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Hispanics/Latinos: Higher education

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Given the increasing numbers of Hispanics/Latinos in the U.S. population, and given the opportunities associated with a college degree, there is a need for understanding how predominately white institutions can provide support for students from these cultures to attend and complete college. Through this research, factors that have helped and hindered Hispanic/Latinos' success as undergraduate students at large mid-western, predominately white universities were identified. Two focus groups were conducted in the fall semester of 2006; discussions were transcribed and analyzed by a team of researchers, including an African American minority student. Several common themes emerged from the analysis, including perspectives that were different from those of the African American minority involved in the study. Findings included the feeling of being overshadowed by the predominant minority group on campus, African Americans. Through transcript analysis, data suggested that the Hispanic/Latino students interviewed, felt that their culture and ethnicities, as well as other small minorities, was over generalized when it comes to looking at minorities as a whole. Additional findings suggest that the underrepresentation of Hispanic/Latinos on campus limits the individual voice for their own culture and thus hinders the educational experiences of these students. The students suggest that the responsibility to make things change lies on the whole student body, not just them. They go on to say that they have to work together as one, and stop being divided, if any goals are ever to be accomplished. These findings lead to various implications and recommendations for ways to improve educational experiences for this population. Some of these include a multicultural center, a cultural day/week, as well as more Hispanic/Latino courses for them to take on campus.