity programming for the multi-campus institution, several mentoring

programs, a leadership conference and grant-funded outreach programs. Her position reports to the Associate Vice President within the division of student affairs. Her supervisor reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs, who reports to the President.

Olga's two degrees are related to education. She earned a bachelor's degree from a large, public university and her master's from a mid-sized, public institution. She supervises 6 full-time staff members in her department. In the course of her duties, she finds that she interacts the most with the areas of enrollment management (financial aid and admissions) and student activities at the university.

Her hometown is located in the Rio Grande Valley and she is married with children. She holds membership in two statewide professional organizations. Additionally she is involved with a local chapter of a national Hispanic community-based organization.

### *Rosalind*

Power is what calls the shots, and power is a white male game.  
- Ann Richards

Rosalind serves as an Assistant Vice President at a large, public, four-year comprehensive university in Texas that is not designated as an Hispanic-Serving Institution. Her responsibilities within the division include oversight of the ombudsman functions for students when they need a variety of assistance, the information technology area, development (fundraising) for the division, strategic planning and assessment and a

liaison to academic affairs for integrating both academic and student affairs. She reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs, who reports to the President.

She earned a bachelor's degree in a field unrelated to education. However, both her master's and doctorate were completed in the field of higher education and student affairs. All three of her degrees are from a large, public university. There are 4 full-time staff members who report to her directly. In her role as Assistant Vice President, she interacts most frequently on campus with the areas of academic affairs, general counsel, counseling and health departments, dean of students and university police.

Her hometown is located in the Gulf Coast region of the state. She is not married and has no children. Rosalind holds membership in three associations related to higher education. Currently, she holds a leadership position within each of those three professional associations.

### *Teresa*

Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.  
- Mother Teresa

Teresa is employed at a small, private, four-year institution in Texas and has served as both Assistant Director and Director over the course of the past 9 years. In her role as Director, her primary responsibilities are to lead the residence life program on campus and a high school boarding program. Teresa's position reports to the Dean of Students who reports to the Vice President for Enrollment Services, reporting to the President. Her institution is designated a Hispanic-Serving Institution.

Her bachelor's degree was earned from a small, private institution and was not related to the field of higher education or student affairs. However, Teresa earned a master's degree from a different, small private institution in an academic area related to student affairs. Within her department, Teresa supervises 3 full-time staff members directly and 1 full-time staff member and 3 graduate assistants indirectly. She finds that a majority of her interaction across the university is with the offices of Admissions and Maintenance.

Teresa's hometown is located in South Texas and she is married with a family. She has had opportunities for professional development through attendance at conferences and participating in webinars. She holds membership in a regional professional association related to her responsibilities.

### *Victoria*

I do not wish [women] to have power over men, but over themselves.  
- Mary Wollstonecraft

Victoria is employed at a mid-sized, public, four-year institution in Texas, and she holds the position of Associate Vice President. Her university is not designated as a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Within the division, she has oversight for the areas of conference services, campus recreation, residence life, multicultural programs, student health, food services and disability services. She reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs, who reports to the President.

She earned a bachelor's, master's and doctorate each from a large, public university. Her undergraduate degree was not related to education; however, her doctoral degree was related to higher education and student affairs. She supervises a total of 6 full-time staff members who report directly to her. Victoria interacts most frequently on campus with academic affairs as it relates to undergraduate students and accreditation projects, along with the grant programs under her purview.

Originally from South Texas, Victoria is married with children. Her professional involvement includes membership in a statewide and national professional association. Both are related to higher education and student affairs.

## **Conclusion**

The 12 women who participated in this study were employed at a variety of four-year institutions within the state of Texas, all holding positions from Vice President to Director within the division of student affairs. Their experiences were varied, particularly in how they entered the profession of student affairs, but all believed they made a difference in the lives of the students on their respective campuses. I believe that we quickly built rapport and some participants used Spanish in part of their responses as I, too, was Latina and shared a similar ethnic background and professional experience.

The original intent was to interview women from a variety of institutions, but was not focused on the diversity of the participants, as they were all purposively selected for their identification as Hispanic, of Mexican descent. In order to better understand the demographics of the participants, and their campuses, Table 1 provides more detail.

<b>Type of Four-Year Institution</b>		<b>Administrative Title for Position Held</b>	
Public	7	Vice President	1
Private	3	Associate/Assistant Vice President/Dean	4
<b>Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI)</b>		Director	7
Yes	5	<b>Highest Degree Earned</b>	
No	5	Doctorate	6
<b>Undergraduate Student Population</b>		Master's	6
< 10,000	4	<b>Hometown (Regions in Texas)</b>	
10,001 – 25,000	3	Gulf Coast	4
> 25,000	3	South Texas	4
		Rio Grande Valley	4
Note: A total of 10 institutions represented in study			

**Table 1. Participant institutional and personal demographics.**

## Research Question 1

The first research question sought to find the pathways and strategies by which Latina administrators reach their positions. Participants were asked questions about their preparation to serve as an administrator and factors that either contributed or derailed their success both personally and within the university. From the responses, the following themes emerged: *Familia (Family Influences)*, *Influencias Personales (Personal Influences)*, *Educación (Education)*, *Ambiente Universitario (University Environment)* and *Influencias Externas (External Influences)*.

### *Familia (Family Influences)*

As a Latina myself, I was not surprised to find that each of the participants spoke at length about *familia*, mentioning it at different times throughout the interview. When referencing their families and the impact that they have made on their career success, the participants defined both their nuclear families in which they grew up and the nuclear families which they lead as adults. *Familia* in the lives of these women has served as a foundation, a source of support and a constant for them over the course of their educational pursuits and careers. "Research with Hispanic populations suggests that role models, and particularly the influence of mothers and other family members, are significant in the educational and career pursuits of Hispanic women" (Cardoza, 1991; Flores & Obasi, 2005; Gandara, 1982) (p. 49, as cited in Rivera, Chen, Flores, et al., 2007).



One thing that to me is different with Chicanos is that in our families, we are brought up, I believe, that the family is the most important value [#12B.OFC.Q10-3].

But I think just being Latina, and then within our whole culture, you always think of the family, and you always think of being together ... we always have that family camaraderie ... [#4A.OFC.Q7-4].

... I think having a strong supportive environment in growing up really helped [#6C.OFC.Q9-17].

Within the context of the values their families inculcated, each of these women spoke about the concept of work ethic. Central to the success that each of these women has achieved is the concept their mother and/or father valued of working hard.

... my work ethic that I learned from my family [#8A.OFC.Q2-9].

... from the age of 14 basically I've been working. So there is something to be said to having that hard work ... that's something that I think has helped me tremendously in working with the students [#9A.RES.Q7-6].

But my parents always raised me to be hard workers. They were hard workers themselves ... [#10A.OFC.Q7-2].

... my family has always said to me, if you work hard, you do a good job, and you go above the minimum, people will recognize that [#11B.OFC.Q2-2].

These women are not afraid to “do what it takes” in order to accomplish their goals. And to continue this legacy of hard work, they are also passing this value along to their own children.

... Because everything worthwhile takes hard work, and I'm trying to teach that to my kids [#7B.OFC.Q9-14].

For many of the women interviewed, their mothers played a significant role in shaping their character. Within the context of Mexican American families, women are

often relegated to more diminutive roles. Canul (2003) describes this traditional gender role with the following:

“Gender roles are ascribed through socialization and cultural transmission. The Latina/o culture has pronounced gender roles when we discuss traditional Latina/o families. As a result, Latina women have been closely associated with passivity and superlative femininity (*marianismo*)” (p. 172).

Within the context of most Mexican American families, mothers are viewed as the nurturers, those who care for the children and family as a priority, often at the expense of their own needs. “America has magnified these traits, and many people stereotypically characterize Latina women as baby machines, uneducated and poor” (Canul, 2003, p. 172).

...as Latinas we are always the last ones to be served or taken care of ... we are the last ones to eat, sleep, etc. [#3B.OFC.Q9-5].

While *machismo* may rear itself, the matriarch is a strong character that is often overlooked within the family dynamic. Canul (2003) goes further in describing today’s Latina woman as “an individual who speaks her voice, exchanges opinions, and is not submissive to a patriarchal system” (p. 172). As evidenced in the following statements, mothers were specifically cited as influencing who these women are today.

... my mom always stressed the importance of education and hard work ... [#1A.HOM.Q2-3].

... I felt like I had a really good role model for leadership because my mother is very compassionate and loving, and she always did things for other people ... [#6C.OFC.Q9-8].

... my mother most definitely has that mentality of failure's not an option ... And, so I think I've always taken that with me ... The sun's going to shine tomorrow ... [#8A.OFC.Q2-7].

### *Influencias Personales (Personal Influences)*

Out of the 12 women interviewed, 8 of the women did not begin their careers in student affairs, but through a variety of pathways eventually joined the profession.

After trying my hand as a business woman, which I hated, I returned to work ... I realized that business was not my calling, this is not who I am [#3B.OFC.Q1-25].

... [higher ed] was a whole new world for me. But as I was kind of on my path, I fell in love with higher education [#4A.OFC.Q1-5].

... I think that I accidentally fell into this position ... some opportunities opened up in administration, which that was never on my radar, and I was approached [#6C.OFC.Q1-8].

... it wasn't a deliberate pathway, but once I got into that multicultural position I realized that that's who I am [#7B.OFC.Q7-8].

It was something, it was not a career that I had planned on, but I'm thankful that seeing the people in those roles and having that experience as a student [working part-time on campus] helped in preparing me a little bit more [#9A.RES.Q1-2].

... I didn't see myself ... to do student affairs in the long run. But when I got in the position, I'm like, "I like this" [#10A.OFC.Q1-4].

Their responses indicated that while many of them had not initially pursued student affairs, they remained in their roles, and the profession, because they enjoy the work and value helping others. Segura and Pierce (1993) describe Chicanas and Chicanos as maintaining and affirming "a distinct culture that emphasizes familism, *compadrazgo*, and a collectivist orientation that is devalued by the dominant culture's emphasis on individualism" (p. 70). Familism is defined as "beliefs and behaviors associated with family solidarity" and *compadrazgo* references the extended family created via

godparents (Segura & Pierce, 1993, p. 72). This structure of Chicana/o families and their emphasis on a collectivist orientation versus that of individualism may explain the value each participant places on helping others.

I think if I wasn't in this field, I would definitely be in some other field where I would be helping or advising others in some way, shape or form [#9A.RES.Q2-6].

Responses from the participants also demonstrate that these women have spent time reflecting on their personal characteristics that have led to their success as administrators. This has manifested itself in the variety of ways in which they described that they help their students, their staff, colleagues and mentees. There is a deep understanding of how their work influences others, leading them to have high expectations of themselves.

... I think all people, regardless of what they do, are successful when they are able to be their best selves in their work [#2A.OFC.Q10-1]

... With great power comes great responsibility ... [#5A.HOM.Q3-34].

... There were certain things that I expected for myself to do [#6C.OFC.Q7-21].

... I always went in there thinking, I'm going to be the best committee member I can be on this committee ... [#11B.OFC.Q2-9].

The melding of personal influences on the participants, such as their varied pathways to positions within student affairs, life long learning and the personal expectations they placed upon themselves illustrate the notion that their career is not just a job, but very central to who they are. Research conducted by Hernández and Morales (1999) on career development experiences for Latinas working in student affairs affirms this idea. When asked to define career, the participants stated,

Career was not job, or occupation, but rather a series of experiences that make each individual unique ... It is a path that an individual chooses that may or may not be straight in nature ... In fact, all participants referred to ‘career’ as being organic and changing as life progresses. For example, Lupe stated, ‘Career is not a job. It’s a way of life.’ (Hernández & Morales, 1999, p. 51)

### *Educación (Education)*

For the participants in this study, *educación* represents both achievement and preparation to serve in their roles as student affairs administrators. Education for these women includes not only the completion of their graduate degrees, but also the continuing education that they participate in through a variety of methods. With regard to the graduate education, women cited the fact that it granted them credibility as a member of the profession and a sense of perseverance.

... I also knew that working in higher ed you had to get that degree ...  
[#1A.HOM.Q2-4].

... once you get your Ph.D. and they’re calling you “doctor,” it gives you credibility with your peers [#3B.OFC.Q9-11].

Graduate education also imparted knowledge and a set of skills that was either directly related or transferrable to their administrative roles on campus.

[doctorate] ... learning how to effectively impact and influence people and then how to empower them to do the same [#3B.OFC.Q1-15].

... the coursework ... is extremely beneficial if you’re in a solid program  
[#5A.HOM.Q1-18].

I do have a master’s degree, ... you do learn a lot of professional ... skillsets just going through your master’s program [#8A.OFC.Q1-8].

The public relations part of my communications degree helps me out tremendously ... the business administration helps with more the business side ... [#9A.RES.Q2-4].

One of the other things that I think has definitely helped was the background that I had. My degrees are not anything related to student affairs. ... So I've taken a little bit of both [#9A.RES.Q2-3].

I started working on my master's, and that education ... really helped me ... I brought a lot of what I was learning as part of "How do you lead? ... [#10A.OFC.Q1-17].

... formal coursework definitely played a role in my preparation [#11B.OFC.Q1-1].

My master's degree is in counseling, so I think I'm able to use a lot of the skills that I learned in talking with clients to help me in talking with students [#12B.OFC.Q2-2].

Additionally, the term "life long learner" was used by a few of the participants to illustrate how they integrate this concept on a regular basis so that they are informed practitioners. These women firmly believe that it is important to continue to replenish the knowledge they hold with current data so that they can be as effective as possible. Couching the concept of "life long learner" into that of professional development provides a framework to discuss the positive effects it has on Latinas serving in administrative positions in higher education.

Muñoz (2010) conducted a study of 26 Latina community college presidents who identified professional preparation as a component of their path to assuming a leadership position. "One president suggested that Latinas should engage in professional development at each stage of their career to not only learn the skills, but the expectations and nuances of leadership" (Muñoz, 2010, p. 170). The participants' comments

demonstrate the importance they place on professional development in supporting their career advancement.

But most importantly, it is important to be a life long learner in our profession as well as our personal lives [#3B.OFC.Q9-34].

... you're green and growing. So I feel like I'm always growing and learning and hoping that I'm prepared for what's coming in the future [#4A.OFC.Q1-15].

the opportunities I was given in each of my positions along the way to continue building on the current skills and competencies I had [#11B.OFC.Q1-3].

... there's always room for growth ... being open to ... learning opportunities ... [#10A.OFC.Q1-18].

It's about being a lifelong learner [#11B.OFC.Q10-5].

#### *Ambiente Universitario (University Environment)*

As an administrator within student affairs, a majority of the week is spent on campus, with attendance at many night and weekend activities required throughout the academic year. The environment in which these women work is an important factor to their achieving success. While there were facets of their daily work experiences that created barriers for these women, they identified areas in which the university had nurtured their success and provided opportunities for growth, as supported in the statement below.

I think the university is a very nurturing place [#8A.OFC.Q2-2].

Additionally, the university provided support for these women to pursue their graduate degrees or professional development in a variety of ways, such as providing financial assistance and released time to attend class.

... as an example we have an “employee betterment program” so that program allows individuals who want to try to attain a degree, a higher degree, or get some professional training, to still go to school and they’ll pay for half it. ... so that definitely helps out financially [#1A.HOM.Q4-5].

Obviously I did my doctoral work while I was working full-time as well, and so we have policies that allow staff members to take hours while they’re working full-time, so we have some release hours that we’re able to do that [#11B.OFC.Q4-7].

Supervisors were also strong advocates of these women’s success and ability to achieve their goals. Their supervisors were both men and women. And, at times, even when a supervisor was not as supportive as expected, that experience provided a valuable opportunity for self-reflection to inform her own supervisory abilities.

If I consider my supervisors, I think my supervisors have been a contributing factor as well. And they’ve been very supportive in that manner [#1A.HOM.Q4-8].

... one of the things I’m proudest of as a skillset is my skills as a supervisor ... I think it’s important that you do ... run across those scenarios of a poor supervisor. Because I think those have been the most defining things for me of how I approach my own supervision, my own supervisory style is ... [#5A.HOM.Q5-25].

... people in our vice president positions that we’ve had have really supported us ... I really do feel that they trust us and they push us, and that’s very rewarding [#8A.OFC.Q4-8].

... when it came to my actual writing, my supervisors were really willing to give me a flex schedule to be able to take a day off each week and write, to finish up ... [#11B.OFC.Q4-9].

Similarly, a component of the university environment that influences these women in their daily roles are those of their colleagues both within the division of student affairs or across the campus. These collegial relationships are an important piece of the university environment that enhances their feeling of university support for the work they perform. Some of the women illustrated this in the following statements.



But my colleagues are amazing! We are very different, but share the love for our students and for student affairs [#3B.OFC.Q6-4].

... I think there's just a lot of people that are well-trained, well-prepared, they're very good at what they do, and so they have your back. And so I think that's definitely something the university has done for us [#8A.OFC.Q4-2].

... I work with wonderful top-notch professionals here [#11B.OFC.Q4-11].

An aspect of the campus environment that was mentioned on several occasions was that of the campus political climate that exists and affects how these women fulfill their duties on campus. The general consensus is that you have to be aware that politics exist and strategize the best ways to navigate the politics on each campus in order to further your agenda. At times, this may be a hindrance to these women who are serving or seeking to advance. Navigating campus politics is not typically an aspect of preparation that is taught in higher education programs.

... While they've given me the opportunity, it's the political environment I think that hinders [#1A.HOM.Q4-22].

You have to have a keen awareness and understanding of campus politics [#2A.OFC.Q10-11].

It is important to know what battles to fight and what causes to stand for [#3B.OFC.Q9-33].

but I think at the administrative level, you have to also understand the politics involved with things. And that's the one that's not so tangible to teach because it differs so much, not just from university to university, also even department to department, and even as players change ... you have to be able to have a political sense in a way [#5A.HOM.Q1-25].

There's always issues, and there's always a lot of politics ... [#6C.OFC.Q5-48].

### *Influencias Externas (External Influences)*

The role mentors have played in the professional lives of these women was significant. It was through these relationships that the women spoke about gaining insights or support in order to either be prepared for their roles or to better understand their roles. These relationships were described as both formal and informal. Mentors were both men and women who were from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

mentors, not just one, who shared their experiences of what it was like, talked to me about the possibilities, let me know what was out there, my mom couldn't do that for me, because she hadn't experienced it, she didn't know what college life was about, so that helped out [#1A.HOM.Q2-6].

I had really good mentors, all along the way, so I felt adequately right to do what I needed to do [#2A.OFC.Q1-8].

... if you've not met her, had an opportunity to meet her, she's an amazing woman. And she is my mentor and role model. She's the one that encourages me all the time to keep going ... [#4A.OFC.Q4-6].

So those sort of factors like support and mentorship, not just mentorship because mentorship can happen laterally, but also this support like I said from supervisors and above, whether it be the university, the president, your VP, your regents, whatever the case might be [#5A.HOM.Q2-7].

... I was very grateful for this African-American gentleman who saw promise in a little Latina girl and that's really where it began [#7B.OFC.Q1-10].

And so I think being mentored by somebody ... that experience was what prepared me, spending those three years under him [#8A.OFC.Q1-4].

... because of the mentorship and leadership and guidance I've had from other people involved, my supervisors, faculty members, mentors, colleagues, that really has contributed to my success because when they saw opportunities for me, they recommended me for those opportunities and I was able to take advantage of that, of those opportunities [#11B.OFC.Q2-5].

Mentoring benefitted these women through both formal and informal relationships. The more formal relationships provided opportunities for the women to identify and/or set

goals, articulate how to achieve those goals and become directly connected to resources and support to achieve their goals. Most often, the women studied initiated these formal mentoring relationships.

At times, some of the informal mentoring relationships, as described by the participants, were less of an actual relationship and developed through their observations of how their supervisors, or other superiors, handled situations, providing examples for them to utilize in similar situations. However, two participants noted that mentors may not always be an option. One participant noted that while help may be available through mentoring within the university environment, without knowing what to request in terms of assistance, or being assertive enough, the help may be challenging to acquire. And the other expressed that she did not feel that she needed a connection to someone who looked like her in order to know she can succeed.

I think people are good at helping you if you are also good at asserting yourself and asking for something specific, but I don't think I knew enough to know what to ask for ... [#12B.OFC.Q3-14].

If anybody can do it, I can do it, is really what my thought process was. I didn't need someone who looked like me in order to for me to think that I needed to progress in that way. But I know that's important for other people so I respect that [#11B.OFC.Q7-7].

And lastly, the university environment is not teeming with Latinas at many levels, which was pointed out by these women in their responses about what they are currently experiencing as one of a few, or the only one, in a variety of professional settings within student affairs. Commonly referred to as “the pipeline”, the participants shared that there are few Latinas in the pipeline at all levels of post-secondary education, which is the first step to entering student affairs in most instances. While they are constantly seeking ways

to connect with Latinas at the undergraduate, graduate or professional levels, there are few to connect with on their own campuses.

And, so when I look at student affairs ... There's not many of us ... [#1A.HOM.Q9-7].

You know one of the most interesting statistics I learned in grad school is something along the lines of how few women who are Latina even get college degrees ... I just remember being really shocked [#2A.OFC.Q8-1].

It is few, the pipeline ... and I've done many a search committee, whether it's for my own positions or for other search committees, ... and the pipeline is few and far between of who makes it up the ranks, of who survives up the ranks, and I'm like, it's not for lack of trying I haven't seen [#5A.HOM.Q8-16].

I'm not saying that there weren't [women Ph.D.s], but it was just a small number ... [#6C.OFC.Q7-17].

The participants seem to be the exception, rather than the norm both on their campuses and within their professional associations, as described through their comments below. This does leave them with a heightened realization that how they carry out their duties has far greater impact than a non-Latina in the same position.

I've wondered about it a lot when I'm at conferences, when I'm at professional organization, or when I see presenters or I see other leaders, when I don't see that we're represented [#1A.HOM.Q7-28].

... at my last job I was the only one [#2A.OFC.Q8-4].

... one of the reasons I work at an HSI is that I realize I'm the exception. I'm not the measure by which all things are, can be measured [#7B.OFC.Q7-4].

Because I don't want to be the only woman up here ... and I think I might be the first Hispanic in this office. So I'm cognizant of that. And I understand what that means to other people who are looking at me, too ... [#11B.OFC.Q7-5].

... Not very many [Latinos], but those who are here we try and support them and encourage them in any way that we can [#4A.OFC.Q4-20].

As a result of the few Latinas who are in the pipeline, the number of Latinas who are either vying for positions, or who currently hold positions within student affairs, is limited, supporting the literature. As the student population on campuses within the state of Texas continues to evolve, and more Latino students enroll, the few number of Latinas in administrative positions will present a continuous need to examine this situation and determine how to best provide support to these Latinas.

In summary, the women in this study arrived at their present roles as student affairs administrators through a variety of preparation, pathways and strategies. This participant's comments below provide a glimpse of the diverse manner in which these women reached their positions.

I think it was a combination of ... gene pool, kind of having a predisposition toward management or directing, and the combination of getting my Ph.D. ... [#6C.OFC.Q1-2].

The common factors of *familia* as a strong influence on their success, their personal fortitude, education and mentoring were clearly identified as contributing to their success. Within the university environment, it was a nurturing and supportive environment for the most part, with campus politics as the one aspect that can become a hindrance to advancement if they are not prepared to navigate its nuances from campus to campus.

## **Research Question 2**

Exploring the intersection of gender and ethnicity and its influence on Latina administrators' leadership styles was addressed in the second research question. The

participants were asked to describe their leadership style and how it differed from that of their male colleagues. Additionally, participants were asked about how the intersection of gender and ethnicity influenced their roles as leaders. From the data, the following themes emerged: *Cultura (Cultural Influences)*, *Género (Gender Influences)*, *La Porta Voz (Advocacy)* and *¿Quién Eres? (Who Are You?)*

### *Cultura (Cultural Influences)*

Much as *familia* is a central piece of the fabric from which these women are cut, *cultura* is another. A strong sense of cultural identity existed for each of these women in different ways. For some, it was the awareness of how others' perceptions of their *Latinidad* impacts their role as a student affairs administrator. Others shared stories of encounters with non-Latino colleagues who sought to use the fact that they are Latina to perhaps negate their *cultura*. According to Chavez (2009), *Latinidad* is "the creation and performance of Latina/o identities that potentially build pan-Latina/o solidarity" (p. 166).

I think it's important in empowering anyone to really know who they are as people [#2A.OFC.Q8-8].

You've got to be able to be comfortable enough in your own skin [#3B.OFC.Q8-12].

Chavira-Prado (1993) discusses the intricacy of Latina identity, versus that of the male counterparts, and three factors that shape these women's lives.

Understanding Latina identity involves even more analytical complexity than is required to understand Latinos, either as a male group or as a population. Latina

identity cross-cuts three factors which are critical in the shaping of women's lives: ethnicity, class and gender. While the same might be said about Latino men, Latinas have experienced particular disadvantages as a consequence of this combination of factors, which cannot be said about their male counterparts. (p. 244)

...when I talk about my experience as a Latina, ... I represent this region and my culture and all these things ... I use the label Chicana because I'm very proud of my ethnicity and background [#7B.OFC.Q2-8].

... I'm proud of my own particular cultural identity, but I do have to be aware of the role that being Latina plays when I'm working with students who are not Hispanic/Latino And being aware that in a perfect world, it wouldn't matter [#5A.HOM.Q7-18].

... They'd say, oh, you're a Spanish girl. I'd say, no, I'm Mexican. Well, that's what I said, Spanish. I said, no, I said, Spanish is mixed with the Indian, but I'm not from Spain. I'm from Mexico. ... I always felt like people would say Spanish just to clean up the word Mexican, so I would right that one [#6C.OFC.Q7-39].

Within the daily execution of their roles as student affairs administrators, *cultura* is woven into the very essence of how they lead. There is an integration of the two worlds in which they all exist – the Mexican and the American – which is both conscious and subconscious in how they lead. Anzaldúa (1987) writes about this crossing between two cultures for Mexican American women, a *mestiza* identity, which can lead to complexities in their daily lives. The following poem by Anzaldúa (1987) depicts this experience.

Una lucha de fronteras / A Struggle of Borders

Because I, a *mestiza*,  
Continually walk out of one culture  
and into another,  
because I am in all cultures at the same time,

*alma entre dos mundos, tres, cuatro,  
me zumba la cabeza con lo contradictorio.  
Estoy norteada por todas las voces que me hablan  
simultáneamente (p. 77).*

(soul between two worlds, three, four  
my head buzzes with contradictions.  
I am torn by all the voices speaking to me  
at the same time.)

According to Chang (1999) she describes the borderland as a psychological space in which individuals wrestle with their bicultural or multicultural identities, but ultimately resolve how much they will identify with their cultures of origin or of adoption. “Too much of either can be the subject of ridicule” (Chang, 1999). Muñoz (2010) also discovered that the Latina community college leaders she interviewed recognized being bicultural and adapting to majority norms. The “essence of being Latina was a source of pride and strength. Identity was not compromised in order to achieve success, but instead it was drawn upon as a lens to offer a different perspective” (Muñoz, 2010, p. 171).

It’s that integration of the best of both worlds without apologies [#3B.OFC.Q7-7].

I’m going to own that I’m the Latina certain times ... That is who I am. And then when you need me on your team, then you’re going to appreciate that part of me [#5A.HOM.Q7-40].

... surprisingly, I would say that in my role, my cultural identity has been a greater factor than my gender identity [#5A.HOM.Q7-43].

I think, and I really think it starts from the time you’re a college student. I do tell this to college students. I think you have to have an ability to sometimes turn off who you are [#12B.OFC.Q10-1].

However, in the following statements, two participants noted that while they did connect with their Mexican American *cultura*, it was not necessarily in a conscious manner.



... I don't think that the culture piece is something I consciously factor into my leadership [#2A.OFC.Q7-19].

I have realized that other people are aware of my culture and gender, probably more than I am [#11B.OFC.Q7-2].

Additionally, most participants discussed how embracing their cultural identity led to both challenging and affirmative experiences in their roles. As Vera and de los Santos (2005) write, "Key characteristics of the mestizo identity are adaptability and flexibility. Chicanas must be flexible enough to switch constantly between different cultural codes of conduct and languages" (p. 106). Along with the flexibility Chicanas possess to cross two cultures, there also exists a clash between the two varying expectations. "Anzaldúa (1987) describes the conflict and tension generated by the polarities experienced when one is torn between the needs of the home or ethnic culture and the demands of the Anglo world such as that which resides within educational institutions" (Espinoza, 2010, p. 321).

So, I don't think it has necessarily been for me more about being a female vs. male. I think more so I have encountered the things with being Hispanic vs. non-Hispanic [#1A.HOM.Q7-21].

make sure you have people that you get to breathe "culturally with" [#3B.OFC.Q9-16].

so I'm very faithful in going to TACHE and going to HACU because you can just culturally engage. I don't have to explain [#3B.OFC.Q9-19].

but on the other side of it, there's been some rough spots because there's expectations about ... how I should be as a Hispanic female [#6C.OFC.Q7-25]

So my being Hispanic has had many, many positive returns for me, and I would say more that than the other way [#6C.OFC.Q7-24].

Ultimately, as Latinas, each of the participants understood that their *cultura*, their *Latinidad*, impacts how they are perceived by others and how they choose to lead others.

It is the culmination of who they *are* that influences their leadership style.

... cultural identity has had a huge impact on what I do day-to-day [#12B.OFC.Q7-1].

I try to connect myself in a manner that is always representing me, my gender, my institution, being Mexican, all of those things well [#11B.OFC.Q7-8].

### *Género (Gender)*

Historically, within student affairs, women entered the ranks of administration as Deans of Women. Duffy (2010) chronicles the work of Mary Ingraham Bunting, a seminal female student affairs administrator whose role modeling for female administrators is relevant today, over forty years after serving as the fifth president of Radcliffe.

It is so critical to examine and proactively address the continuing challenges to professional success that women endure in student affairs administration in order to reduce “roadblocks” that hinder the achievement of gender equity on campus in the twenty-first century. (Duffy, 2010, p. 236)

Relevant in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century is the issue of gender for student affairs administrators. While *cultura* presented the women with both encouraging and challenging experiences, the issue of gender led to more of a barrier for these women on their campuses. They discussed the fact that perceptions of their abilities to be accepted, as an equal among their peers and colleagues, was difficult for some, particularly depending on the location of the institution. For campuses in South Texas, gender played

an important role in how their male counterparts responded to their requests, for example.

I'm on lots of committees where there's only men. There have been times where I've been asked to get or bring something to another member. I'm accommodating if I'm already up, but if I'm not, too bad [#3B.OFC.Q8-27].

And in our particular case and because of the area that we're in gender becomes a big deal ... Every like six months or so I feel like I hit a wall with the males on campus [#8A.OFC.Q3-5].

Already members of an underrepresented group in higher education administration experiencing oppression at various levels, women face additional constraints due to their race or ethnicity. As discussed previously, there are multiple identities Latinas navigate on a regular basis. Segura and Pesquera (1999) study this intersection of class, race and gender by exploring the lives of three Chicana clerical workers. "Where race-ethnicity may 'confound' an analysis, an exploration of its nuances as replayed by Chicana women will shed light upon the complex interplay of class, race, and gender as action, interaction and structure" (Segura & Pesquera, 1999, p. 9). The "Chicana political consciousness" (Segura & Pesquera, 1999) is defined as a "lens through which the world order is understood and acted on" (p. 9).

I see it out there ... I see it on campuses, not even with being Hispanic, being a woman more so ... Conversations when we are being excluded with it [#1A.HOM.Q7-18].

... So I grew up in the '50s, and being Hispanic was less of a factor than being a female [#6C.OFC.Q7-1].

One of the things, I think, also that people will say, and I've had this just through my first year in student affairs, people felt like, oh, you're just a little thing, or oh, don't worry about it [#9A.RES.Q6-4].

Sometimes it's being validated. ... Sometimes I feel like I want you to validate me and don't see gender as an issue because I think that would just remove a lot of barriers [#10A.OFC.Q10-15].

Additionally, gender, coupled with age, was also discussed as a factor in how others on campus perceived them or their abilities.

One, being a female, two, being perceived as very young, and maybe not having the knowledge or not knowing and the experience. ... I feel that at times it has kind of held me back, either for certain communities or for certain, I don't know certain positions necessarily, but has affected certain leadership roles ... [#4A.OFC.Q7-12].

I'm a little bit younger on the administrative scale, so sometimes I can see that play into some things [#11B.OFC.Q4-21].

While gender and age posed barriers for these women when interacting with others across the campus, a majority of these women were also considered nurturers and maternal. This was a distinct contrast to their male counterparts and their abilities to relate to students, in particular, as well as their staff, in this emotionally tied manner. There is a sense of *familia* among the people and students with whom they most closely interact.

I would say ... that I can get away a little bit more with being a little more motherly than they would [#5A.HOM.Q6-1].

So I deal with my staff like I deal with people I truly care about, because I do truly care about my staff [#7B.OFC.Q5-4].

One time I did one of those 360 evaluations where I evaluated my staff and then they evaluate you back. And one of my staff described me as having a maternal leadership style [#7B.OFC.Q5-1].

However, there seemed to exist a dichotomy for one participant between being viewed as motherly or a witch. And, one of the participants did not particularly identify herself as maternal in her leadership style.

Women have a tendency to come across in one of two ways: either the motherly caregiver or the witch [#2A.OFC.Q10-9].

I'm not motherly in any way. And I've worked for supervisors, female supervisors who have been that way, a lot more emotional, a lot more connectedness in personal kinds of lives and bring those into decision-making sometimes [#11B.OFC.Q6-8].

### *La Porta Voz (Advocacy)*

Overwhelmingly, these women embraced the fact that they each have a responsibility, or rather duty, to serve as the “voice” or advocate not only for their students, but particularly for the Latina undergraduate students, as well as graduate students and young professionals in student affairs. Much as *familia* has already been discussed for those who have blood ties to these women, they consider these Latinas an extension of *familia*, taking a dedicated interest in their success.

This Chicana political consciousness, as previously mentioned, is spurred on by the “collective” orientation of Chicano families. “Much of the current research on Chicana feminism highlights the ‘collective’ orientation of Chicanas’ struggles against oppression based on gender, race, ethnicity, and class – a struggle distinct from mainstream liberal feminism’s focus on gender inequality and individual rights” (Segura & Pierce, 1993, p. 81). The following statements illustrate how committed these women are to their role as *La Porta Voz*.

And then I realized, my gosh, if I don't champion these issues, who is going to do it? Who is going to be asking those questions? [#3B.OFC.Q9-23].

Or there will be certain students who don't have literally a daily voice on our campus [#5A.HOM.Q2-31].

... But as a leader you just feel like you have responsibility for other people ... [#6C.OFC.Q9-21].

... a lot of my issues are people who don't have a voice ... [#12B.OFC.Q9-1].

For these women, they are working in student affairs because of its focus on students, the heart of their love for the profession. They state this passion succinctly in the statements below.

... passionate about working with students [#1A.HOM.Q10-8].

... I need to trust that you're not trying to manipulate ... that we're all here to serve the students and that's your primary interest. It's not 100%, but it's your primary interest [#6C.OFC.Q5-8].

... ultimately the bottom line is about the student. It's not about anything else ... no student, no job [#10A.OFC.Q10-3].

And I keep an open door policy for all students, but I seem to have a lot of Latino students who want to come and give me a hug, or talk to me [#12B.OFC.Q7-9]. Access to higher education and their passion for retention of Latino students is integrated into their daily jobs, manifesting itself in several ways: Latina Connector & Visibility on Campus for Students, Role Modeling and Sharing Their Success Stories.

#### Latina Connector & Visibility on Campus for Students

And during orientations, introducing them [faculty/staff] to incoming freshmen, letting them know, here's a resource [#4A.OFC.Q4-9].

But if there seems to be inequity, I don't go after everything that's like that, but if there's something that's either within my staff or my students or there's some issue, I feel that it's important for me, it's my value to try to correct that [#6C.OFC.Q5-43].

... These students need to see me. Someone like me being effective in my job. And so being a Latina, being Mexican American, being from this region, that's why I'm here. Because I make a difference for them [#7B.OFC.Q7-8].

I try to be visible as much as I can [#11B.OFC.Q8-8].

## Role Modeling

and especially that those Latinas who are here on campus that have leadership roles to have a presence on campus. Because they [faculty/staff] are our role models for our Latinas on campus, and they [students] can go up to them and say, I want to be like you. How did you get to be a faculty member? [#4A.OFC.Q4-17].

You are constantly a role model whether you like it or not ... [#5A.HOM.Q3-35].

Because their friends come and go in their life. Their role models will impact them forever. They may not always remember your name or particular lesson you taught them, but you're going to contribute to their character and their time here [#5A.HOM.Q5-52].

... I've made a personal commitment to work at an HSI because I need to role model for our students what it means to be a successful Latina, Latino in higher education. That you can get a college degree and you can do these things [#7B-OFC.Q7-5].

## Sharing Their Success Stories

... when I have opportunities, take advantage of the opportunities to speak to, whether it's students, staff members, letting them know that they can continue to reach different levels in their career and their career path, and it's ultimately what they want to do, too [#11B.OFC.Q8-2].

## *¿Quién Eres? (Who Are You?)*

As the participants addressed the questions related to gender and ethnicity, the themes of validation and stereotypes surfaced in their responses. Using the title *Quién Eres* signifies that not only are the women faced with the stereotypes of Latinas in their jobs, but they are also judged by others in manner that asks, “who do you think you are?” Participants described how these two themes have been played out.

## Stereotypes

... one time we were in a group and one gentleman who was pretty high up, started speaking to me in Spanish “Hola! Como Está?” etc. “You know Spanish?” I began speaking to him in Spanish. He quickly stopped and stated, “Oh that's all I know.”

“Well, don’t start something you can’t finish.” And I was kidding, but I was kind of not. He appeared very condescending, otherwise I would have loved to converse in Spanish [#3B.OFC.Q8-28].

So I think just, not just being Latina, it’s just there’s a whole bunch of other little factors that I kind of have to keep pushing along and saying, “No. There’s more to me that you don’t know” [#4A.OFC.Q7-16].

When I first went to graduate school ... It was 17 or 19 was the class, and three of them were women, and two were lesbians, and so I was the other one. And at the time ... I wore high heels, ... I’d always wear makeup and stuff like that and just being real open and happy. And I remember a, I’m going to call her a mentor, I’m going to use that loosely, who took me under her wing, said that some of the faculty were a little concerned about how serious I was about graduate school because I was always smiling a lot in the hallway and laughing ... So they didn’t know that, she said, but she explained it to them that I was Hispanic, and that that’s the way Hispanics are. So even when people were trying to help you ... [#6C.OFC.Q7-31].

... I can tell you where people are misguided ... I think sometimes because I am female and because I am Hispanic, they might think I’m going to be a pushover, and so that is hard on people who don’t understand my gender or my culture [#8A.OFC.Q7-1].

## Validation

... I think we tend to be at times defensive about a lot of things and maybe that’s the environment that we’ve been brought up [in]. We constantly had to defend ourselves [#1A.HOM.Q8-15].

So I feel like I spend a lot of time trying to prove myself so that no one thinks my hiring was simply an attempt to “diversify the staff” [#2A.OFC.Q10-15].

... I feel like sometimes I have to constantly be proving myself [#4A.OFC.Q7-11].

While there are many individual factors identified by the participants about how their gender or culture influence their leadership style on a daily basis, they also recognize that they have a responsibility to serve as an advocate for future Latina leaders. And all the while, they are facing the very same obstacles or challenges they long to eradicate for those for whom they “speak.”



At the core of this research question is the examination of how gender and ethnicity influence leadership style. The women's responses identify that it is intertwined in who they are, providing them some latitude that may not exist for their male colleagues, and ultimately affects their leadership. The following women had this to say about this intersection.

I think that my culture and my gender so affects my leadership because I think, I'm always thinking of, I think I'm more caring and more sensitive to some students, to our students, than just being more passive. [#4A.OFC.Q7-1].

I am a Hispanic, I'm actually a Mexican American woman and so both of those identities have, I think, maybe forced is too strong of a word, but forced me to be on my toes more so than perhaps my counterparts, White male [#1A.HOM.Q7-2].

... I will press on some diversity issues in making sure that we're being inclusive, making sure that when we're forming committees or doing those types of things that we have a diverse group of membership on them ... Not that our other colleagues don't, but I think we're more comfortable in asking those questions sometimes [#11B.OFC.Q10-21].

I think the sense of cultural identity and gender identity is very important ... it's central to your core ... and important to bring with you most times [#12B.OFC.Q10-21].

### **Research Question 3**

The third research question focused on describing the leadership style of Latina administrators. Questions about leadership style and identifying factors of a successful Latina student affairs administrator were employed to gather data. The following themes emerged: *Características Personales (Personal Qualities)*, *Líder (Leading Others)*, *Depende De La Situación (Leadership is Situational)*, *No Me Dijeron ... (I Didn't Know ...)* and *Esperanza (Hope)*

### *Características Personales (Personal Qualities)*

Among one of the main personal characteristics contributing to these women's success and leadership style is work ethic. This was a source of pride for the women. The participants believed that hard work fortified them in their success and leadership.

I think probably first and foremost would be my work ethic [#2A.OFC.Q2-1].

... we actually call it the late night directors club. Those of us that, there isn't an event, but we're leaving at 8, 9 o'clock at night because we're working on whatever report it might be, and it's just part of the job. And it doesn't mean you have poor time management. And it doesn't mean that you don't have a good functioning team or a good administrative assistant, it just is the job [#5A.HOM.Q2-23].

There's a lot to say about just being a very hard worker, having expectations and getting to them [#7B.OFC.Q9-13].

I think it's just the work ethic from my family. I think that has been major, *numero uno* [#8A.OFC.Q2-6].

... I never thought twice of it because I would go in class, and you'd see a lot of Hispanic female ... And then when I looked at it, the whole big picture, ... there's not a whole lot. So that definitely gave me a different perspective, helped me appreciate the culture that I have, the background that I have, the work ethic that Hispanic females tend to have, whether it's higher education or it's business administration, there's a similarity in the work ethic and such that Hispanic females have [#9A.RES.Q7-11].

... I don't do it because it's recognition, but that's just what I was kind of taught and told [#11B.OFC.Q2-3].

Networking is another tool that these women incorporate into their leadership styles. This creation of, and participation in, networks has assisted them in fulfilling their administrative roles. It has been a tool by which they forge relationships in order to accomplish their goals.

I think some of it had to do with "knowing who you know," the networking that's in place in our field [#1A.HOM.Q2-9].

The one thing I had to do in my first position in the Graduate School was deliver mail. I used that as an opportunity to establish relationships. I made friends with directors of graduate programs. I made friends with the janitors and secretaries. So as I got along with individuals across campus, I was able to develop that network of support and [institutional] connections [#3B.OFC.Q4-10].

... I started to look for a Latino professional network ... And at one of the conferences I attended I met the provost at (an institution in TX) and he recruited me for the doctoral program and for the assistant dean of students position [#7B.OFC.Q1-7].

A third personal characteristic valued by the participants is that of integrity. Words used to describe this characteristic included “honesty” & “ethical”. In their own words, they describe how they model integrity.

If you're a good administrator, you are going to be very clear about your values and beliefs and your character. And, you can't compromise those [#3B.OFC.Q8-20].

Being ethical is probably one of my biggest things [#11B.OFC.Q10-12].

... I try always to be honest and transparent, and I think ... people can sense that. And that goes both ways ... you want to be honest and transparent so everyone feels they're part of the same team [#12B.OFC.Q2-7].

Lastly, there exists a desire to continue learning. The women spoke about the importance of continuing their professional development in a variety of ways. While professional conferences were included, they also take responsibility to read and remain informed of current trends and research.

... keep up with trends and practices [#11B.OFC.Q10-6].

... I have to stay on top of things, and I have to take some time to read, and people go, “When do you have time to read?” And I go, “I really don't” Sometimes I'm just skimming something, or sometimes I am getting it off the Internet or television. But I have to have some clue of what might be going on [#5A.HOM.Q2-37].

... you're green and growing. So I feel like I'm always growing and learning and hoping that I'm prepared for what's coming in the future [#4A.OFC.Q1-15].

### *Líder (Leading Others)*

As a leader working with others, the participants cited empowering those who work them as one of the ways in which they lead. Empowerment led to a sense of ownership for members of their teams. This sense of ownership encourages members of their team.

... if people continually make you feel successful, even if it's small wins, small wins and little victories, that encourages you to keep wanting to do more and that empowers you to keep doing that kind of "on your own," at least I'd hope so [#2A.OFC.Q8-15].

I have young directors, I have older directors and so I see where they each are in their lives and try to empower them to reach their potential [#3B.OFC.Q5-10].

... but my philosophy is that you have to give ownership to your staff. That is how I learned to be a leader [#4A.OFC.Q5-9].

I think ultimately the best supervisory style is making sure that they recognize you as the team leader but they respect each other as peers and they believe in their own voice [#5A.HOM.Q5-35].

This micromanaging, controlled setting I don't flourish in and it's not my style [#7B.OFC.Q5-11].

But I think for the most part, they feel like they're going to be heard, and if they want to move forward with a change, they can get it done. That's what ... I try very hard to instill in my staff [#8A.OFC.Q5-12].

A second component of their leadership within the teams they lead was that of surrounding themselves with competent staff. This was the described by the participants as finding staff who complement their abilities.

I think that one of the things that helped me be successful in my position is having great staff around me ... [#4A.OFC.Q2-1].

Putting a good team together, getting to know the people that work with you, and capitalizing on their strengths, and also helping to improve their weaknesses, is definitely one of the things that has helped me ... [#9A.RES.Q2-2].

I recognize my own skills, my own competencies, and my own strengths, and I like to surround myself with people who complement that, complement me, and perhaps fill in a void that I don't necessarily have [#11B.OFC.Q5-10].

Setting high expectations for those they supervise is another factor in how these women lead others. There was a clear distinction in how these women described setting clear expectations and parameters, but did allow their staff members to find their best route in achieving the desired end results. These women support initiative from their staff members via the outlined expectations.

I'm going to set the expectations because that's incredibly important to me ... setting clear expectations from the beginning, making sure people know what is expected of them and then saying however you choose to get to that expectation is up to you [#2A.OFC.Q5-5].

However, on the other side of the coin, I'm very clear about what the outcome should be, or the goals, and as long as you're clear about that, I'm a lot more supportive [#6C.OFC.Q5-5].

As a decision-maker, there is a clear indication that while they would prefer to make decisions collaboratively with their team, that is not always possible. They are methodical in how they reach their conclusions in moving forward. However, they recognize that all decisions are not made by the group and they have no concern about assuming full responsibility for those decisions, when necessary. This method of decision-making is a melding of what many would identify as both female and male leadership qualities.

So making sure that they're given the information to understand, to know, what I'm looking for in making a decision, but they're also giving me information that

may impact. And, so when we discuss that through, then we come up with a decision that is beneficial for all [#1A.HOM.Q5-7].

So knowing when it is time to say we've gone as far as we can go on this course and now I'm going to step in because I have the knowledge or the experience or the awareness of the political climate or whatever it is that means that we need to stop kind of that path we were on [#2A.OFC.Q5-13].

... early on in my career, I always thought, well, you always get told, "Oh, your team needs to feel like they have a voice, etc." Your team doesn't necessarily need to have a voice in every single decision you make [#5A.HOM.Q5-3].

I can, and I will make some of those decisions, because they're not always supported from the team, but my preference is to identify where we need to go as a group and then help work with the team to make those things happen [#12B.OFC.Q5-3].

Building relationships is an additional strength that these women possess. While the concept of building relationships and networks is not distinctly unique to Latinas, it does reinforce their cultural sense of *personalismo*, (Canul, 2003, p. 171) "the value placed on building and maintaining personal relationships" (Falicov, 1998; Paniagua, 1998; Santiago-Rivera, Arredando & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002). Some of the women expressed that this natural tendency to connect with others is an extension of their culture.

Capitalizing on opportunities to forge relationships with others was identified as a strength in the participants' abilities to achieve their goals as leaders on campus. Canul (2003) writes,

Even in our professional relationships, we tend to be people- rather than task-oriented. A significant part of job satisfaction is related to interpersonal relationships ... but for Latina/os, interactions with colleagues provide a sense of

belonging and also make the task at hand more manageable and rewarding. (p. 171)

The participants share how *personalismo* has impacted their work in the following statements.

I don't know if it's because I've been here so long, or just who I am, or that I'm even Latina but I've been able to build relationships and be effective in my work [#3B.OFC.Q4-4].

But relationships I feel are real important ... I operate more with relationships than tasks [#6C.OFC.Q9-19].

... I have a record of working well with people, of solving problems, and of good outcomes, and that then leads to more opportunities and another open door [#7B.OFC.Q2-14].

I am convinced that as Latinos and Latinas, we're just really good at being relational [#3B.OFC.Q2-7].

#### *Depende De La Situación (Leadership is Situational)*

Much has been written regarding leadership and leadership styles. Several definitions of leadership were reviewed during this study as they related to women. Based on the findings in this study, Klenke (1996) seems to capture the idea of leadership that most closely illustrates the style described by the participants. Key elements of leadership may “combine in an infinite number of ways” (Klenke, 1996, p. 10) which is identified as a Leadership Diamond. According to Klenke (1996), women's leadership roles are “always dependent on context” (p. 261).

From these women's voices, the following comments indicate that they tailor their leadership style based on those with whom they are working and what may work best. These women's leadership style is influenced by both culture and context. “Effective

leadership depends on a complex pattern of interactions among leaders, followers, and situations” (Klenke, 1996, p. 263).

“Wow, I think it really depends on the situation” [#1A.HOM.Q5-1].

... the three leadership styles ... autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire ... I think my leadership style is to know when to pull which of those three out [#5A.HOM.Q5-1].

... leadership roles ... there are different ones that fit well for the culture. Like my leadership style would not fit if I was leading in the military ... [#6C.OFC.Q9-18].

So really you have to get to know the people that work with you. You can't do the one-size-fits-all ... style of management because that's not going to work [#9A.RES.Q5-5].

*No Me Dijeron ... (I Didn't Know ... )*

While there are many areas mentioned previously which have fortified these women to serve as leaders on their campus, and within their administrative roles, there were a few areas mentioned that they had not been prepared for. The most commonly referenced skillset mentioned was that of supervision. There was also a lack of formal preparation, particularly from the women who had not been educated through a related student affairs or college student personnel graduate degree program. And lastly, the sense of isolation for these women, either because of the fact that they were the only one, or one of a few Latina administrators, or the fact that they held a leadership position on campus, was noted.

Supervision is probably the place I was least prepared [#2A.OFC.Q1-4].

I was not formally prepared [#6C.OFC.Q1-1].

I think I was completely unprepared for the isolation that I feel sometimes as an administrator [#12B.OFC.Q1-12].



*Esperanza (Hope)*

*Esperanza* seem the best title for this subcategory in that there are many positive aspects of how each of the participants contribute to encouraging and preparing the next generation of Latinas. Some of this encouragement is specific to encouraging more Latinas to enter the pipeline of post-secondary education. However, the additional commitment to bring women into the field of student affairs was also noted. Again, this is their opportunity to bring these Latinas, who are considered extensions of their family, into leadership roles on campus.

That's actually been one of my goals, one of my philosophies since I have gotten into this field. I have made a commitment to helping others [#1A.HOM.Q8-1].

... I talk to my student leaders about this ... when you are your excellent self in the role of leadership, you never know how many people are watching you [#5A.HOM.Q8-1].

... I just try to open the path for others [#7B.OFC.Q9-16].

I really think it's about bringing people in and helping them learn because if I just hold on to my knowledge, I'm not doing the next generation a favor [#8A.OFC.Q8-1].

because I have to realize that in my role as an administrator, I also have to give back, mentor others the way I was mentored too, so having the time to be able to do that, help others come up with a future and a career [#9A.RES.Q3-2].

I think that I feel a responsibility to look for others who are rising stars ... in the profession, especially women and people of color [#11B.OFC.Q7-3].

Latinas also have a rich tradition of story telling and they believe that by sharing their own stories with Latinas of the next generation, it assists in making their journeys possible. The following examples illustrate how these stories are shared with the next generation.

... I share examples of what I have been through, so that they can at least hear ... at least they are exposed to it. They're prepared [#1A.HOM.Q8-7].

And I keep telling them that they have to be persistent, and that they have to continue no matter what happens, that they have to keep going [#4A.OFC.Q8-3].

And so I try to challenge people. And so they like hearing it [higher ed] is possible, even though at the moment they may feel so frustrated that they close their mind to it [#8A.OFC.Q7-10].

I talk a lot about a conversation that me and my mother had and things to that effect. When I was wandering around in college and trying to figure out what field I wanted to go into, and my mother, she only had an eighth grade education, but she told me, she was constantly watching the news, always had the radio on, always listening to the news, so she knew, she was, I would say to this day she was probably one of the smartest people that I know as far as current events and things to that effect. To this point I've always felt that she was the one that set me straight, told me, quit playing around. You need to make a decision on what your degree is, you need to make a decision and stick with it. She says, enough with taking classes here and there and trying to experiment and figure out who you are, she goes, you are who you are. Make a decision. And I said, okay. I made a decision. So those are the type of things that I try to relate to them [#9A.RES.Q8-3].

While mentors were a large influence on the women in this study, they embraced this role of mentoring for those who are following in their footsteps. Their mentoring applies to Latinas who are students, graduate assistants entering the profession and colleagues who are moving up the ranks within student affairs. They take a genuine interest in these women, having high expectations for them and guiding them along when they can.

Now my students ... I think they would definitely describe me as a mentor ... I'm always telling them ... that I have such high expectations and standards for them [#4A.OFC.Q5-24].

Over the six years that I have been in the current position ... maybe I have been a little biased, in that regard, but when I do have staff that have come through and who've moved on and who are Latinos, whether it's male or female, I'll bring them

in to talk and just ask them what is it you want to do and start talking about just things we have had to face [#1A.HOM.Q8-10].

Overall, when asked what the qualities of a successful female Mexican American student affairs administrator were, they mentioned the following:

I'm not sure that they change. I would expect a successful administrator, whether female or male, to have the same qualities [#1A.HOM.Q10-9].

... do an exceptional job of being a support, advocate and educator [#2A.OFC.Q10-6].

I encourage them to learn those skills needed to be successful in a world of gender bias, ethnic bias, and so on [#3B.OFC.Q8-4].

I think it's very important that we do studies like this, where we are able to see how roles or how Latina roles affect what we do [#4A.OFC.Q9-2].

... I think it's because for me, it's just about being a good administrator period [#11B.OFC.Q10-22].

The culmination of findings related to the leadership styles of the Latina administrators in this study affirms that *Latinidad* seamlessly influences their leadership styles so that the manner in which they lead suits the situation and environment. As reviewed in the literature acknowledging a leadership gender gap, Belenky, et al. (1986) used Perry's development model to categorize women's ways of knowing into five perspectives, with *constructed knowledge* as the perspective from which women construct all knowledge and integrate their voices so that they become part of the knowledge they are acquiring. Additionally, when Haring-Hidore, et al. (1990) applied the five categories in Belenky, et al.'s *Women's Ways of Knowing* to women specifically in higher education, they found evidence to support that some women administrators use constructed knowledge in their daily roles, noting that this "fifth stage of women's ways

of knowing—constructed knowledge—is capable of adding a significant dimension to institutional leadership” (1990, p. 180).

This initial starting point led me to narrow the focus to Mexican American women administrators in student affairs, from the broader representation of women higher education administrators studied by Haring-Hidore, et al., contributing to the limited body of research on Mexican American women administrators in higher education. The participants in this study provided an opportunity to reflect on their leadership styles from the perspective of a Mexican American woman. While Madsen (2007) identified emergent leadership theory as the style employed by the university presidents she interviewed, Luna, Medina & Gorman (2010) deem that women faculty of color must share their stories for a better understanding of how their experiences differ from non-minority women.

Silva (2003) contributed to the literature with her research specifically focused on Mexican American women administrators in higher education. While Silva’s research included administrators from the academic areas, it provided a basis for me to continue studying leadership styles of Mexican American women administrators specifically in student affairs. Silva (2003) introduced a leadership model based on her findings that supports the impact that culture has on Mexican American women’s leadership style, as described below:

The intent of this leadership model was to develop a structure that could be used by institutions in recruitment and retention of Mexican American female administrators, by Mexican American female administrators themselves as a

reflection of their experiences and Hispanic students as a guide in maintaining culture throughout their academic career. It also provides a snapshot of how they function through strong family ties, networks, and connections, both formal and informal, to other Latinas, as well as leadership enhanced by cultural identification. Participant leadership approaches were generated from a strong cultural base, which included ties to rituals and traditions, a strong work ethic, and an intrinsic mission to further a new generation of educated Hispanics. Their persistence and perseverance appeared to culminate from a “memory of resistance” that spurred the need to succeed for their families, their “people,” and for themselves as members of a collective body. Working above and beyond the call of duty was not based on career objectives, but on a perspective of mission (p. 190).

The three themes of this leadership model are: 1) Foundation—Family, 2) Approach—Gaining Respect, and 3) Goal—Making a Difference. The participants’ *Latinidad* and collectivist orientation infused their leadership style, supporting the *Culturally Relevant Leadership Model from a Mexican American Female Perspective*, as introduced by Silva (2003).

### **Summary of Findings**

*Research Question 1: What are the pathways and strategies by which Latina administrators reach their positions?*

1. There were a variety of pathways and strategies by which the women in this study reached their positions as directors or above within student affairs.
2. The following five themes emerged: *Familia (Family Influences)*, *Influencias Personales (Personal Influences)*, *Educación (Education)*, *Ambiente Universitario (University Environment)* and *Influencias Externas (External Influences)*.
3. Family serves as a strong foundation for these women, particularly their mothers, who have given them a strong work ethic.
4. Many of the women began their careers outside of student affairs, but eventually found their way to the profession, as they set high expectations for themselves and value helping others.
5. Preparation through graduate education (both master's and doctoral) imparted knowledge, skillsets and validation to these women to perform their positions.
6. These women also valued life long learning in order to inform their practice.
7. The university environment provided support for these women to succeed by providing strong supervisors and competent colleagues with which to work.
8. The one area in which the university environment presented a challenge was that of navigating campus politics.
9. External influences affecting these women's professional careers were the positive influences from mentors (both formal and informal) and the lack of Latinas in the pipeline to post-secondary education and ultimately into the field of student affairs.

*Research Question 2: Does the intersection of gender and ethnicity influence Latina administrators' leadership? If so, how?*

1. The participants did address differences between themselves and their male counterparts, with respect to their nurturing and motherly nature; however, they mostly concentrated their answers on the following four themes of *Cultura* (*Cultural Influences*), *Género* (*Gender Influences*), *La Porta Voz* (*Advocacy*) and *¿Quién Eres?* (*Who Are You?*).
2. A strong sense of cultural identity and integration of the two worlds in which they live and function (Mexican and American) led to both challenging and affirming experiences.
3. The participants' gender impacted the way colleagues perceived their abilities as equals, in addition to making assumptions about their inabilities due to a combination of their gender and age.
4. Each participant indicated their passion for working with students and commitment to serving as advocates for Latinas at all levels of post-secondary education and within the profession of student affairs.
5. These women serve as connectors, are visible on campus, serve as role models and share their success stories with other Latinas.
6. These women have encountered negative stereotypes from colleagues and find that they have to prove themselves in their roles.

7. Both gender and ethnicity were found to be intertwined in who they are and how they lead. It is their collectivist orientation, versus an individualistic orientation, as experienced within a Chicana/o family that guides their leadership style.

*Research Question 3: Can we describe the leadership styles of Latina administrators through traditional models? If not, what is unique to Latina administrators?*

1. With respect to leadership style, the following five themes emerged:  
*Características Personales, Líder, Depende De La Situación, No Me Dijeron and Esperanza.*
2. As leaders, these Latinas' approach to leadership varies in order to best fit the situation in which they find themselves.
3. Personal characteristics mentioned that influenced their leadership style were work ethic, networking, integrity and professional development.
4. When leading others, the participants empowered their team members, surrounded themselves with competent staff, provided a clear vision for staff expectations and excelled at building relationships.
5. Adequate preparation, supervisory skills and feeling isolated in their roles are skills that these women did not initially possess.
6. When described by participants, successful Mexican American female student affairs administrators were good administrators who were supportive, advocates, educators and successfully navigated the world of gender and ethnic bias.



Chapter V will provide a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations in relation to policy and practice. Additionally, I will address recommendations for further research.

**CHAPTER V**  
**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR**  
**POLICY AND PRACTICE, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE**  
**RESEARCH**

This chapter will provide a summary of the purpose of this study and the findings of the research. Conclusions will be presented, based on the findings. Additionally, a discussion of the implication for policy and practice, as well as recommendations for future research will be provided.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was three-fold. First, I wanted to identify pathways and strategies by which Latinas reach their administrative positions within student affairs. Second, this study was designed to consider how the intersection of gender and ethnicity influences leadership styles for Latina administrators. And last, I wanted to identify ways in which Latinas who are seeking roles as student affairs administrators can be supported in their endeavors to achieve these roles within higher education.

There were three research questions addressed in this study. They were: (1) what are the pathways and strategies by which Latina administrators reach their positions; (2) does the intersection of gender and ethnicity influence Latina administrators' leadership? If so, in what ways; and, (3) can we describe the leadership styles of Latina

administrators through traditional models? If not, what is unique to Latina administrators?

### **Summary of Findings**

*Research Question 1: What are the pathways and strategies by which Latina administrators reach their positions?*

Participants were asked questions about their preparation and any factors that helped contribute to their success or derailed their success from their personal experiences or within the university environment in which they work. From the responses, five themes emerged: *Familia (Family Influences)*, *Influencias Personales (Personal Influences)*, *Educación (Education)*, *Ambiente Universitario (University Environment)* and *Influencias Externas (External Influences)*. There were a variety of pathways and strategies by which the women reached their positions as directors, assistant or associate vice presidents and vice president. Many of the women began their careers outside of student affairs, but eventually found their way to the profession.

Family serves as a strong foundation for these women, particularly their mothers, who have provided the example of a strong work ethic. While graduate education imparted knowledge, skillsets and validation, these women also valued life long learning. Although there were facets of their daily work experiences in which they encountered barriers, the women identified areas in which the university had nurtured their success and provided opportunities for growth, such as providing strong supervisors and competent colleagues.

One particular challenge noted within the university environment was that of navigating campus politics. These women's professional careers were also influenced by external factors. External factors named were positive influences from mentors and the lack of Latinas in the pipeline to post-secondary education, and ultimately into the field of student affairs.

*Research Question 2: Does the intersection of gender and ethnicity influence Latina administrators' leadership? If so, in what ways?*

Exploring the intersection of gender and ethnicity and its influence on Latina administrators' leadership styles was addressed in the second research question. The participants were asked to describe their leadership style and how it differed from their male colleagues. Additionally, participants were asked about how the intersection of gender and ethnicity influenced their roles as leaders. From the data, the following themes emerged: *Cultura (Cultural Influences)*, *Género (Gender Influences)*, *La Porta Voz (Advocacy)* and *¿Quién Eres? (Who Are You?)*

The participants addressed differences between themselves and their male counterparts, with respect to their nurturing and motherly nature. Possessing a strong sense of identity and integration of the two worlds in which they live and function (Mexican and American) led to both challenging and affirming experiences. Gender did impact the way colleagues perceived these participants' abilities as equals. Colleagues also made assumptions about the participants' inabilities due to a combination of their gender and age.

Each of the participants indicated their passion for working with students and commitment to serving as advocates for Latinas at all levels of post-secondary education and within the profession of student affairs. They are connectors, visible on campus, serve as role models and share their success stories with other Latinas. These women have encountered negative stereotypes from colleagues and had to prove themselves as administrators. Both gender and ethnicity were intertwined in who they are and how they lead, battling inequities, as opposed to their male counterparts.

As a member of a Chicana/o family, these women believe that the family is a priority over the individual, which influences their daily decision-making. It is the integration of their *Latinidad* that supports a collectivist orientation, versus that of an individualistic orientation, which drives their ability to include their students, staff members and colleagues in their “family.” This extended family guides them innately in their daily interactions and leadership.

*Research Question 3: Can we describe the leadership styles of Latina administrators through traditional models? If not, what is unique to Latina administrators?*

The third research question focused on describing the leadership style of Latina administrators. Questions about leadership style and identifying factors of a successful Latina student affairs administrator were employed to gather data. The following themes emerged: *Características Personales (Personal Qualities)*, *Líder (Leading Others)*, *Depende De La Situación (Leadership is Situational)*, *No Me Dijeron ... (I Didn't Know ...)*, *Esperanza (Hope)*

Personal characteristics of work ethic, networking, integrity and professional development influenced their leadership style. In the role as leader, participants empowered team members, surrounding themselves with competent staff, providing a clear vision for staff expectations and excelled at building relationships. As they assumed their leadership roles within student affairs, these women did not believe that they were adequately prepared, possessed supervisory skills and felt isolated in their administrative roles.

As leaders, these Latinas' approach to leadership varies in order to best fit the situation in which they find themselves. These women synthesize and borrow from the various leadership styles in order to best fit their context, supporting a flexible and adaptable approach, as described by both emergent leadership and the *Culturally Relevant Leadership Model from a Mexican American Female Perspective* (Silva, 2003). Their *Latinidad* enables these women to seamlessly integrate their sense of commitment to the "family" when acting in their administrative roles. Participants identified a successful Mexican American female student affairs administrator as one who is supportive, advocates, educates and successfully navigates the world of gender and ethnic bias.

## **Conclusions**

This study has contributed to the body of knowledge related to Mexican American female student affairs administrators' pathways and strategies to their positions, the intersection of ethnicity and gender and its influence on their leadership

style. Furthermore, it shares the voices of these women who have found ways to successfully navigate the university environment to achieve success through their roles as administrators within student affairs. As the demographics of our nation, and ultimately our campuses, experience Latino students enrolling in greater numbers, particularly women, it is important to ensure there exists appropriate numbers of Latina administrators who can advocate for those students.

The literature review has illustrated a majority of women employed on college and university campuses serve in the division of student affairs. However, non-Latinos and even fewer women, of which a smaller proportion are Latinas, hold many of the senior positions that involve decision-making and budgetary responsibilities. It will be incumbent on administrators to seek ways to prepare programs and campus environments that support diversity among the ranks of senior administrators within student affairs, and more specifically for those who are Latinas.

In 2007, Madsen interviewed 10 women university presidents, who have succeeded in cultures often male-dominated in higher education, about their leadership styles and philosophies. She addresses the characteristics of both emergent and androgynous leadership theories, as women employ them. The emergent leadership theory is “based on the belief that society is changing” (Nidiffer, 2001 in Madsen, 2007, p. 5). Hallmarks of this leadership style include leaders who are “participatory, flexible, ethical, authentic, connective, and team-oriented . . . regardless of their official position, individuals who are perceived by others as influential are often known as emergent leaders” (Madsen, 2007, p. 5). This style of leadership was espoused in the study of

women administrators by Haring-Hidore, et al. (1990). They found that each of the administrators interviewed revealed a strong preference for including others in decision-making (Haring-Hidore, et al., 1990, p. 179).

The androgyny leadership theory is similar to emergent leadership theory; however, it melds both stereotypical male (someone who is highly instrumental) and female (expressive) characteristics in forging the most effective leader (Madsen, 2007, p. 7). “Individuals who utilize this style typically have greater flexibility and a broader repertoire of behaviors than individuals who use only those skills and techniques traditionally aligned with a particular gender (feminine or masculine)” (Madsen, 2007, p. 7). Both the emergent and androgyny leadership styles express characteristics of flexibility and adaptability, responding according to the different situations in which these leaders find themselves. Support and training for emerging Latina administrators on campus should incorporate these concepts to prepare them for the realities of present day higher education leadership roles.

Returning to the initial study, which prompted my research, Haring-Hidore et al., (1990), identified that reflection and reflective practice are essential components to effective leadership. It is through this practice that women administrators are able to reach the fifth stage of constructed knowledge, as described in *Women’s Ways of Knowing* (Belenky, et al., 1986).

... constructed knowledge is capable of adding a significant dimension to institutional leadership. By combining objectivity and subjectivity in order to construct knowledge, any administrator utilizing constructed knowledge is



probably taking some different views and actions than one who is guided solely by rationality and objectivity (Haring-Hidore et al., 1990, p. 180).

The women who acquire knowledge in this fashion fuse themselves as a source of knowledge with the subjective, objective and knowledge they have learned from others. Constructed knowing is also characterized by listening. As evidenced through the findings in this study, the Latina administrators seem to acquire knowledge through the constructed knowledge stage. Listening to others was mentioned quite often, particularly as it related to decision-making.

However, central to these women's leadership style is that of their integrated duality of the two cultures they straddle each day, described earlier as *mestiza*. Their *Latinidad* does not disappear once they enter the confines of the university environment. On the contrary, it is an indelible aspect of their identity. This seamless integration of my own *Latinidad* surfaced as I analyzed the data. While I was initially disappointed that these women's leadership style did not reveal any unique aspects, I soon learned that this was untrue. I had examined and reflected upon their responses from the same lens as the participants.

None of the women identified this sense of responsibility or duty to the extended family as the critical influence in the way in which they carried out their administrative duties. However, it was through the prompting of my faculty advisor that I realized this was the unique aspect of leadership employed by the Latina administrators I had interviewed. It was as if I were holding a mirror to my own style of leadership and ways in which I carried out my administrative duties. These women know and are proud of

who they are and the various perspectives they bring to their work because of their *Latinidad*, whether they recognize it consciously, or not.

One additional element that surprised me was that family was not listed as often as one of the hindrances to these women's success. There were a lot of positive comments made about how parents, particularly mothers, had laid a foundation for their hard work and persistence. However, the only consistent theme with family that may have been a hindrance was with respect to the women being "place bound" to their positions (i.e. spouse and/or children led to a decision not to leave the institution).

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

While there remains a dearth of literature that focuses on Latina student affairs administrators, and more specifically those of Mexican origin, many of the findings in this study support some of the same ideas that have been espoused by researchers for both women and Hispanic administrators. The following recommendations should be given thoughtful consideration by administrators, faculty members in higher education administration programs and Latinas who hold entry and mid-level positions within student affairs. The assumption that one individual within the complexity of academe can affect change is noble, but highly unlikely given the history of marginalizing women, and in particular women from underrepresented groups, within higher education. It is my hope that all of the aforementioned constituents will find ways to collaborate and unite their efforts in supporting and elevating qualified Latinas into the various senior level roles within the division of student affairs on campuses across the

country. These recommendations can strengthen the Latina voices within the division of student affairs across the nation.

- **Family support**

Family support served as a foundation of strength for these women. If there are ways to nurture family support for women in graduate programs, along with nurturing their family ties while serving in administrative roles, universities should identify these factors and act upon implementing these recommendations.

- **Mentoring**

A firm commitment of providing mentors to Latinas throughout their career progression in student affairs is imperative. The women in this study cited the following mentoring programs as sources of strength and inspiration that would encourage success of emerging student affairs leaders: mentoring programs for 1) undergraduate Latina students with introductions to the various aspects of the profession; 2) graduate students who are seeking degrees in higher education administration or student affairs, and 3) Latinas who hold professional positions within student affairs. Effective models of formal mentoring include: sufficient funding and resources to support the program, training for mentors, clearly articulated program goals, ensuring well matched mentors and mentees, and program evaluation (Ehrich et al., 2004). Additionally, providing training and support in career development was cited as a best practice of successful mentoring programs (Thomas et al., 2004).

- **Preparation Programs (graduate school)**

Graduate preparation programs, both at the master's and doctoral levels, should ensure that their student populations are promoting diversity to include admission to Latinas. And, furthermore, preparation programs would sustain Latinas in the assimilation and transition of entry level to senior level roles in the university environment if they will assist with providing education and practice in specific topics such as supervising, navigating campus political climates, networking, role modeling and advocacy for Latinos, as "a" or "the" Latino on campus.

- **University Environment**

Finding ways to promote and appreciate diversity across campus is instrumental to retaining students, faculty and staff from underrepresented populations. A successful university environment can be fashioned that values equality in all facets of university life, does not intimidate or require Latinas to have to validate themselves or their credentials when interacting across the various campus entities, and values student affairs as an integral component to student learning.

- **Leadership Development**

Leadership development, in its various forms, is essential to support Latina student affairs administrators. One method of promoting leadership development is participation in professional development opportunities, which often includes a financial commitment for travel costs. In today's economy, many institutions have drastically reduced or frozen the use of funds for travel. While this is still an invaluable way in which to connect with other colleagues and to learn and grow

within your position and the profession, it is not the only way to accomplish professional development. Institutes such as the Women's Leadership Institute of ACUI, and co-produced by members of the Council for Higher Education Management Associations, or the AAHHE Executive Leadership Academy are examples of specific programs, apart from annual professional association conferences, that should also be given consideration. I do believe, though, that Latinas who are faced with limited or no funds allocated to travel, should seriously consider investing in themselves and funding their own travel to further their leadership development.

Other methods of acquiring leadership development include participating in webinars, professional development workshops offered through the institution or the division, and identifying colleagues who are in similar roles or have similar professional interests to engage in a dialog via social media and/or in person. These are low cost methods that will continue to assist Latinas to keep growing and learning, remaining on the cusp of new information in order to better serve in leadership roles.

- **Succession Planning & Increasing the Latina Pipeline**

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there is an estimated 6,000 administrative positions in higher education that will need to be filled annually through 2014 (Leubsdorf, 2006 in Betts et al., 2009, p. 1). With the pending retirement of baby boomer administrators across the nation, the need to fill these

positions with qualified individuals, preferably inclusive of a diverse pool of women, has been considered by some experts as a crisis. This presents an excellent opportunity for emerging Latina administrators to prepare to assume these roles through succession planning.

Succession planning is “a process by which an organization assures necessary and appropriate leadership for the future through a talent pipeline with the capabilities of sustaining an institution’s long-term goals” (Wallin et al., 2005, p. 26). Wallin et al. (2005) also note that succession planning is not an entitlement program and may employ talent brought in from outside of the university. While less than half of the women interviewed in this study initially charted a professional career in student affairs, all of them expected to remain in student affairs, once they joined the profession. However, a visible career path to the next leadership role was not necessarily evident to these women. One recommendation to address the impending shortage of qualified candidates to assume administrative roles is to “define visible career paths and provide professional development to increase the pool of candidates for the leadership pipeline leading to positions in senior administration across the various divisions as well as to the role of presidency” (Betts et al., 2009 p. 3).

While the relatively low number of Latinas is inadequate as the representation of Latina/o students increases on college campuses, it is important to identify ways

that we can increase the number of eligible Latinas who are ready to enter the profession of student affairs and are seeking to advance into administrative positions. “As colleges and universities expand the leadership pipeline, it is essential that institutions make a commitment to increasing diversity within administration through the recruitment process, professional development, advancement, and retention” (Betts et al., 2009, p. 4).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

- **Research Latina Student Affairs Administrators Outside of Texas**

While the majority of the women were employed in colleges and universities from North Texas to South Texas, their hometowns were from the southern half of the state. Further research should be conducted to identify how Latinas fare in other states of the United States, particularly in states that are experiencing rapid growth in the Latino population.

- **The Triple Threat and the University Environment**

As one participant responded, student affairs is the “third minority.” She has witnessed and been exposed to the fact that student affairs is not treated as a credible or contributing asset to the campus environment. How do Latina student affairs administrators who are members of three underrepresented groups within the college environment (women, Latina and student affairs) best serve as the voice?

- **HSIs and Latina Administrators**

Does the university environment promote Latinas to serve in administrative roles within student affairs, versus non-HSI universities?

- **How do we get more Latinas in the pipeline?**

What are the characteristics of Latina student affairs administrators, which can lead to identifying good candidates among undergraduate Latinas to encourage them to pursue their graduate degrees and enter the field?



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## APPENDIX A

### E-MAIL REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW

XXXXXX,

I am writing to request your assistance in helping me complete my dissertation research. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University, and my dissertation title is: *Latina Administrators' Ways of Leadership: Preparando Chicanas*. I have reached the status of Ph.D. candidate at Texas A&M University pursuing a degree in Higher Education Administration. I am also currently employed at Texas State University-San Marcos as a staff member in the LBJ Student Center's office of Campus Activities and Student Organizations.

To complete my research, I am seeking to interview 12 Latina administrators of Mexican descent who are employed in student affairs, holding the title of Director or above, at higher education institutions across the state of Texas. Each interview should take no more than ninety (90) minutes. All interviews would take place on your campus, or nearby in a mutually agreed upon location that would also provide some privacy and the ability for me to audio record the interview. My hope is that you would be available [Date(s) and Time(s)] for a (90) minute interview. If you would be willing to be interviewed for my project, I would really appreciate it. If you are not available these days, but are interested in participating in this study, please let me know. I would like to try and accommodate your availability.

There is no compensation for this study, but your participation would help contribute to the body of literature that discusses the experiences of Latina administrators in higher education, particularly those of Mexican descent. Attached is a copy of the Consent Form for your review.

I am in the process of building the interview schedule. If you are interested and willing to be interviewed, please reply to this email as soon as possible, and we can set up the interview date, time and location that is convenient for you. I will also follow-up via phone with you in a couple of days.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. For additional questions or information, I may be reached in the following ways:

mobile phone: (512) 750-0630

email: [mmlopez@austin.rr.com](mailto:mmlopez@austin.rr.com)

Thank you,

Michelle

Michelle M. López  
Doctoral Candidate, Higher Education Administration  
Texas A&M University

## **APPENDIX B**

### **INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

#### *Interview Questions*

1. How did you prepare (or were you prepared) to serve in your role as an administrator?
2. What factors can you identify as contributing to your success as an administrator?
3. What factors can you identify as having derailed your success as an administrator?
4. Can you describe how the university has supported your success? Hindered your success?
5. How would you describe your leadership style? Can you give me a couple of examples?
6. How does your leadership style differ from your male colleagues? If it does, can you provide examples of how it differs?
7. How does your cultural identity and gender factor into your role as a leader? If they do factor into your role as a leader, can you give me a couple of examples?
8. What are the qualities and characteristics of a successful student affairs administrator? How do those qualities and characteristics change for a successful female student affairs administrator? How do those qualities and characteristics change for a successful female, Mexican American, student affairs administrator?

\*\*

9. How do you prepare/empower the next generation of Latina administrators?
10. Is there anything you would like to share that I have not asked you that would be relevant to this study? \*

\*Question added during initial interview, and asked at each subsequent interview

\*\*Question was added during ninth interview, asked at each subsequent interview and participants were provided an opportunity to submit responses, who had not been asked this question.

### *Demographic Information*

1. Name
2. Job Title
3. Contact Information (Email/Phone/Address)
4. Institution and Public/Private
5. Population (undergraduate/graduate)
6. HSI (yes/no)
7. Number and job titles of Latinas at same professional level at institution
8. Degrees and granting institutions
9. Any professional development training
10. Areas of responsibility
11. Supervisory reporting structure within division of student affairs
12. Number and titles of people supervised
13. Type of activities that occupy majority of the work time
14. Areas of the university with most interaction

15. Three most recent jobs and length of time in each position

16. Membership in significant professional organizations

17. Hometown

## APPENDIX C

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Latina Administrators' Ways of Leadership: *Preparando Latinas*

**You are being invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Texas A&M University. You are being asked to read this form so that you know about this research study. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part in the research. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefit you normally would have.**

#### **WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?**

The purpose of this study is to understand ways to support the promotion and success of Latina administrators, particularly those of Mexican origin, in higher education to assist with advancing and empowering the Latinas who will succeed them in their administrative roles, and perhaps encourage Latinas to enter the ranks of higher education administration.

#### **WHY AM I BEING ASKED TO BE IN THIS STUDY?**

You are being asked to be in this study because you are a female administrator of Mexican origin/descent who is employed at a four-year institution of higher education in Texas with the title of Director or above.

#### **HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE ASKED TO BE IN THIS STUDY?**

12 participants will be enrolled in this study at no more than 12 study centers.

#### **WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO BEING IN THIS STUDY?**

The alternative is not to participate.

#### **WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IN THIS STUDY?**

Your participation in this study will last up to one month. It will consist of one 90 minute interview and an opportunity to review the transcript of the interview to ensure that it accurately reflects the content of the interview. An opportunity to observe your daily administrative duties for no longer than a few hours will also be requested, but not required.

#### **WILL VIDEO OR AUDIO RECORDINGS BE MADE OF ME DURING THE STUDY?**

The researchers will make an audio recording during the study so that the information shared by the participant may be accurately reflected in the transcription. If you do not give permission for the audio recording to be obtained, you cannot participate in this study.

**ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO ME?**

The things that you will be doing have no more risk than you would come across in everyday life. The participants may encounter a psychological risk if the questions bring to mind unpleasant memories or experiences related to discrimination or other feelings of fear/challenges serving as a Latina administrator.

Although the researchers have tried to avoid risks, you may feel that some questions that are asked of you will be stressful or upsetting. You do not have to answer anything you do not want to.

**ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO ME?**

There may be no direct benefit to you by being in this study. What the researchers find out from this study may help other people who are seeking similar positions within higher education administration.

**WILL THERE BE ANY COSTS TO ME?**

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

**WILL I BE PAID TO BE IN THIS STUDY?**

You will not be paid for being in this study.

**WILL INFORMATION FROM THIS STUDY BE KEPT PRIVATE?**

The records of this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Dr. Yvonna S. Lincoln and Michelle M. López will have access to the records.

Information about you will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and in password protected computer files. This consent form will be filed securely in an official area.

Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

**WHOM CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?**

You can call the Principal Investigator to tell him/her about a concern or complaint about this research study. The Principal Investigator, Michelle M. López, M.Ed., can be called at (512) 750-0630 or emailed at [mmlopez@austin.rr.com](mailto:mmlopez@austin.rr.com). You may also contact the Principal Investigator's advisor, Yvonna S. Lincoln, Ph.D., at (979) 845-2701 or emailed at [ysl@tamu.edu](mailto:ysl@tamu.edu).

For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research and cannot reach the Principal Investigator or want to talk to someone other than the Investigator, you may call the Texas A&M Human Subjects Protection Program office.

- Phone number: (979) 458-4067
- Email: [irb@tamu.edu](mailto:irb@tamu.edu)

**MAY I CHANGE MY MIND ABOUT PARTICIPATING?**

You have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide not to participate or stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study, there will be no effect on your employment status, merit evaluation or anything else related to your professional status. You can stop being in this study at any time with no effect on your employment status, merit evaluation or anything else related to your professional status.

**STATEMENT OF CONSENT**

**I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available and that the researcher will tell me if I must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want. A copy of this entire, signed consent form will be given to me.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT:**

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Presenter

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **APPENDIX D**

### **RESEARCH AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

#### **Research Questions**

1. What are the pathways and strategies by which Latina administrators reach their positions?
2. Does the intersection of gender and ethnicity influence Latina administrators' leadership? If so, how?
3. Can we describe the leadership style of Latina administrators through traditional models? Or is it something unique to Latina administrators?

#### **Interview Questions**

1. How did you prepare (or were you prepared) to serve in your role as an administrator?
2. What factors can you identify as contributing to your success as an administrator?
3. What factors can you identify as having derailed your success as an administrator?
4. How has the university supported your success? Hindered your success?
5. How would you describe your leadership style? Can you give me a couple of examples?
6. How does your leadership style differ from your male colleagues? If it does, can you provide examples of how it differs?

7. How does your cultural identity and gender factor into your role as a leader? If they do factor into your role as a leader, can you give me a couple of examples?
8. What are the qualities and characteristics of a successful student affairs administrator? How do those qualities and characteristics change for a successful female student affairs administrator? How do those qualities and characteristics change for a successful female, Mexican American, student affairs administrator?
9. How do you prepare/empower the next generation of Latina administrators?
10. Is there anything you would like to share that I have not asked you that would be relevant to this study?

## APPENDIX E

### AUDITOR REVIEW LETTER

#### Memorandum

To: Michelle M. López, Researcher  
From: Rosalind V. Alderman, Ph.D. , Auditor  
Date: November 10, 2012  
Re: Letter of Attestation for López Dissertation

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On July 18, the researcher, Michelle M. López, and I met to discuss the audit process. During that meeting, we reviewed the researcher's methods for obtaining and analyzing the data. I was also provided copies of all dissertation chapters.

#### Charge

The Auditor's charge is to determine dependability, confirmability and to review credibility measures.

#### Theoretical Basis for the Audit

Per the chapter, *Establishing Trustworthiness*, in Lincoln and Guba's *Naturalistic Inquiry* (1985), this audit is based on Edward S. Halpern's auditing concept as described in Appendices A & B. (pp. 382-392).

This audit was conducted by reviewing materials related to the research, including the interview protocol, transcripts (sorted into index cards), notes on themes found throughout the writing process and findings as shared in the dissertation itself.

#### Goals of the Audit

Per the initial meeting, the goal of this audit is to establish trustworthiness of the researcher's work, determining dependability, confirmability and to review credibility measures.

#### Audit Procedures

##### *Audit Trail*

I found evidence that the Audit Trail Categories below were achieved successfully.

- 1) Raw Data: The researcher had organized and categorized the raw data appropriately. All index cards showed data that had been unitized and organized. Initially the data were organized into 12 categories.
- 2) Data Reduction and Analysis Products: I was able to review the unitized data, and inspect the coding procedures the researcher used. All the data appeared to be well organized.
- 3) Data Reconstruction and Synthesis Products: After reading the transcripts the interviewees had checked, the researcher identified several emergent themes for

each of the research questions. She identified 5 themes for goals 1 and 3, and 4 themes for goal 2. During the 9<sup>th</sup> interview, the researcher added one emergent question to the questions protocol. Three of the eight women with prior interviews responded to the question via email.

- 4) Process Notes: The researcher discussed with me how she processed the data and arrived at her conclusions/findings. The researcher also explained how she worked with two well qualified peer de-briefers.
- 5) Materials Relating to Intentions and Dispositions: The researcher began using a reflexive journal as she was writing her proposal and continued writing it until the conclusion of the dissertation writing process.

#### *Audit Process*

- 1) Preentry: The researcher and I met to review various documents and we determined I would serve as the auditor for this research.
- 2) Determination of Auditability: In reviewing the materials provided, the research appears to be in good order and one can follow how inferences and conclusions were made.
- 3) Formal Agreement: A verbal agreement was reached to use me as the auditor.
- 4) Determination of Trustworthiness:
  - a. *Confirmability*: The findings seem to be based on the data, inferences are logical, the category structure is clear, there is little to no inquirer bias and there are sufficient efforts to ensure confirmability.
  - b. *Dependability*: A purposive sampling method was used in accordance with standards of the field. The researcher interviewed to the point of redundancy, fulfilling the requirements for dependability. Rich description in the dissertation product aids to this dependability.
- 5) *Credibility*: Professionals interviewed were asked to review the transcripts for the interviews. All 12 participants in the study did do a member check during the interview. Transcripts were emailed to all participants and given a chance to verify the information. Five participants responded to the researcher's request to verify the information (4 provided edits, 1 approved without edits).
- 6) Closure: I am sharing this memorandum with the researcher and it will be an appendix to the dissertation.

#### *Findings*

Overall, the audit has found that the researcher conducted the study in accordance to the naturalistic inquiry methods, following the appropriate tasks to produce a complete audit trail as well as to ensure trustworthiness in her process.

*Overall Attestation*

It is the auditor's opinion that the researcher's methods and conclusions have met the requirements of dependability, confirmability and credibility measures.

*Auditor's Vita*

The auditor has been employed in higher education for over 20 years as a student affairs professional. She holds a bachelor's degree from West Texas A&M University, an M.A. from Bowling Green State University and a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University. She currently serves as the Assistant Vice President for Retention Management at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas.